

Vamos  
tejiendo

Building bridges of equity



# Executive Summary PSA





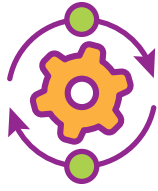
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## PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project titled Equal Access to Quality Jobs for Women and Girls in Agriculture or EQUAL (hereafter referred to as Vamos Tejiendo) seeks to reduce the risk of child labor, forced labor, and other violations of labor within the agricultural sector. Specifically, the project works in the cut flower sector in the municipalities of Facatativá and Funza in the Department of Cundinamarca and the unrefined sugar (panela) sector in the municipalities of San Roque and Yolombó in the Department of Antioquia. The project aims to achieve two main outcomes: Improved economic participation in quality jobs within the agricultural sector by women and adolescent girls identified as vulnerable to child labor, forced labor, and/or other violations of labor rights. And improved practices by government and private sector actors to reduce vulnerability of women and adolescent girls of legal working age to child labor, forced labor, and other violations of labor rights.

## PURPOSE OF THE PRE-SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS (PSA)

The purpose of the PSA is to understand the experiences, needs, and challenges of adolescent girls and young women in the cut flower and panela value chains, as related to their working conditions and violations of their rights, including dynamics around child labor and forced labor. It also aims to understand the perspectives of the other stakeholders, including government, civil society organizations -CSOs-, and the private sector within the context of the project. The analysis also seeks to identify the specific limitations faced by adolescent girls and women in both sectors of the labor market and the public and private sector practices that contribute to expanding or reducing their economic autonomy. This information will allow the project team to propose the actions and strategies required to achieve the project outcomes and inform the design of a perception study that will delve into the experiences of the project's target participants from a gender mainstreaming point of view.



## METHODOLOGY

The project used a mixed-methods approach for this PSA: primary qualitative data was collected directly from stakeholders to obtain information about the life experiences of the people who participate in the production of panela and cut flowers, besides secondary quantitative from national public institutions, such as National Department of Statistics DANE, National Planning Department DNP, and National Health Surveillance System.<sup>13</sup> project team members from ENS, Pact Colombia, and Pact DC participated in this process.

The project carried out 29 semi-structured interviews with public sector officials, private sector companies and federations such as Fedepanela, Asocolflores, Molienda Real, and community organizations or local companies of the four municipalities.

The context of the Covid-19<sup>1</sup> pandemic limited the use of some methods, such as focus group discussions (FGD) and in-person workshops, due to government restrictions on holding in-person meetings. In this situation, it was more challenging to build trust and engage with some actors from the value chain for each sector such as the groups of women and Civil Society Organizations and private sector.

In terms of data collection, not all databases have quantitative information at the vereda level. Likewise, information related to the identification of gaps and/ or characteristics of production, wages, income, and other related indicators, are not disaggregated by gender and age in the information provided by state agencies and/ or productive unions, and the secondary information is not always up to date.

The methodologies used for this PSA:

**Analysis of supply chains** and the production structure of panela and cut flowers in Colombia, including a characterization of the sectors, organization of production, characterization of gender and age of workers, and social benefits in the sector.

**Contextual Analysis** to uncover the underlying dynamics of the relationships between stakeholders, as well as the structural contexts and challenges faced by women in terms of economic participation, empowerment, and guaranteeing their rights in each municipality. The project also conducted an analysis of the dynamics of child labor and the impact of Covid-19 on each of the two sectors.

**Assessment of labor market factors** to understand the employability context in the panela and cut flower sectors, including through outreach to private sector actors to inform the scope for capacity development and training efforts.

**Stakeholder Mapping** to visualize the relationships between them and assess the existing levels of cooperation between the stakeholders, laying the foundation for a genuine dialogue and setting realistic expectations and objectives about their participation in the project.

1. The focus group discussions (FGD) intended to contribute to the Perception Study as the initial inputs, due to the Covid-19 situation, the team did not carry out the FGD. However, the findings of this PSA allow the project to make some adjustments to the timeline and scope of the Perception Study according to the current context.

**Systems mapping** to build a collective vision of the dynamics that affect women and girls within the value chains and their environments, identify opportunities and barriers, and think of strategies that can move the system towards conditions that guarantee the rights of women and girls.



## Main findings of the cut flower sector

### Characterization of the global market<sup>2</sup>

As of 2019, Colombia is the second largest producer and exporter of flowers

**16%**  
share of total global exports, and only  
behind The Netherlands which has a **48%**  
of total global exports.

the United States is the largest  
importer of flowers, with

**21%**  
of total global share, followed  
by Germany with  
**16%**

Roses lead the share  
of global exports

**39%**  
of total exports of  
flowers, followed by  
chrysanthemums with  
**9%**,  
and modified roses  
and carnations with  
**6%** each one.

2. Data from the Ministry of Agriculture, 2020 <https://sioc.minagricultura.gov.co/Flores/Documentos/2019-12-30%20Cifras%20Sectoriales.pdf>





Over the past decades, the flower supply chain in The Netherlands switched from a buyer-driven to a producer-driven chain. The transformation of the chain was also the result of the integration of a new intermediate segment created through the strategies of the producers and state regulators (Patel-Campillo, 2010). This altered the governance of the basic goods chain as well as the power relations between producers and buyers.

One important element in the case of The Netherlands was the development of cooperative auctions that made it possible to “take power from the buyer” and alter the chain. This stands in contrast with developing countries, where most flower producers do not benefit from the organization of cooperatives and auction mechanisms, which means that the chain is primarily buyer-driven: “Colombia is an important example of a country without a farmer-led cooperative and thus buyers hold considerable power” (Patel-Campillo, 2010, p. 12).

## Characterization of the national market

Colombia has more than **8.000** planted hectares and **239.947** in 2018 produced tons of flowers (Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural, 2019b)

Average yield in the sector has been decreasing since 2015, going from

**31** tons/ha in 2015 to **28,4** ton/ha in 2018

Flowers are the second largest agricultural export product in the country (after coffee and followed by bananas), generating revenue in foreign currency in the amount of nearly

**1.402** million U.S. dollars in 2018. The sector also contributes close to

**17%** of the income tax paid by the Colombian agricultural sector (SIOC, 2020). colombiano (SIOC, 2020).

Flower cultivation represents between

**5% y el 7%**

of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the agricultural sector and

**75%**

of domestic air cargo (Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural, 2019b)

**Colombia has a portfolio of over 1,600 varieties of flowers and it is the first exporter of carnations in the world, the second in chysthanthemums, and the fourth in roses and lilies. (SIOC, 2020).**



The production chain in the agricultural sectors comprises the actors that participate in the production, transformation, marketing, and distribution of a product. The cut flower sector production chain model consists of six links: i) final client, ii) international retailers, iii) international wholesalers, iv) Colombian buyers, v) producers, and vi) suppliers of inputs. The sector's institutional context includes organizations and public institutions directly involved in the system, and the institutional environment, which corresponds to the regulations for each chain (Castellanos et al., 2009).

## Challenges regarding labor and environmental conditions in the sector

The International Labor Organization (ILO) defines decent work as “involv(ing) opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace, and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize, and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men” (OIT, 2015).

Several practices within the cut flower sector could be considered in violation of this international standard but are in line with national regulations and thus, legal. For example, under the current national legislation, many companies that dominate the sector have increased the number of their subcontracts. This is directly related to a decrease in union participation and creation of new unions because subcontracting breaks the employer-employee relation which is the base for unionization under the Colombian law. In 2002, sub-contracted workers represented only 14% of the total workers in the cut flower sector; by 2010 this figure had grown to 42%. In other words, the rate of subcontracting grew by 200% in eight years (Gonzalez, 2014).

The cut flower sector is characterized by precarious work that is evident in different practices and relationship modalities, such as overexploitation and gender discrimination. There are also significant environmental risks in the flower sector. The different production processes can affect water sources, air quality, and soil quality, as well as animals, plants, and the landscape. While there is no specific international or national standard for the flower sector, there is an extensive body of laws that regulates some of the different processes that affect the environment. In the case of flowers, the proposal for quality seals of approval is assuming the challenge of assessing and containing the environmental risks.



## Local relationship cut flowers sector

With respect to the relationships between the stakeholders, the stakeholder analysis concluded that there are strong and collaborative relationships between the public sector stakeholders in Facatativá and Funza, such as the secretariats for economic development, the secretariats for women, and CSOs. There are also precise relationships between the two municipal administrations, the private sector, and the network of SPE providers. Vamos Tejiendo identified some of the relationships that exist between stakeholders in the region that the project believes have significant potential to contribute to the economic empowerment of women in the cut flower sector. For example, the relationship between the private sector (businesses and Asocolflores) and the network of SPE providers, SENA, and the mayors' offices of Funza and Facatativá.

In the municipalities of Facatativá and Funza, where a strong corporate setting surrounds the flower industry, the team concluded that the companies have high power, given that they effectively define the labor conditions for women in the sector. Based on the stakeholder analysis, the team identified two types of companies: i) those that are openly in favor of the project, given the openness to dialogue with the female workers and union organizations, and ii) those who have a conflictive relationship with some female workers and union organizations, and are thus undecided or indifferent. Asocolflores is in this second group of stakeholders. While this poses a significant challenge for Vamos Tejiendo, it can also be interpreted as an opportunity to mediate and build bridges between these actors based on their shared interest in the economic well-being and rights of the female workers.

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## Working conditions of women in the cut flower sector

In the cut flower sector, the PSA identified three major challenges to achieve economic autonomy for women and the full guarantee of their labor rights: i) job insecurity, ii) disproportionate care work responsibilities, and iii) antagonism between businesses and unions and organized women.

Job insecurity is evidenced in labor contract conditions and the duration of women's employment in the companies, as well as in the positions they hold and their opportunities for promotion and improvement of wages. This situation also relates to the education levels of the women from the sector and the available training opportunities. To address this challenge, both private and public sectors implement strategies that seek to improve women's basic and secondary educational levels and broaden their range of opportunities. However, the barriers that are not addressed by these types of interventions persist; for example, the gender divide in the workplace and vertical segregation<sup>3</sup>, within the flower production activities. Most of the technical trainings offered focus on duties carried out by men: fumigation, disease and plague management, working at heights, metal mechanic work, and irrigation.

Furthermore, the Covid-19 pandemic revealed digital gaps in internet access and digital literacy. As part of the project's adaptation to the context of the pandemic, the digital

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3. This concept "denotes the situation whereby opportunities for career progression for a particular gender within a company or sector are limited" (European Observatory of Working Life, 2017).



education component should be taken into account to strengthen women's competencies. Similarly, as part of its work with public and private stakeholders, the project should prioritize the improvement of internet connectivity.



## Main Findings of the panela sector

### Characterization of the global market

**Colombia is the second most important panela producer in the world, and the first in Latin America, responsible for close to 16%**

of the world's total production (MinAgricultura, 2021). It is second only to India, which dominates the global panela market with over

**60.2%** of the production

According to TradeMap line 170113 (TradeMap, 2020) Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates are the foremost importers of sugar cane in solid form, and the largest importer of Colombian panela is the United States with close to

**3.645** tons of panela, representing **40,1%** of the total exported panela,

followed by Spain which imports **33,8%** of Colombian panela.

In Colombia, the price is determined by the supply of panela in the market. The producers do not have market power due to their large numbers and to the competitive pressure panela has from substitute products such as sugar and sweeteners. Given the large number of producers, there has been an oversupply in the sector which has resulted in a continuous decline in price and a crisis for the panela sector in recent years.

### Characterization of national production

The panela sub-sector is the second most socially relevant agro-industry in the country, after coffee (Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural, 2019a) In 2019, the country harvested an area of approximately

**176.000** hectares, and an output average of

**6,71** tons per hectare

This translates to over a million tons of panela produced in

**29** departments of the country, covering over **560** municipalities.



Over **350.000** families participate in the

production of this sector, with  
**70.000** productive units and **20.000** mills.

It is estimated that panela plantations in the country generate close to

**287.000** direct jobs and **878.000** indirect jobs

**This means that 12% of population in the rural area is active  
as a result of panela production (OIT, 2020)**

The model has six primary links: providers of agricultural inputs, cultivators of sugar cane, providers of sugar cane, bulk buyers, retail buyers, and lastly, the final client. The model also includes multiple institutions that are responsible for the smooth operation of the chain and are reflected in the organizational setting.

There is no precise information on the distribution by gender or by age range in the panela sector. However, several independent studies and interviews conclude that the majority of individuals working in the sector are men (Vega, 2018) (Manjarrés & Montoya, 2018) especially those involved with the collection of sugar cane to produce panela, given the enormous physical strength require for this task. In many cases, women who are already in this sector are mainly responsible for packing and selling but can also engage in other activities related to the panela value chain.

## Challenges regarding labor and environmental conditions in the sector

Regarding the labor conditions of the panela producers, most of the workers are registered in the department's health subsidy system. Due to the lack of a labor risk administrator<sup>4</sup> (ARL for its Spanish acronym) affiliation, the workers are not protected if there is an on-the-job accident or work-related illness. Only 10% are affiliated to an ARL.

The productive process generates environmental impacts, such as changes to micro-climates and atmospheric composition, as well as contamination of water sources. As is the case in the flower sector, there is no official environmental or labor standard for the sector.

## Local relationships in the panela sector

The stakeholders in the panela productive sub-sector have high power and interest in the project, given that their functions and action plans are in line with the objectives of the Vamos Tejiendo project. At the national level with offices in the regions, stakeholders that implement their plans and coordinate with regional institutions (mayor's offices and departments) include the Antioquia territorial department of the Ministry of Labor, the

4. is the set of public and private entities, standards and procedures designed to prevent, protect and care for workers from the effects of illnesses and accidents that may occur on occasion of or as a consequence of the work they perform.

National Learning Service (SENA), ICBF, Ministry of Agriculture, and the Presidential Advisor for Women's Equality (the latter coordinates actions at the central level). In the department of Antioquia, Vamos Tejiendo found that the Antioquia Secretariat for Women has influence in activities related to the promotion of women's rights and is very interested in the project.

In the case of the Asociación de Paneleros y Agricultores de Yolombó (Asopagroy), Ecodula, the Gualanday, and La María mills, the team concluded that these stakeholders could have a significant impact on the programs in which the women of the panela sector participate. However, these organizations are still in the process of strengthening their operations, as they are not yet economically sustainable. They could be considered for future social and business strengthening activities, such as clean agriculture, accountancy, and management.

The project observed that producer and women organizations have a specific or weak relationship with public institutions, such as the mayor's offices, at the departmental or national levels. The coordination in the latter relationship has been based on dialogue or on occasional and very specific agreements, with less coordination with the departmental secretariats than the institutions at the municipal level. An example is the relationship that exists between social organizations, such as Asopagroy and AMOY, who despite their different characteristics and missions have occasionally worked together. This is perceived as an opportunity for the two organizations to share knowledge and perspectives about women empowerment.

## Working conditions of women in the panela sector

In the municipalities of Antioquia, the conditions are similar to those in traditional rural areas: the population is mostly rural, and the panela sector activities are carried out in a more artisanal and informal manner. These territories are far from the capital city of the department and do not have conurbation with large population centers. This makes women that work in the sector more aware of their rural identity<sup>5</sup>, given that women suffer not only from gender gaps but also from the conditions of their geographical location: rural and in territories historically affected by the armed conflict, with limited institutional capacity to respond to the demands of the region, especially as it relates to access to justice.

Rural women are thus facing three significant gaps that hinder their economic autonomy and the full realization of their rights: informality in the sector, which prevents them from finding jobs that offer social security and adequate remuneration; the disproportionate share of women in unpaid care work, which limits their time for education and recreation; and their condition as rural women, which restricts their access to services, compared to the women in Cundinamarca.

The women in this production chain find themselves with the need to diversify their activities because the income received from panela production is insufficient. However, their options are limited to coffee cultivation and production, mining, domestic work, and informal commerce in the municipal capitals. The panela business and commercial organizations, for their part, face challenges related to formalization, given the progressive drop in prices, due to oversupply and underconsumption, as well as the monopolistic dynamics created by intermediaries to control the prices. In this situation, the companies find it difficult to offer their employees good working and economic conditions, in compliance with formalization standards.

5. In Colombia the identity categories of rural and urban women are very important for their sense of empowerment and agency. The project highlights this situation because it is relevant for the intersectional approach of the intervention.



## General conclusions for both sectors

Although the cut flower sector is formal and the panela sector is informal, the women in the project's four target municipalities are facing similar situations: income that is insufficient or is barely enough to meet their subsistence needs. Exacerbating the financial strains of women working in these sectors, the project team observed that communities do not appear to appreciate the activities carried out by women. This is particularly evident in the unpaid care work, but also occurs within the value chains. In the panela sector, women's work is perceived as a complementary activity, like support to the activities of the mills. In the floriculture sector, although they carry out the primary tasks in the flower farms, this responsibility is not reflected in the remuneration or the opportunities for growth offered by the companies.

There is evidence of problems that are common across the four municipalities: domestic violence, sexual violence, economic abuse (especially nonpayment of child support), unwanted pregnancies, involvement of adolescents in illegal activities, inability to obtain pensions, and difficulty accessing security and justice services. In both sectors it is usual for women's choices, freedoms, and autonomy to be limited by external and structural factors. Due to this situation, the life plans of most women are based on a logic of survival, where working in informal (panela) or formal (floriculture) activities, which are poorly paid and endanger their physical and mental health, is usually the only option for generating income.

The persistence of rigid gender stereotypes, among other social and economic issues, facilitates the perpetuation of the limiting conditions in both sectors. The social norms that reduce the role of women to mothers, spouses and/or caretakers are deeply engrained in the four municipalities. The analysis concludes that all stakeholders, including public officials at the local and departmental levels, constantly refer to women as innately responsible for the domestic sphere. This allows women's disproportionate share of unpaid care work to become naturalized in both sectors.

The work of municipal administrations with women usually focuses on awareness-raising and prevention of gender-based violence. This correlates with a theme that was repeatedly raised in the interviews with public officials: the belief that women's problems can be resolved at the individual level (i.e., strengthening the capacity of women as individuals), not making structural changes to their environment. Interviewees regularly used adjectives such as "shy," "low self-esteem," "nervous," and "lacking confidence in themselves," when referring to women in both sectors and to explain, for example, their low levels of participation in the public sphere or lack of involvement in the production chains.

Another factor that is common to the four municipalities is the low level of trust in public institutions. Although this appears to be more explicit in Antioquia<sup>6</sup>. The women in Cundinamarca who participated in the analysis also said that the relationship with authorities could be complicated and that they were skeptical of the effectiveness of their interventions, especially those related to access to justice.

There is greater acknowledgement of child labor in the panela sector than in the cut flower sector, as well as a shared justification by the community and authorities for why it occurs. In fact, the public interventions do not aim to eradicate this practice but rather accompany the adolescents performing child labor related activities to ensure that they do not drop out of school.

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6. This may be explained because the municipalities in this department generally have less institutional capacity.

In contrast, in the cut flower sector, the understanding of child labor is limited to the involvement of minors in the plantations. This reduces the scope of the analysis, as it is improbable that children and adolescents are involved in this work given the legal framework and size of the companies. However, it is necessary to examine different aspects of the environment that could facilitate child labor practices, especially the household chores carried out by girls and adolescent women.

Overall, there is evidence in the four municipalities that the life plans of youth and adolescents appear to veer away from agricultural work, be it in the mills or in flower plantations. In the cut flower sector, adult women's desires that their children have job opportunities different from theirs are very prominent.

## Opportunities and general recommendations

To achieve the project's objective, it is important to i) review gender stereotypes that place women in less qualified and poorly paid positions, ii) understand their interaction with the current labor laws and practices that hinder access to certain jobs, and iii) understand the effect of training programs designed without a gender approach so that the project can provide alternatives that promote systemic change in the sector.

Similarly, the project sees the potential for strengthening social dialogue and consensus-building spaces where businesses, worker organizations, non-profit organizations, and government institutions can develop joint initiatives to facilitate the voluntary implementation of good practices in panela and cut flower production.

Vamos Tejiendo can connect stakeholders and establish channels of dialogue to foster new market opportunities and thus create better working conditions for both women and men. It is also an opportunity to provide and build, together with women, tools to increase their agency to enable them to mobilize for the defense of their rights and to promote projects that address the recognition of the care economy as an important element. The project also identified the general need to create support networks for women to mobilize around political and social issues and not just economic ones.

Vamos Tejiendo identified the need to build the technical capacity of public officials in the regional institutions<sup>7</sup>, especially the mayor's offices, to implement employment policies and programs that are aligned with the realities in the region and with a gender approach to reveal the gender gaps in terms of economic participation associated with gender stereotypes, and the gender division of labor. The capacity building exercise would be grounded on Ministry of Labor guidelines, advice, and inputs. Regardless of how the private sector becomes involved, Vamos Tejiendo should focus on the recognition of the companies' challenges, the identification of the practices that foster gender equality, quality work for women, the guarantee of their labor rights and social well-being, and on the willingness to implement changes needed to achieve better working conditions for women.

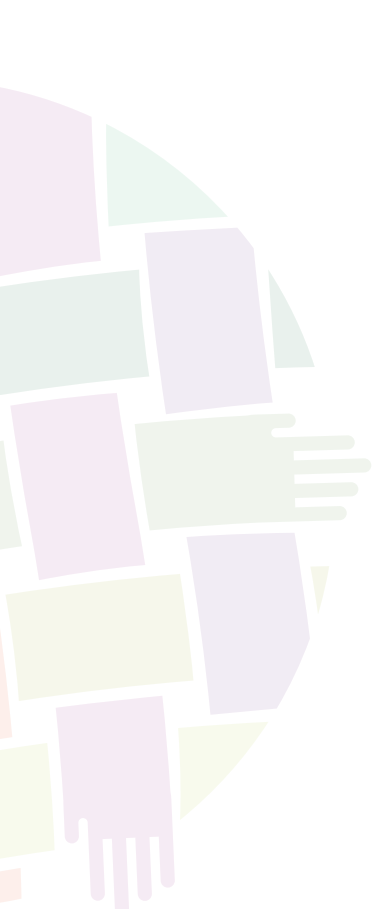
Due to women's disproportionate share of care work (i.e., reproductive activities)<sup>8</sup>, it was widely recognized that this activity limits the time that women can dedicate to productive<sup>9</sup> and educational activities, recreation, and other uses of free time. This creates a gap that

7. It is necessary to involve the public sector and the agro-industrial sector in the regions in supporting the development of the plans and programs to improve the sector, as well as in recognizing and addressing the economic, social, cultural, entrepreneurial needs of the communities and the recognition and realization of their rights.

8. Reproductive activities, as used by the statistical institutions of Latin America, are tasks carried out for the reproduction of the household (care of children and the elderly, washing and ironing clothes, meal preparation, etc.)

[https://www.cepal.org/mujer/reuniones/tiempo/tm\\_ecuador.pdf](https://www.cepal.org/mujer/reuniones/tiempo/tm_ecuador.pdf) (León, 2003)

9. This refers to the economic participation of women.



significantly reduces the economic, political, and social participation of women and influence in their households and communities. For this reason, Vamos Tejiendo can serve as a platform to promote stakeholder recognition of how the limited time available to women prevents them from effectively advancing towards the full realization of their rights.

Furthermore, the project should focus its efforts on highlighting the magnitude of the issue and advocate for its prioritization in the agendas of municipalities, businesses, and departmental and national level institutions. Providing more time for women to pursue political participation, further their education, or perform other paid work should be a priority in any intervention that seeks to improve their quality of life. Similarly, it is necessary to provide women with tools to demand the necessary measures from competent authorities to transform the provision of care (childcare, elder care, disability care, health care, among others) into public services and so that they actively participate in decision-making mechanisms in municipalities and businesses.

The project observed that the strengthening of specific employee skills for carrying out activities within the different links of the value chain, especially in cultivation and production<sup>10</sup> should not be the focus. The project's training strategy must be based on the fact that a large percentage of women have not completed high school. Vamos Tejiendo can partner up with different stakeholders to promote women's opportunities for completing elementary and high school. This can have a positive impact on their autonomy and decision making.

Regarding the antagonism between businesses and unions and organized women, the project has an opportunity to strengthen social dialogue and consensus-building mechanisms to develop joint initiatives between businesses, labor organizations, non-profit organizations, and government institutions that facilitate the voluntary implementation of best practices and willingness to improve work conditions. Similarly, it is necessary to concentrate on joining efforts to strengthen labor organizations, such as the ONOF, on several fronts: i) visibility, ii) promotion of women's labor rights, iii) strengthening of their programmatic and organizational activity, iv) dialogue with regional institutions in decision-making and participation mechanisms, v) visibility of working women's issues, and vi) showcasing of unions as social dialogue promoters.

The municipalities of Funza and Facatativá have a strong presence of national institutions and programs that aim to empower women and guarantee their rights. For the project, it is highly relevant to actively engage with stakeholders involved in setting regional strategies guaranteeing women's rights and initiatives, such as services provided by Casa de la Mujer and different municipal mayoral offices. This will facilitate the identification of potential beneficiary communities, as well as comprehensively and efficiently coordinate and target regional training services, initiatives for access to employment, and other services for women and adolescents.

There is an opportunity to create partnerships with identified stakeholders, such as Molienda Real, since their business model includes sustainable and environmental responsible business and fair trade, allowing small producers to add value to production and marketing through powdered panela. International markets prefer panela in this presentation because it can be mixed with other products and used to prepare derivatives, such as candies and beverages. Molienda Real is currently interested in establishing contact with small producers in Antioquia. Vamos Tejiendo can connect stakeholders and establish dialogue channels to foster new market opportunities and thus create better working conditions for both women and men.

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10. Where most women are located.



This is also an opportunity to provide and build, alongside women, tools to increase their agency, to mobilize for the advocacy of their rights, and to promote projects that address the recognition of the care economy as an important issue. Here, women's groups like AMOY<sup>11</sup>, as well as women's advisory councils and the social organizations present in the region (Asopagroy and community mills), can play an important role as promoters and agents of change in the project's different awareness-raising and mobilization activities.

In addition, in San Roque and Yolombó the project identified multiple solidarity economy initiatives, such as agro-ecological home gardens and breeding of minor species<sup>12</sup>, which have allowed women to ensure food sovereignty for themselves and their families, as well as to allot resources traditionally used to purchase food to other productive and self-sufficiency activities. Surplus produce from the gardens is sold in the farmers markets<sup>13</sup>. The project identified the overall need to create support networks for the women that will mobilize around political and social and not solely economic issues. This could lead to commercial entrepreneurial networks in Nordeste, Antioquia<sup>14</sup>.

Finally, the project observed the need to work in coordination with each of the territorial institutions in three areas: i) redefinition of gender stereotypes for the formulation and implementation of public policies; ii) establishment of pathways for attention that are more visible and functional in terms of access to justice for women, since the main reason for not reporting cases of violence is the physical distance<sup>15</sup> from relevant institutions and the lack of information on justice pathways<sup>16</sup> and, finally, iii) recognition and commitment to take actions to prevent and reduce child labor, taking into account that this problem has been normalized in San Roque and Yolombó, but that it responds to the structural conditions that turn children into source of economic support for households that are primarily women-headed and lack sufficient income to ensure the basic sustenance of the families. The latter issue should be examined further, because children could be at risk of becoming involved in illicit activities due to the presence of armed actors in the territory.

This becomes a first step towards protecting youth at work, where the project can work in coordination with the institutions to strengthen this type of practice in the four municipalities. Also, providing life skills training to teenagers in both sectors may be a way to disincentivize their engagement in activities that are not suited for their age and that disrupt their development.

11. In the specific case of Yolombó but can be replicated in San Roque.

12. Minor species, such as hens, pigs, and fish.

13. This experience was identified in discussions with AMOY and could be a point of reference for replicating the experience with women in both Yolombó and San Roque.

14. This is a network of women in nordeste antioqueño that usually carries out business exchanges and meetings to strengthen the women's business ventures, as well as other activities associated with the promotion of women's right to a life without violence.

15. Women usually have to travel from the veredas and corregimientos to the municipal capital to have access to institutional services.

16. There is an evident need to identify the channels used to offer public sector services during the pandemic and determine whether the project could somehow replicate or disseminate this information to the communities through its activities.

