



RURAL SYNERGIES



# COLOMBIA

*Building bridges between social and  
productive inclusion policies*



With the technical support of:

# Evaluation of programmes for the socioeconomic stability of the victims of armed conflict in Colombia: Familias en su Tierra (FEST) and the Estrategia UNIDOS

## KEY MESSAGES

**C**oordination between social protection and rural productive development programmes can help poor and at-risk households escape the poverty trap and break its intergenerational transmission.



While social protection provides liquidity, immediately and partly, alleviating poverty conditions, productive development programmes lead to the generation of the means for a sustained exit from poverty, while also promoting increased in the productivity of small family units and their access to limited resources and assets, such as land, water, financial services, technical advice and markets. These programmes also contribute to improving households resilience when dealing with external shocks or crises. This argument is especially relevant in contexts such as the one we are currently facing as a result of COVID-19.



Within the framework of these premises, this document provides an analysis of the results obtained from the evaluation of synergies and complementarities between the Familias en su Tierra (FEST) programme (rural productive development) and the Estrategia UNIDOS (social protection) in Colombia.



The impact evaluation of the productive programme revealed positive results. FEST generates direct effects on variables such as increased possession of assets and terms of people's daily dedication to work.

It was also possible to observe that joint participation in FEST and UNIDOS generates a positive impact on variables related to food security, social capital, savings, aspirations and expectations. These impacts are mainly motivated by the actions of FEST, but in some cases they complement or generate synergistic impacts with UNIDOS, either due to their own activities or their role as a bridge with FEST.



Although these positive results can be observed, in institutional terms, intensity in terms of coordination is low, even when both programmes are run by the same body. The lack of formal coordination, which can be observed at design level, is partially resolved in the implementation process at local level where it does appear.



In order to strengthen such coordination and thus take advantage of the potential synergistic impacts between the programmes, this study proposes a Coordinated Support Strategy at the institutional level, which would seek to favour the generation of effective interactions between the programmes and so contribute to the objective to reduce poverty and provide support to the victims of armed conflict.



**T** HIS DOCUMENT PRESENTS A SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION OF SYNERGIES AND COMPLEMENTARITIES BETWEEN THE FAMILIAS EN SU TIERRA (FEST) PROGRAMME AND THE ESTRATEGIA PROGRAMME, AS A RESULT OF A QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE IMPACT EVALUATION, ALONG WITH AN INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS. THE DOCUMENT DESCRIBES THE ANALYSED PROGRAMMES TOGETHER WITH THE THEORY OF CHANGE THAT SUPPORTS THE COORDINATION AND COMPLEMENTARY IMPACTS BETWEEN BOTH INTERVENTIONS. THE MAIN RESULTS OF THE IMPACT EVALUATION AND THE INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS, WHICH UNDERPIN THE PROPOSED COORDINATED SUPPORT STRATEGY, ARE ALSO PRESENTED. A SECTION AT THE END OF THE DOCUMENT PROVIDES A DATA SHEET DETAILING THE METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE STUDY.

## FAMILIAS EN SU TIERRA (FEST)

The focus of the Familias en su tierra (FEST) programme is to provide support to victims of forced displacement on their return to their homes or relocation. This initiative is designed to provide tools for social and productive inclusion, but with greater emphasis on the productive inclusion of the participants, through a component of productive projects. As part of the support process, the Office for the Comprehensive Support and Reparation of Victims (UARIV) identifies the households that can access home returns and relocation

routes, as long as the victims are included in the Victims Register (RUV). Cohort IV of the FEST programme, which is the cohort evaluated in this case study, responded to around 18,000 households.

As shown in Figure 1, the FEST programme, which lasts 18 months per cohort, has four support components: 1) Productive project, 2) food security, 3) households and habit-skills, and 4) human and social capital.

Figure 1. Components of the Familias en su Tierra programme

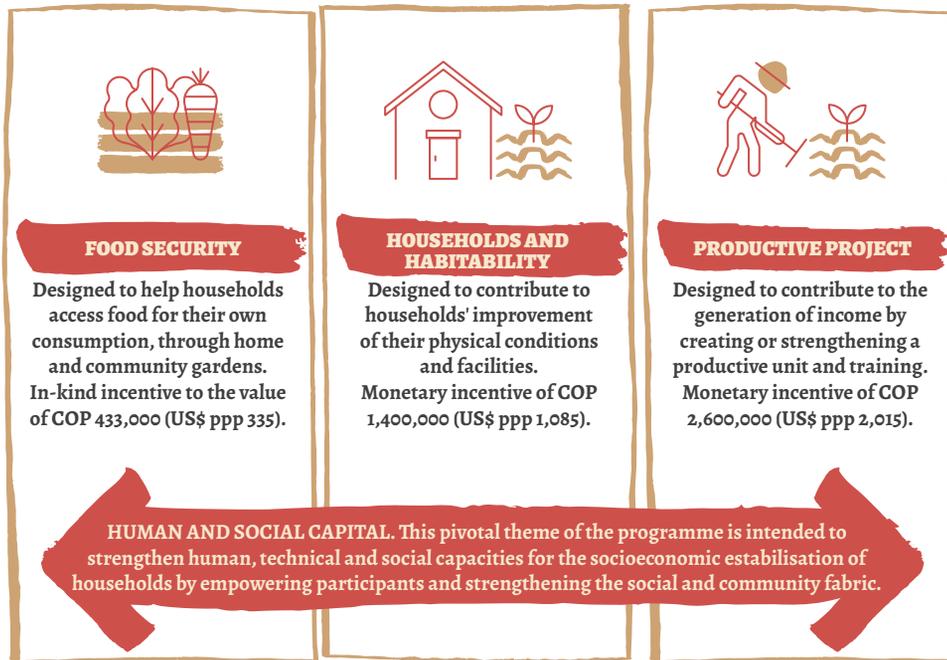
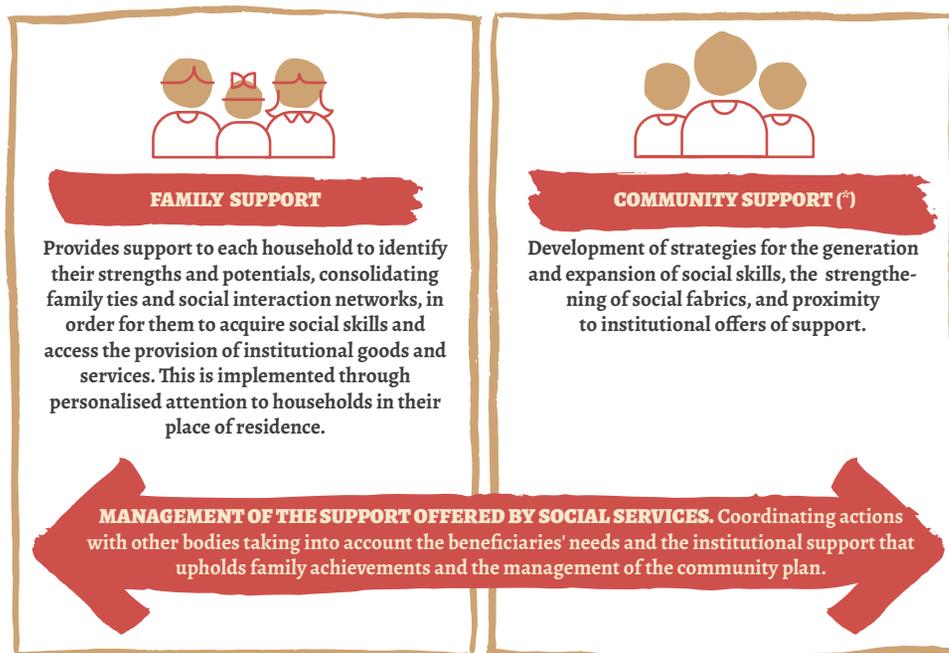


Figure 2. Estrategia UNIDOS Components



## ESTRATEGIA UNIDOS

This strategy is designed to implement interventions that foster social inclusion by identifying the needs and achievements of the families it supports, in order to manage assistance provided by the State, which, in turn, focuses on people's identified needs and conditions. The target population for Estrategia UNIDOS is made up of households living in extreme poverty in any of the following situations: (i) Beneficiaries of Priority Interest Housing, such as the Ministry of Housing's Vivienda Gratis programme, intended for households living in extreme poverty and displaced persons who are part of the UNIDOS network; (ii) ethnic communities; (iii) victims of the armed conflict - who add up to almost 9.9 million as reported in the Victims Register - and; (iv) mothers heads-of-household.

The strategy includes four operational intervention models: (i) Urban, (ii) U-100, (iii) ethnic and (iv) rural. This document analyses the rural-intervention model, which includes three main components, as shown in Figure 2.

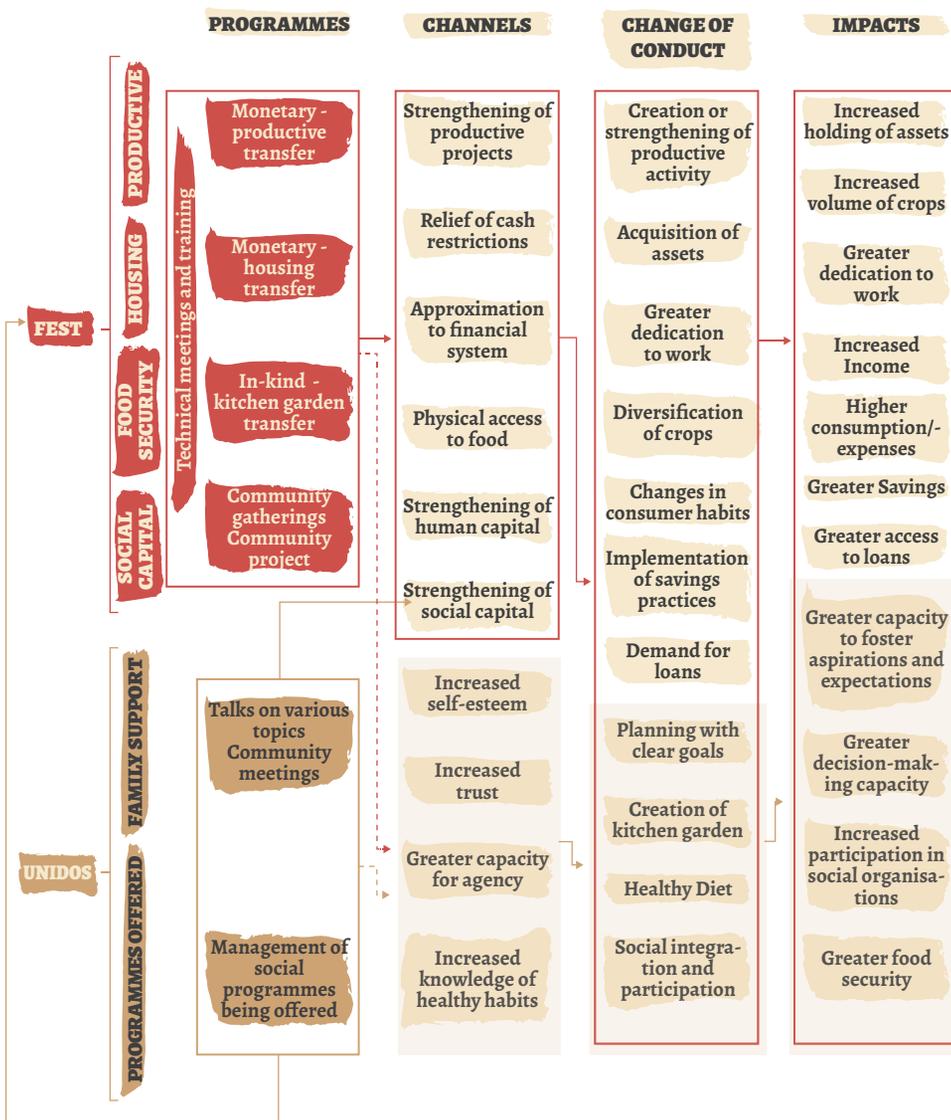
(\*) At the time that information was gathered on this programme, the Estrategia UNIDOS' rural operational model had not yet implemented the community support component.

## THEORY OF CHANGE

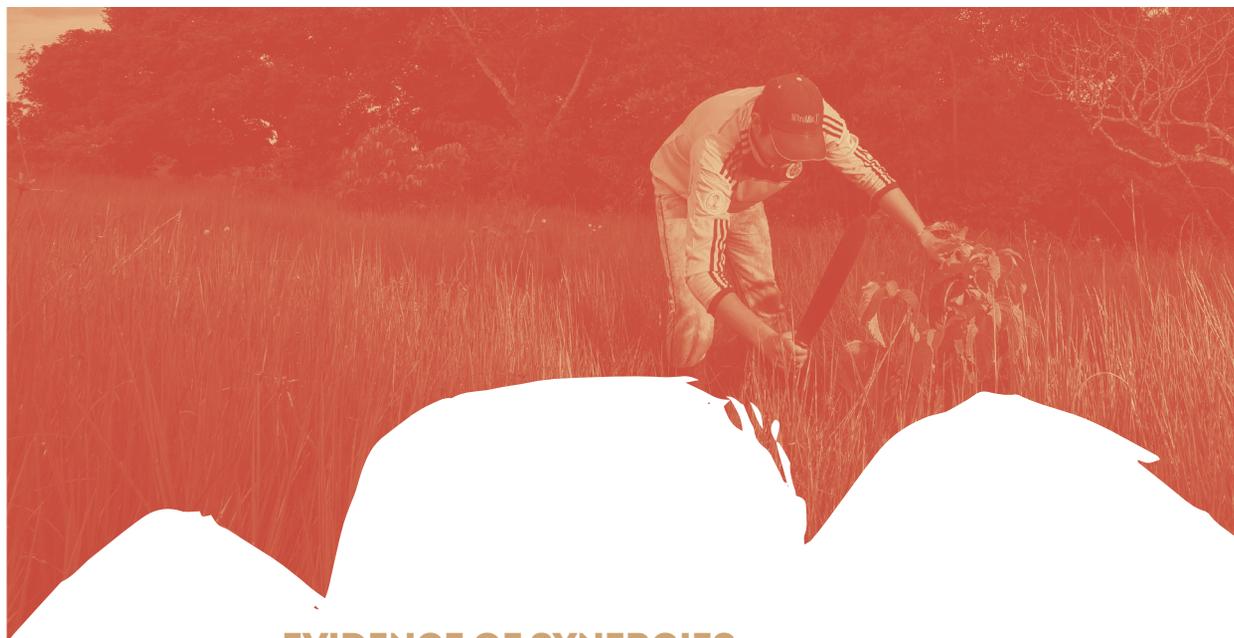
With respect to the task of identifying synergies and complementarities between the FEST programme and Estrategia UNIDOS, the effects of each intervention, along with the variables that may be generating interactions between the two types of programmes, have been identified, as shown in figure 3.

The purpose of this exercise is to establish the variables that can be measured and included in the quantitative and qualitative evaluation of synergies and complementarities between FEST and UNIDOS (see the technical sheet at the end of this document).

Figure 3. Theory of change of the FEST and UNIDOS programmes



**Note:** Dotted lines refer to indirect effects, solid lines to direct effects. The brown squares refer to the variables in which interactions between the programs may be generated. The red boxes refer to the effects derived from FEST.



## EVIDENCE OF SYNERGIES AND COMPLEMENTARITIES

The results of the assessment indicate that **FEST had positive and direct effects on productive variables, and that there are possible synergies with UNIDOS with respect to certain specific variables.** According to the qualitative analysis, the observed synergistic effects were mainly achieved through UNIDOS' indirect role, which allows beneficiaries to access or leverage the programmes offered by the State. Similarly, interactions were found between the two interventions; for example, in terms of informal savings, as the two programs had indirect positive effects on this variable. This effect seems to be motivated by the interaction between the savings groups promoted by Estrategia UNIDOS and the productive resources generated by FEST.

Synergy was also identified between the two interventions in terms of the food security and the presence of a kitchen garden variable. Although the effect of UNIDOS is indirect, talks by the programme's co-managers re-inforce healthy eating habits, which can also be strengthened through the implementation of the kitchen gar-

dens promoted by FEST, which would represent the successful completion of joint efforts.

With respect to the subjective variables, such as **aspirations and expectations**, indirect effects were found in the case of both programmes. FEST improved the participants' perception of themselves by strengthening their productive activity. Likewise, the two programmes are able to operate due to the fact that the participants have improved their situation, making them feel more at ease, comfortable, and animated. Evidence was identified in both the quantitative and qualitative analysis with respect to **social capital**, which integrates a set of variables that are considered to be direct for the two programmes. Both FEST and UNIDOS, through their community work in the FEST projects, as well as in the meetings and training sessions of the social organisations fostered by UNIDOS, **seem to have positively affected the perception of joint work, support and cooperation among the participants.**

**Table 1. Synthesis of results with and without interactions between the two programmes**

| Effects without interactions   |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ A positive effect was identified for the <b>productive assets</b> variable and it was established that this effect is mainly due to the intervention of FEST.</li> <li>+ A <b>positive effect was observed in the daily dedication to work in secondary activities</b> in the households assisted only by FEST, with an increase of 3.7 hours per week (0.53 hours per day).</li> <li>⚠️ When comparing FEST households with those that did not receive another intervention, <b>no increase in the income of the assisted households was observed.</b></li> </ul>  |
| Synergistic or complementary effects   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ A positive effect of 9 percentage points was observed in the existence of informal savings for FEST households. Synergy was identified when households are served jointly by both programmes, which could be largely attributed to FEST. However, the qualitative work highlights the role of co-managers as advisers on issues regarding savings, and the creation of savings groups deriving from the action of Estrategia UNIDOS</li> <li>⚠️ No effects regarding formal loans were found for either of the two programmes.</li> <li>+ A synergy was noted between FEST and UNIDOS with respect to the variable of <b>informal-type loans</b>, which translates into a reduction of 4.9 percentage points in the use of usury loans.</li> <li>+ It was found that FEST contributes to reducing <b>severe food insecurity</b> and increasing the percentage of households with only <b>mild food insecurity</b>. These changes reflect a transition to food security for households that were assisted by FEST. When analysing those households that were beneficiaries of both programmes, an increase was observed in the percentage of households with mild food insecurity.</li> <li>+ A positive effect was noted regarding the perception of <b>well-being</b> in the households that were beneficiaries of both programmes. This complementarity was fostered by FEST, thanks to the strengthening of the capacity for agency, which was generated by the promotion of the productive project, and through UNIDOS on the basis of family support.</li> <li>+ A joint positive effect was found for the future expectations variable (two years). According to the qualitative evaluation, the households that were beneficiaries of FEST and UNIDOS, reported feeling more at ease, comfortable and encouraged, and that they valued themselves more as people due to the improvement of their economic situation thanks to FEST.</li> <li>+ With respect to <b>social capital</b>, positive effects were observed for the households that were beneficiaries of the two programmes. These changes could be related, in terms of FEST, to the increase in households that participate in social organisations, and in terms of UNIDOS, due to the increased participation in community groups.</li> <li>+ With respect to <b>Cognitive Social Capital (CSC)</b>, it was found that the programmes generate positive effects. In particular, they do so jointly in terms of the sub-indicator for cooperation</li> <li>⚠️ No synergistic effects were found for the variables associated with empowerment.</li> </ul> |

## THE ROLE OF INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE

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HE RESULTS OF THE INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS INDICATE THE EXISTENCE OF A **DEGREE OF LOW INTENSITY COORDINATION** BETWEEN THE TWO PROGRAMMES, DESPITE THE FACILITIES GENERATED BY THE FACT THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE INSTITUTION ( PROSPERIDAD SOCIAL) THAT MANAGES THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TWO INTERVENTIONS. SPECIFICALLY, IT WAS FOUND THAT OFFICIALS DO NOT HAVE INCENTIVES TO COORDINATE WITH OTHER PROGRAMMES AND ENTITIES. FURTHERMORE, THE PROGRAMMES OFFERED BY THIS ENTITY RESPOND TO SPECIFIC ASPECTS ESTABLISHED BY EACH GOVERNMENT, AS HAS HAPPENED IN THIS CASE, AND IN TERMS OF PROGRAMMES THAT TARGET THE SAME POPULATION SEGMENT (FEST AND UNIDOS).

At countrywide level, the regional and local Prosperidad Social offices related to the programmes, generated formal agreements, for example, to prioritise the criteria for the FEST programme population, if they are linked to UNIDOS or to other programmes such as Familias en Acción. Likewise, it was also found that officials established informal communication channels to ascertain specific details of the other programmes, such as objectives, participation criteria and geographic presence, which may be relevant to meeting the goals of the programme they are managing.

At local level, the Municipal Coordination Working Groups (MAM) represent a key informal mechanism, made up by stakeholders with extensive knowledge of the context and participation processes of

the programme beneficiaries, and that help to coordinate local authorities and those in charge of public programmes. The result of this coordination process was witnessed in the informal support that those in charge of the FEST programme requested from the comanagers or officials of other programmes, or from other stakeholders in the territory, in order to carry out a specific activity. Such actions of cooperation are evident, for example, in locating and linking potential beneficiaries that allow the programme to be implemented, and which receive the support of UNIDOS' territorial comanagers.

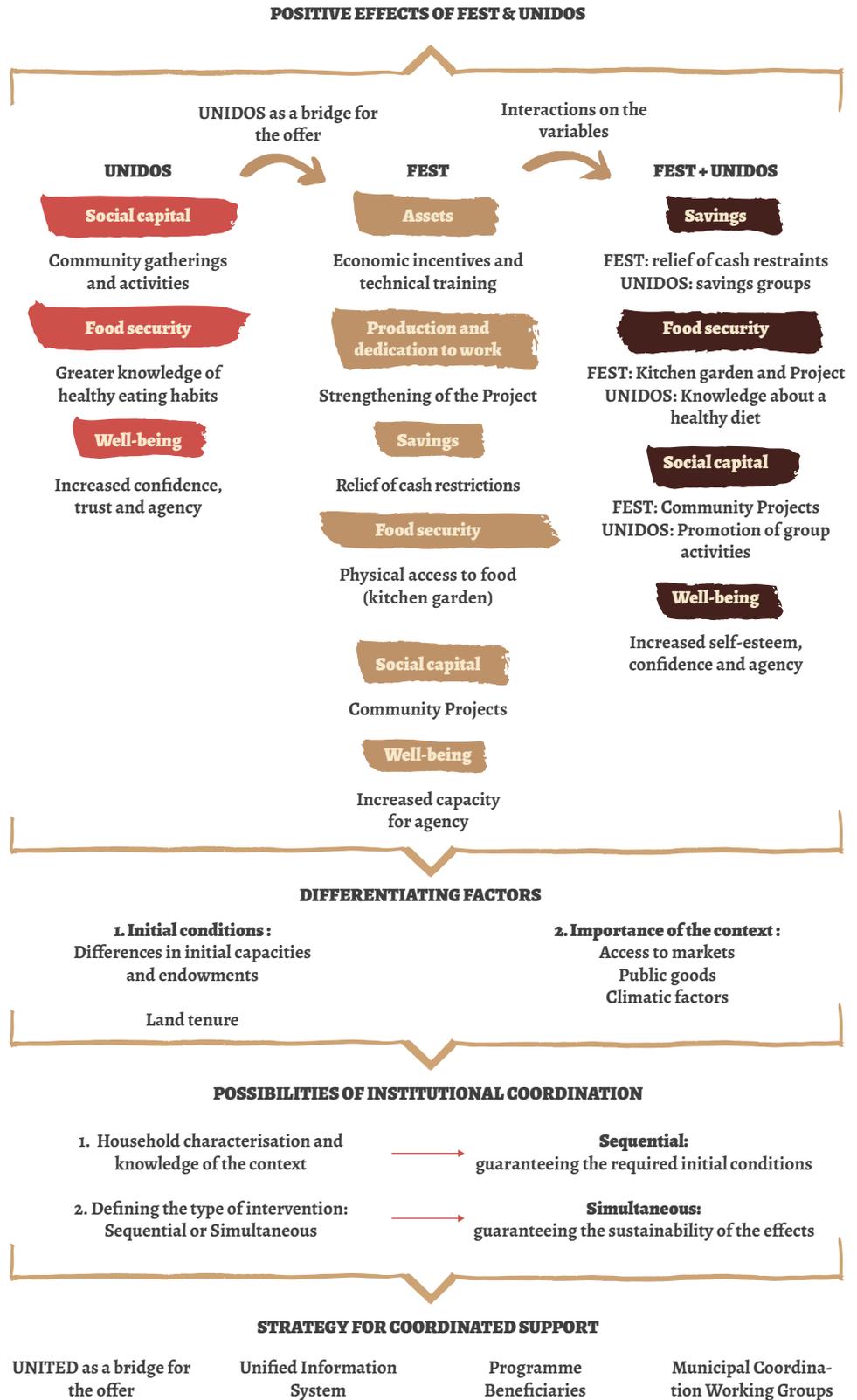


The interactions that can be noted at local and informal levels between the programmes, may be leading to the changes observed in dimensions such as food security and social capital, as well as in subjective variables such as aspirations and expectations. As suggested by the interviews, these synergistic effects were generated by the bridging nature of the UNIDOS programme, as it provides a first step in linking households to FEST and other public programmes. Likewise, and although UNIDOS does not provide goods directly to households, the talks given by co-managers on healthy eating habits, the work done through community gatherings and the formation of social organisations, in addition to the

design of a household plan, enhance the results of FEST in terms of food security. This includes the improved implementation of home kitchen gardens; social capital, fertilising the land for the implementation of community projects; and of aspirations and expectations, by influencing the beneficiary households' capacity for agency.

Figure 4 graphically presents a synthesis of the evaluation results and the associated recommendations.

Figure 4. Synthesis of effects and recommendations



## PROPOSAL: TOWARDS A COORDINATED SUPPORT STRATEGY

The following is a **proposal for a Coordinated Support Strategy** that seeks to foster the creation of effective interactions between the programmes, in order to contribute to the objective of poverty reduction and support for the victims of armed conflict. This strategy is intended to align the objectives of the programmes, improve staff incentives for coordination, define the type of intervention appropriate given the conditions and initial endowments of households, to replicate the Municipal Coordination Working Groups as a best practice for territorial coordination, and to understand the context of implementation. Finally, this initiative also seeks to enhance the effects of the programmes and the generation of synergies and complementarities. The Coordinated Intervention Strategy has four phases: (i) Reassessment and redesign, (ii) household characterisation, (iii) definition of coordinated intervention, and (iv) implementation.



The **first three phases** would comprise an institutional redesign of Prosperidad Social, in which common objectives are sought among the programmes, a general information system is set up, and the type of intervention appropriate for each beneficiary is defined. For its part, the implementation phase must contain mechanisms or opportunities where local stakeholders come together, understand in detail the characteristics of the context, and promote coordination with local authorities for the provision of public goods.

**Strategies focusing on the characteristics of the population groups must be designed in the reassessment and redesign phase. That is to say, the selection criteria of the population to be served must be reassessed, as not all households where victims are present are experiencing poverty or extreme poverty.**

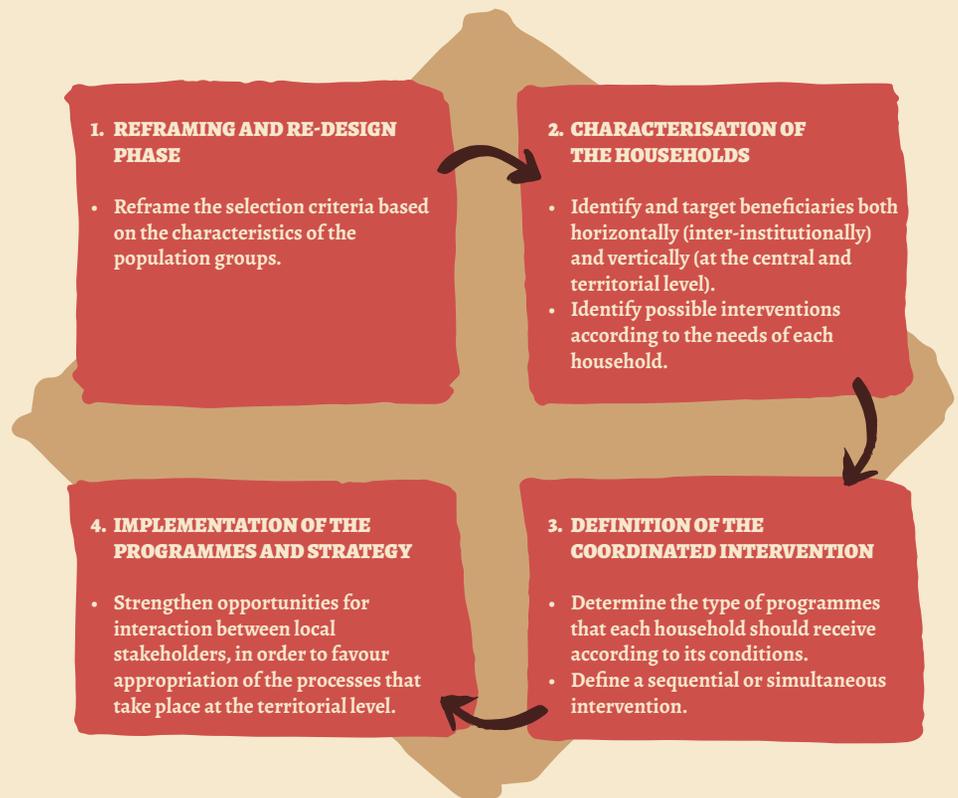


This coordination should focus on the conjugation of objectives, interests and needs of each programme to seek greater efficiency in the support provided to the population living in poverty and extreme poverty, as well as the households of victims of the armed conflict, especially in the rural sector. In this respect, coordination would permit an adequate response to the high operational costs entailed by the support provided to households in dispersed rural areas. In this respect, it is essential for Prosperidad Social to develop a mechanism to create common objectives among the programmes, in which officials have incentives to seek opportunities for coordination, given the existence of a common goal. Moreover, this government agency should also seek to complement methodologies and processes, as well as promote effective communication in terms of programme design and implementation.



Furthermore, with respect to the **characterisation of households** and how UNIDOS has been able to make the provisions offered by the State more accessible to households, particularly in terms of fostering the link to FEST for some households, Estrategia UNIDOS can also be positioned as an alternative that allows for the identification of the contextual conditions and basic needs of households with regard to managing the supply more efficiently. In this respect, it would thus become an

Figure 5. Phases of the Coordinated Support Strategy



information system, which should serve to identify and target beneficiaries both horizontally (inter-institutionally) and vertically (at the central and territorial levels), and to identify the interventions of which a household could be the beneficiary as well as the different recipients of each programme within the same family. Finally, it is key to have access to contextual information in order to inform those policy makers who are trying to adapt interventions to particular conditions and who are interested in working with local institutions to provide public goods. These are the circumstances which end up conditioning the effectiveness of interventions.

**neous.** Sequential interventions would ensure the presence of initial capacities for entry into rural development programmes, while simultaneous interventions enhance the effects of rural development programmes.



Finally, in the **programmes' execution** and the **implementation of the Coordinated Support Strategy**, opportunities for the interaction of local stakeholders must be strengthened in order to favour the appropriation of the processes that take place in the territory, and to understand the conditions of the context in which the programmes are being implemented. An ideal setting to achieve this are the Municipal Coordination Working Groups, as there is evidence of the importance of these groups in understanding the context and the participation processes with the beneficiaries.



Jorge Higinio Maldonado, Rocío del Pilar Moreno-Sánchez, John Alexander Gómez, Viviana León Jurado (Comps.).  
Protection, Production, Promotion: Exploring Synergies Between Social Protection and Rural Productive Development in Latin America. Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes, Facultad de Economía, Cede, Ediciones Uniandes, 2016.



Once a unified information system has been established, the type of programmes that each household should be the beneficiary of can be determined according to their initial conditions and endowments, or rather, **the definition of the type of intervention that can be either sequential or simulta-**

## TECHNICAL SHEET

### The project

Over the past few years, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), together with Universidad de Los Andes and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have been analysing the potential synergistic effects of interventions on rural households that involve social protection programmes and productive rural development projects. IFAD and the Universidad de Los Andes have implemented this project through the “Conditional Cash Transfers and Rural Development in Latin America” grant ([www.sinergiasrurales.info/](http://www.sinergiasrurales.info/)); and FAO through the project entitled “From Protection to Production: The role of Social Cash Transfers in the Promotion of Economic Development” (PtoP) ([www.fao.org/economic/ptop](http://www.fao.org/economic/ptop)). Some evidence of such synergies and complementarities has been identified, but the evidence has also raised new questions. These inquiries are related to the types of synergies and how to take advantage of them, the correct sequencing of programme rollout, the institutional reforms that need to take place and the political economy behind these options, and thus improve the results of the programmes.

To answer some of these questions, the project entitled “Improving the Coordination between Social Protection and Rural Development Interventions in Developing Countries: Lessons from Latin America and Africa” - which is being developed by Universidad de Los Andes (UNIANDES), through its Centre for Economic Development Studies (CEDE), and financed by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) - seeks to gather evidence of the benefits of such coordinated interventions.

The goal of the project is to gather evidence for policymakers and donors of the benefits of the coordinated interventions that could provide inputs regarding the appropriate institutional

and operational design, and enable them to use these inputs as a basis for improving anti-poverty interventions targeted at rural households, thus helping smallholder farmers to take a proactive part in rural transformation.

The main objective of the project is to try to influence governmental institutions related to rural development and social protection (anti-poverty) policies, so they can take advantage of identified synergies between social protection and productive initiatives. The project was implemented in seven countries, three in Latin America and four in Africa.

### The evaluation undertaken

An impact evaluation, consisting of a quantitative and qualitative analysis, was carried out to examine synergies and complementarities between Estrategia UNIDOS and FEST. The variables that were the evaluation objectives of both FEST and UNIDOS were identified based on the theory of change of both interventions. This can be understood as the direct and indirect effects of each intervention, as well as those in which there is a hypothesis of possible interaction. Table 2 summarises those direct and indirect variables analysed in the evaluation for each programme. The underlined variables are those where synergistic or complementary effects were expected between the two programmes.

The methodology used for collecting information for the impact evaluation consisted of developing structured surveys of beneficiary households, or at least those eligible to take part in the UNIDOS and FEST programmes. These were then divided into four groups: a) households that belonged exclusively to FEST, b) households that were not linked to any of the analysed programmes, c) households that were beneficiaries of both interven-

Table 2. Direct and indirect variables analysed with respect to FEST and UNIDOS

| Type of effect  | FEST  | UNIDOS  |
|-----------------|---|---|
|                 | Variables   | Variables   |
| <b>Direct</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Production</li> <li>• Assets</li> <li>• Dedication to work</li> <li>• Household income</li> <li>• <b>Food Security</b></li> <li>• <b>Social capital</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Social Capital</b></li> </ul>   |
| <b>Indirect</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumption/ expenses</li> <li>• Savings and loans</li> <li>• <b>Expectations and aspirations</b></li> <li>• <b>Empowerment</b></li> </ul>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Production</li> <li>• Assets</li> <li>• Dedication to work</li> <li>• Household income</li> <li>• <b>Food Security</b></li> <li>• Consumption/ expenses</li> <li>• Savings and loans</li> <li>• <b>Expectations and aspirations</b></li> <li>• <b>Empowerment</b></li> </ul> |



Note: Interaction was expected on the highlighted variables.

Table 3. Distribution of surveyed households according to comparison group and applied sample sizes

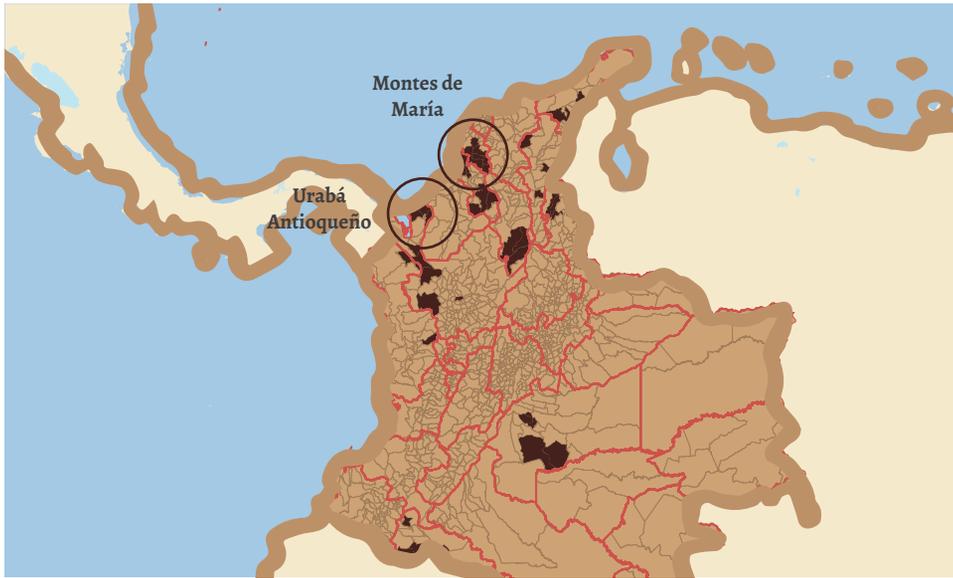
|                                  | With FEST  | Without FEST   | Total        |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--------------|
| <b>Without Estrategia UNIDOS</b> | FEST beneficiary households<br><b>650</b>          | Households that were not beneficiaries of FEST or UNIDOS<br><b>559</b>                     | <b>1,209</b> |
| <b>With Estrategia UNIDOS</b>    | FEST & UNIDOS beneficiary households<br><b>687</b> | Households that were not FEST beneficiaries but that were involved in UNIDOS<br><b>481</b> | <b>1,168</b> |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>1,337</b>                                       | <b>1,040</b>   | <b>2,377</b> |

tions, and d) households that were linked only to UNIDOS.

The different effects were estimated by comparing the different groups that had been previously established, using the matching methodology known as Propensity Score Matching (PSM). This method compares the treated households (households that were beneficiaries of FEST or UNIDOS) with the most

similar controls (households that did not receive any of the interventions or only one of them) in terms of the probability of household participation in the FEST or UNIDOS programme. Table 3 shows the number of households surveyed according to the comparison groups to which the household belonged.

**Figure 6. Locations where qualitative and quantitative information was gathered**



**Source: Authors. The municipalities incorporated into FEST in its IV cohort are shown in brown. The circles correspond to the areas where information was gathered.**

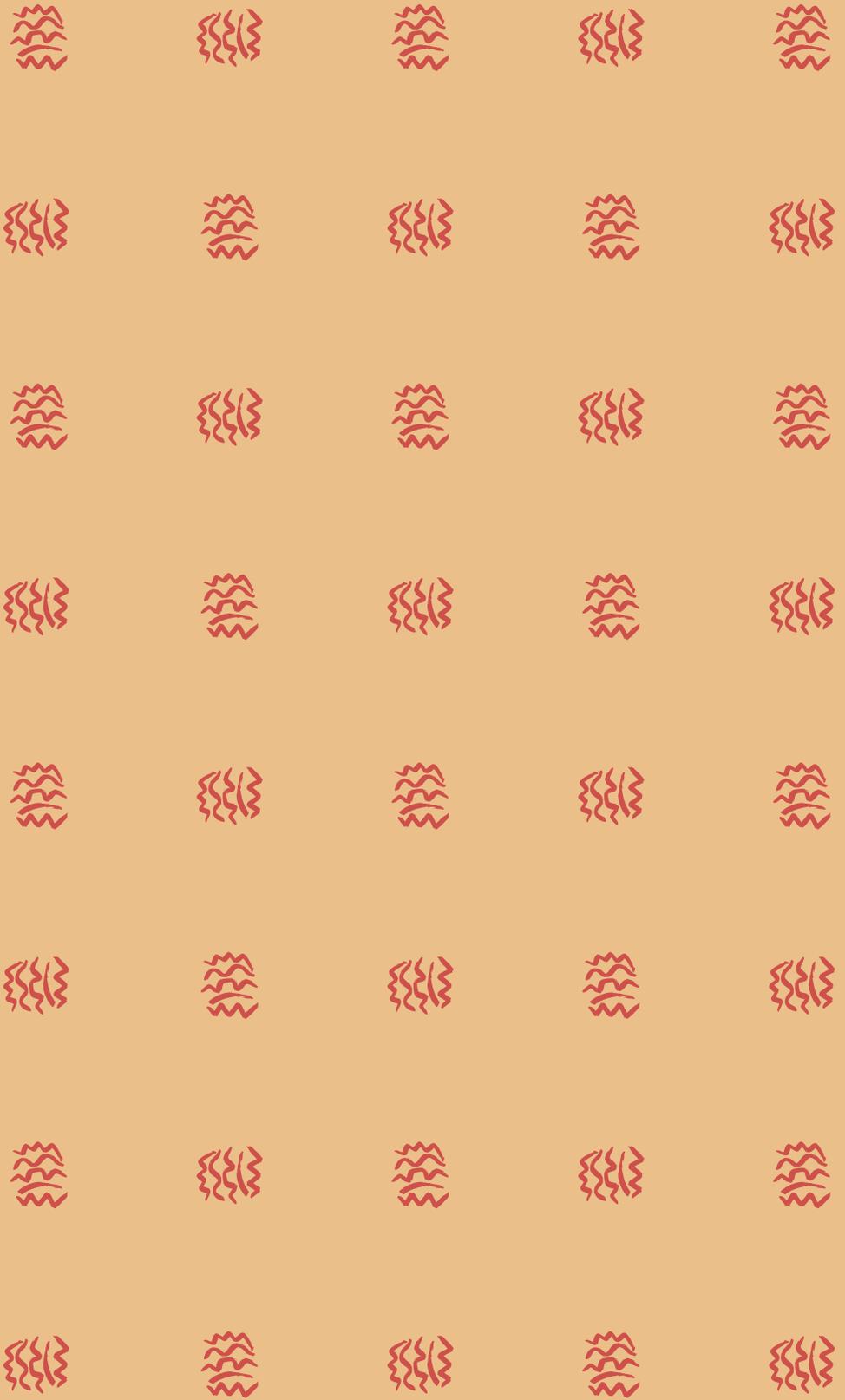
The qualitative evaluation, on the other hand, represents a methodological approach that is based on the identification and comparison of groups of households that receive combinations of the different interventions, and in two areas of the country: Urabá Antioqueño and Montes de María (see Figure 6). Adhering to this design, the qualitative analysis included the application of 21 interviews in municipalities in the Urabá Antioqueño area and 28 interviews in municipalities in the Montes de María area, and in seven types of households:

- i) Households that are very similar to the beneficiary households, but have not been incorporated into the programme;
- ii) households that have only been incorporated into the Estrategia UNIDOS;
- iii) households that have been incorporated only into Familias en Acción;
- iv) households that have been incorporated only into Familias en su Tierra;
- v) households that have been incorporated into the Estrategia UNIDOS and Familias en su Tierra;
- vi) households that have been incorporated into Familias en Acción and Familias en su Tierra; and
- vii) households that have been incorporated

into the three programmes: Estrategia UNIDOS, FEST, and Familias en Acción. Here it is fundamental to note that at the time of interviewing the households, it was found that some belonged to Familias en Acción, when this was not identified in the administrative records, which influenced the definition of the previously described groups.

The interview guide included several modules in which general aspects related to each of the programmes were investigated, the effects on the variables selected for the quantitative analysis that households can attribute to the interventions, as well as a section that allowed synergies or complementarities between them to be inferred.

With respect to the institutional analysis, a review of secondary and primary sources of information was undertaken. In specific terms, interviews were conducted with officials at central and local levels, as well as with beneficiaries of the interventions. In particular, an observation exercise was carried out to examine local spaces of coordination.



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