Somos Tesoro advances in the consolidation of processes with women, youth, public officials, miners and teachers to reduce child labor in the mining areas in Antioquia and Boyacá. After meeting its goal of reaching 4,300 homes and 13,000 children, Somos Tesoro intensified its work with beneficiaries at greater risk of child labor.

After four years of working on the prevention and reduction of child labor in mining areas, Somos Tesoro began to focus on ensuring the sustainability of the processes implemented to date and the handover of its comprehensive strategy, which is a successful model for reducing child labor. The presence in the communities, the bonds of trust and the support to their initiatives have been crucial elements of the efforts to achieve social impact.

The following advances in the project, as well as its contribution to monitoring cases of child labor, were possible thanks to the coordination and support of the Ministry of Labor, the ICBF (Colombian Institute for Family Well Being), the Ministry of Mines and Energy, the ILO, the SENA (National System of Learning), the Colombian Network against Child Labor, and the United States Department of Labor, among other institutions and organizations that are helping the country to obtain better results in the reduction of child labor.

**Education**

Somos Tesoro provided tools that draw on art and play for the training of 492 teachers, which has increased awareness of their immense potential in preventing and identifying cases of child labor. Fundación Mi Sangre (FMS) is in charge of this component of the project, and has trained teachers in detection of cases and the activation of the pathway to reduce child labor. Educational institutions have joined the efforts of the CIETI and demonstrated their commitment to monitoring the cases of children who drop out of school. The project also strengthened the capacity of the teachers and counsellors in charge of the parent’s school to promote protective environments by addressing emotions, parental responsibility and prevention of child labor.

A key target of the work of Somos Tesoro over the last period was the children who dropped out of school, due to the high risk they face of being drawn into child labor. For this reason, the project has opened spaces to provide attention to minors as well as vocational training to more than 3,200 adolescents and youth, to develop their skills and empower them to continue their studies.

In order to make the educational process more attractive to the young people, the project combined the Pazalobien methodology with cultural activities during their free time at school. This includes mural painting with messages about childhood and adolescence.

The support to the youth initiatives continues to inspire more than 400 adolescents to become involved in the defense of child rights and in improving the living conditions in their community.

**Mining formalization process**

The 76 mining units participating in Somos Tesoro made significant progress towards proper mining practices. The Alliance for Responsible Mining (ARM), the coordinator of this component of the project,
supported miners in transforming aspects of their small-scale gold and coal mining practices, such as water treatment, supply and use of safety equipment, pollution prevention measures, reforestation, mining signs, and ventilation, among others.

The publications and training on Safety and Health in small-scale mining in Colombia, the System for Security and Health Management in the Workplace, on mining formalization processes and on the handling of mercury and alternatives for its elimination, some conducted by the SENA, were an important contribution to responsible mining in the country. Somos Tesoro distributed 400 formalization kits and posters with recommendations on mining safety to the miners and institutions that participate in the project. More than 340 miners have been trained. ARM also contributed to an increase in the productivity of the mining units and to improving their labor and administrative practices. Over this period, it also focused on women miners, to strengthen their capacity as barequeras in Bajo Cauca.

The projects of the winners of the Somos Tesoro Innovation Contest for small-scale mining are already operating, and include a wind mill and a free Internet hot spot in Tópaga, and a community center in Sogamoso. ARM also provided training to more than 340 youth on topics related to responsible mining practices.

Public policies

Fondo Acción, in charge of the Public Policy component of the project, launched the Comprehensive Territorial Management Pathway for Prevention and Reduction of Child Labor in Mining (the Pathway). The project organized events in Antioquia, Bogotá and Boyacá with local, departmental and national public officials, who received a tool box with guides for conducting an assessment of child labor, defining child labor risk criteria, targeting interventions, and reporting cases of child labor in their regions.

Eight pilot projects for the creative use of free time were carried out in the municipalities targeted by the project: Gámeza Mongua, Sogamoso and Tópaga in Boyacá, and El Bagre, Remedios, Segovia and Zaragoza in Antioquia. 700 children participated in these initiatives, which were implemented by local NGOs in coordination with Fondo Acción.

In addition, the Alliance for Responsible Mining gave a virtual course for public officials in charge of the small-scale mining formalization processes, to achieve greater consistency between the oversight and formalization processes and the security and livelihood needs of the mining populations.

Livelihoods

Through the Somos Tesoro project, Pact continued to support 42 productive initiatives, including family and community gardens and fish farming, by providing technical assistance and opportunities to sell their products. In addition to the entrepreneurial fairs promoted by Somos Tesoro, the potato bread bakery in Mongua opened a cafeteria and the corn arepa factory in Segovia began selling its products. The meetings to exchange experiences between these productive initiatives have provided opportunities to share good practices and lessons learned. Hundreds of households in these regions have increased their entrepreneurial capacity and employability in areas such as gastronomy, beauty, electricity and computers, through the courses offered by project partners, such as the SENA, CENSA and COMFABOY.

Pact focuses on supporting productive initiatives through to the marketing stage and ensuring sustainability. To this end, it provides training on associative practices, computer systems, project design, production processes, accounting, marketing, customer service, and conflict resolution.

Household economies have also been strengthened through workshops on Family Economy and Savings for 2,600 women and men in these mining regions. In addition, young people receive vocational training from Pact and the FMS, to help them design their life projects and develop labor skills.

These processes are accompanied by the “Everything has its Time” campaign to turn households into protective environments where child rights are protected.