



Pre-situational Analysis of women in the *Cut Flower* and *Panela* value chains

The Vamos Tejiendo Project, implemented by Pact and the Escuela Nacional Sindical, seeks to promote economic autonomy and better working conditions for women and adolescent girls in the flower and sugarcane value chains in Cundinamarca and Antioquia.

The implementation strategy is aimed at articulating public institutions, private companies and civil society organizations to create a favorable environment that will generate greater guarantees for the protection of women's rights and promote initiatives that foster their economic development.

In order to comprehensively understand the conditions of women in each of the municipalities (San Roque, Yolombó, Funza and Facatativá), the Project conducted a Pre-Situational Analysis to understand the socioeconomic, cultural, and institutional factors that influence the gender gap between men and women in these agricultural sectors. The main findings are presented below.

CHARACTERISTICS SHARED BY BOTH SECTORS

Economy



The life plans of most women are based on a logic of survival, which prioritizes income, even when these jobs involve low pay or health risks.

Women do not have sufficient income to cover their household care needs. In general, the participation of several household members is required to cover family expenses. This situation has been made more precarious by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Education and technology



A large percentage of women have not completed elementary school. Most of them do not have computer skills and in Antioquia they have low access to Internet.

Use of Time



There are entrenched social norms that reduce the role of women to mothers, spouses and/or caretakers. This generates a double workday that limits the time that women have available for activities related to their development such as study and social participation.

Life Plans



Young people do not find opportunities for development in the municipalities, especially in those activities related to agricultural work. For this reason, the municipalities state that there is no generational replacement, which jeopardizes the future of both the sectors.

Gender Based Violence



There is evidence of common problems such as domestic, psychological, sexual and economic violence and unwanted pregnancies.

Access to institutional services



Women have low level of trust in public institutions. There is skepticism about the effectiveness of interventions, especially those related to access to justice.

There is a belief that women's problems should be solved by strengthening their self-esteem and not by managing structural changes in their environment (specific interventions to reduce gender gaps).

Characteristics by sector



Panela

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)

The panela sector in Antioquia is closer to the traditional rural sector and its activities take place within the framework of the artisanal and informal process.

In the panela sector there is a low tendency towards formalization because the companies do not receive sufficient income to cover the social security of the workers. For their part, workers would prefer not to formalize because they would lose personal and family subsidies granted by the government.

General conditions of value chains



Flowers

Colombia is the second largest producer and exporter of flowers, with an 16% share of the total global exports in 2019. (MinAgricultura, 2020)

Although the flower sector is considered formalized, there is a contracting system oriented towards outsourcing and short-term or seasonal contracts.

There is evidence of precarious work due to the contracting system and the low possibility of permanence caused by the fluctuating seasonal nature of the sector, and by the characteristics of the crops' harvesting: manual and repetitive.



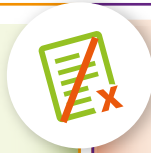
working conditions of women in **the cut flower and panaela value chains**



Panela

Flowers

Due to the informal nature of the sector, the women do not have formal contracts. The general method of payment corresponds to the value per packaged panaela.



Women have limited possibilities for promotion and salary improvements, which is often related to their educational level and possibilities for training and education.

The work most often performed by women within the value chain corresponds to production and post-production work in cultivation, molding and packaging. To a lesser extent, they perform work associated with sugarcane cutting or any other work that involves production in the panaela mill.



There is a marked sexual division of labor. Women are engaged in planting, tending flowers, and cutting. These activities are usually lower paid and do not require certification.

Due to low income, women in the panaela sector diversify their activities with other activities such as coffee cultivation, mining (to a lesser extent), paid domestic work and commerce.



The women of cut flower sector usually supplement their income through catalog or food sales. These activities contribute to increasing time poverty.

The women display a rural and peasant identity due to the agricultural work they do and the place they live in.



The women display an urban or semi-urban identity by living in populated municipalities close to Bogotá.



Stereotypes and **gender gaps**



Panela

Flowers

Women in the agricultural sector, especially in panaela, suffer triple discrimination, since they are not only conditioned by their gender role as women, but also because they are peasants and victims of the armed conflict.



There are few opportunities for technification and job training for women, since the educational offering available focuses on tasks performed by men: fumigation, disease and pest management, work at heights, metalworking and irrigation.



Panela

Child labor and educational opportunities



Flowers

In the panela sector, there is greater recognition of the child labor phenomenon, which is considered justified due to low household income. Given this complexity, public policy efforts have focused on preventing children from dropping out of school.



In the flower sector there is no explicit recognition of child labor since children and adolescents are not likely to work due to the nature of the companies. However, it is necessary to review practices that could favor domestic work and other work by children and adolescents associated with the workers' family environment.



Panela

Institutional presence in the municipalities



Flowers

The municipalities of Yolombó and San Roque experience challenges in the provision of institutional services, due to geographical conditions (access to villages) and to women's low level of confidence, especially in terms of access to justice.



The municipalities of Facatativá and Funza, being closer to Bogotá, have a higher average institutional offer than in Antioquia. However, challenges persist in the provision of institutional services due to the size of the population and to women's low levels of confidence, especially in access to justice.



Panela

Women's organizational status



Flowers

The dynamics of women's associations in the panela sector respond to community-based organizations such as the Juntas de Acción Comunal, or multipurpose women's groups such as AMOY (Asociación de Mujeres Organizadas de Yolombó), which work for food sovereignty and the promotion of a life free of violence for women.



Some women are organized in unions such as ONOF (Organización Nacional de Obreros Trabajadores de la Floricultura). However, this type of organization and the women involved experience challenges with union stigmatization and labor discrimination.

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Opportunities and general recommendations for both sectors

Promote the recognition of unpaid care work as an activity that limits women's time for their economic, social and cultural development. The project can contribute as a platform to prioritize this issue in the agenda of the institutions.



To provide women with tools to significantly influence the inclusion of public policies to reduce gender gaps, increase their economic autonomy, improve their political participation and promote their labor rights.

Strengthen the technical capacity of institutions, especially municipalities, to implement employment policies and programs with a gender perspective that will make it possible to progressively overcome the gaps to which women are exposed.



Work closely with companies to identify practices that promote gender equality, quality work for women and guarantee their labor rights and social welfare.

Promote social dialogue and consultation mechanisms between unions, companies, institutions and NGOs to facilitate the implementation of best practices that guarantee the labor rights of women workers.



Work closely with women's groups and support networks such as AMOY, ONOF, Women's Advisory Councils and panela producers to strengthen grassroots organizations that promote women's rights.

Offer incentives for initiatives such as agro-ecological home gardens and breeding of minor species, which can contribute to women's economic autonomy and household food sovereignty.



To make visible the channels and pathways of attention for women's access to justice and to work together with the authorities to make these mechanisms more functional and closer to the realities of working women.

Promote actions associated with the prevention of child labor and provide vocational orientation of young people in the municipalities.



Connect panela producers with partners that will enable them to add value to their products for international markets.

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