

Participants of Gran Tierra Energy's *Preventing Child Recruitment Program* Host Former FC Barcelona Football Player in Villagarzón and Puerto Asis

- *Former FC Barcelona football player, Jose Edmilson, visited Putumayo as part of the Preventing Child Recruitment Program led by Gran Tierra Energy, the Barça Foundation and Word Vision Colombia.*
- *The program uses sports as a platform to build more stable communities by helping at-risk kids gain healthy, real-life, conflict-resolution experiences through games they can relate to. By addressing the risk factors that affect children and their families, the goal of the program is to keep young students in school and away from gang activity, illicit substances, human trafficking, and domestic and sexual violence.*
- *Over the last two years nearly 1,500 children from 9 schools from Putumayo and Cesar have participated in the Preventing Child Recruitment Program.*

Villagarzón, Wednesday, May 29th, 2024. Over 1,000 children from the Putumayo and Middle Magdalena Valley hosted Legend and Former FC Barcelona football player Jose Edmilson in their communities for a day of sports and fun. The activities were a part of the *Preventing Child Recruitment Program* that the FC Barcelona Foundation, Gran Tierra Energy, and the NGO World Vision Colombia are implementing in these two regions affected by armed conflict, violence, and social vulnerability that especially affect childhood and youth. Jose Edmilson shared with the participants that his love and discipline for football helped him navigate away from choices that would have had negative consequences on his life. Through hard work and focus he overcame difficult situations and become an elite soccer player with a career spanning 24 years.

Jose Edmilson, former FC Barcelona player, expressed during the festivals, "Through its socio-sports methodology, SportNet, the FC Barcelona Foundation contributes to this this project to improve life skills that support the protection and psychosocial support of children living in these vulnerable contexts."

Over the last two years nearly 1,500 children from 9 schools have participated in this initiative in both the Putumayo and Cesar departments. The program uses sports as a platform to build more stable communities by helping at-risk kids gain healthy, real-life, conflict resolution experiences through games they can relate to. By addressing the risk factors that affect children and their families, the goal of the program is to keep young students in school and away from gang activity, illicit substances, human trafficking, and domestic and sexual violence.

Diego Perez-Claramunt, GTE's Vice President, HSE & Corporate Social Responsibility stated that, "Respecting and protecting Human Rights is one of Gran Tierra Energy's foundational priorities and lies at the heart of our Company. We

believe that GTE's presence should help enhance the Human Rights of everyone in the communities near our operations and we are proactively working, through projects like these to help prevent Human Rights risks before they take place."

Within the program, actions are implemented to promote safe environments for children and to provide tools for early detection and action in cases of force recruitment. This initiative is implemented using the Barca Foundation's SportNet methodology which uses sports and teamwork games, as tools to improve the quality of life and emotional well-being of girls, boys, and adolescents in situations of vulnerability. In addition, the project includes seminars for teachers and community leaders to teach them how to implement this methodology in other local educational institutions.

World Vision is another important partner of the project and has promoted within the program *Parenting with Tenderness*, which is an approach they have developed that focuses on the human and social development of childhood. It seeks to replace education that seeks to control children through fear, punishment, and violence, with a parenting approach based on love, understanding, and care. Raising girls and boys with tenderness affirms their dignity and strengthens emotional bonds. At the end of the festival the beneficiaries' families received a medal symbolizing their commitment to be protectors for safe environments within their communities.

"Being able to continue to contribute to the protection of girls, boys, and adolescents in the most vulnerable communities is our goal. We are committed working day by day so that childhood, adolescence, and their families know and have positive parenting tools and guidelines," stated Peter Gape, director of World Vision Colombia.

The FC Barcelona Foundation and Gran Tierra Energy launched this alliance together in 2019 with the objective of strengthening environments for young people in the regions where Gran Terra Energy operates. Through this continued partnership we will continue to work together to protect the youth and support their families in Putumayo and Cesar.