



Future prospects thanks to vocational training: Secured income for marginalised young adults

Project background

Many young adults in the poor districts of Bogotá have fled the civil war from rural areas and are trying to build a new life in the city. However, they lack training, a network and the right behaviour when it comes to job applications. As a result, the unemployment rate of young refugees is 58%. Frustrated, some are susceptible to the promises of criminal gangs or struggle along as poorly paid day labourers.

Our project approach

We provide 600 internally displaced and marginalised young adults with formal vocational training. After graduation, we support them in finding a formal job with guaranteed minimum wage and social benefits and accompany them for the first few months in their new job. Parallel to their vocational training, we strengthen their social and conflict resolution skills.

Project goals

- 540 young adults are professionally qualified, with at least 60% earning the legal minimum wage in a formal job and being socially insured.
- 540 young adults deal with their experiences of violence and learn how to deal with emotional injuries. They know their rights and obligations and are contributing to life in a community that is free from violence.
- Our partner organisation, strengthened institutionally, can work to disseminate its vocational training model.

tionally, can work to disseminate its vocational training model.

Project activities

Labour market analysis and selection

We only offer vocational training that is in demand within the region and we constantly analyse the labour market. Social workers discuss with the beneficiaries the training that suits them. The beneficiaries are only those who cannot afford to pay for an education. We promote the equal participation of both genders.

Vocational training and recognised diploma

The young adults complete their vocational training courses at the state vocational training institute SENA and receive a nationally recognised diploma upon completion. We offer 225 one-year apprenticeships, for example as software programmers, administrative assistants or digital printers. The 278 short training courses, e.g. as fashion saleswomen, security guards or construction workers, last between 2 and 4 weeks.

Soft skills training

Under the guidance of social workers, the young adults improve their soft skills and practise how to deal professionally in everyday working life and in job interviews. In addition, the beneficiaries learn how to make their application file more visually appealing.

Project location

Colombia, Bogotá - Ciudad Bolívar, Rafael Uribe Uribe, Tunjuelito, Suba, Kennedy and Santa Fe districts.

Topics

Vocational training, labour market integration, coming to terms with the past, peacebuilding, social participation

Programme

«Bridge to working life»

Duration

2022 - 2024

Project budget

CHF 740'754

Vivamos Mejor

Thunstrasse 17, 3005 Bern
Zurich office
Ausstellungsstrasse 41
8005 Zurich

info@vivamosmejor.ch
www.vivamosmejor.ch
+41 31 331 39 29

Berner Kantonalbank | CH-3001 Bern
IBAN CH34 0079 0016 8757 8007 3

ZEW0-certified since 1992



Your donation
in good hands.

Impact

In 2018, in collaboration with the University of Lausanne and the Colombian Universidad de los Andes, we launched a robust randomised trial to measure the medium-term impact of our intervention on the lives of young adults. With its study design, *Vivamos Mejor 2020* was the first Swiss aid organisation to win the Impact Award of the SDC and ETH/NADEL for the second time. Initial results have shown that psychosocial support enables the development of skills to cope better with challenges in both the professional and private spheres. Final results are expected to be available from mid-2022 and will subsequently be published in specialised journals and presented to relevant institutions in Switzerland and Colombia.

For more information on the impact of our work, please visit www.vivamosmejor.ch/en/impact

Our mission

With our «Bridge to working life» programme, we ensure that socially disadvantaged young adults have access to vocational training, the formal labour market and social participation.

Our vision

Internally displaced and socially vulnerable young adults should have the same opportunities for a dignified and successful professional future as their peers from more privileged backgrounds, regardless of their origin. As enlightened citizens, they should actively exercise their rights and obligations and help to shape society and build peace.

Job placement and accompaniment

A social recruitment agency establishes contacts with companies in order to place the graduates in suitable jobs. Social workers accompany the young adults during the first six months on the job and mediate in case of difficulties.

Psychosocial support

In professionally supervised group workshops, the young people work on their social behaviour and self-esteem and learn how to deal constructively with their feelings. The workshops are complemented by individual psychological support.

Participation and peacebuilding

In workshops, participants learn about the Colombian political system and their rights and obligations as citizens. They also learn tools geared towards a more conflict-free coexistence and violence prevention.

Dissemination of the vocational training model

We support our partner organisation in systematically processing and disseminating their successful approach. In this way, it can forge new alliances and encourage emulation so that a higher proportion of marginalised youth can gain access to vocational training.

Target group

Directly: 600 young adults

Indirectly: 3'300 family members

Costs

The project budget is CHF 740'754. We count on companies, cantons, foundations and municipalities for funding. The project is co-financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA, as part of the programme contribution.

Own contributions and local contributions

These are worth CHF 112'235 and are not included in the total costs. SENA finances the vocational training courses. Other local actors contribute to rental costs as well as electricity and telephone costs. The young adults contribute to the transport costs (approx. USD 1.20/day) to the initial workshops and help with the organisation of the various events and workshops (set-up and dismantling) free of charge.

Project partner on site

Vivamos Mejor's direct project partner is the grassroots Colombian NPO «Volver a la Gente». It employs professional local staff and is very familiar with the context. The team has many years of experience and proven competences in the education and placement of marginalised young adults and actively represents their interests with the authorities. Our partner organisation is recognised for its work in the project regions and boasts good networks.

Impressions from the previous project



Social workers discuss with a beneficiary the education that matches his skills and interests.



The trainees learn to make their application files visually appealing and to research for jobs.



In workshops, the young people ask themselves what peace means and what contribution they can make to it.



View of a sewing factory: A former project participant at her workplace as a seamstress.