



Fit for the job: work and peace education for internally displaced young people

Project background

Bosa Occidental is one of the poorest districts of Bogotá, Colombia. Over 90% of the population lives in poverty. Many suffer from the memory of traumatic experiences of war. Social cohesion is weak. Young people are particularly badly affected as they have very few opportunities for education and work. They are vulnerable targets for armed gangs who promise them much.

Our experiences show that young people with vocational training and competent support throughout are able to find stable work. In the last three years we have been able to help over 200 young people in Bosa to find a job which earns them a stable living. We would like to build on this success.

Project goals

220 vulnerable and internally displaced young people from Bosa Occidental earn a living through gainful employment.

- 220 young people have a professional qualification and earn a living in a stable job.
- 220 young people address their violent experiences and learn how to deal with their emotional problems.
- 220 young people are socially engaged and make a peaceful and violence-free contribution within their family and neighbourhood.

Project activities

Vocational education for young adults

220 young people graduate with a nationally recognised vocational education. We only offer courses which are in demand in the flourishing job market of Bogotá, for example bookkeeping, administration, childcare, IT and HR administration.

Additionally we also work with the young people on their social skills necessary to integrate successfully into the workplace. We work on key skills such as reliability, punctuality and the ability to deal with conflict. Furthermore, they also learn how to put together an appropriate application portfolio. The project team also prepares them for job interviews

Psycho-social support

Many young people suffer from traumatic experiences of the war. They live in difficult family circumstances and have trouble forming strong social relationships. Accompanied by experienced specialist social workers they work on their social behaviour and their sense of self-worth. The team actively involves the families in this process and helps with common conflicts. In this way we support the young people to develop realistic life goals.



Colombia
Bosa, Bogotá

Project location

District of Bosa Occidental in Bogotá, Colombia

Themes

Professional education, work market integration, dealing with the past, community development, self-help assistance

Program

Education: Bridges to School and Work

Duration

2017-2019

Budget

CHF 528'694

What do we stand for at Vivamos Mejor

Independent and direct

Vivamos Mejor, a Swiss charity with no political or religious affiliations, has been working to improve living conditions in Latin America for 35 years. We have long-term partnerships with local NGOs who work directly with motivated and proactive beneficiaries with limited means. Thanks to our financing, the partner NGOs implement sustainable projects, involving local authorities who also share some of the responsibility. Our beneficiaries receive an initial helping hand, but right from the start they do much of the work themselves to establish an independent foundation. After the conclusion of the project, beneficiaries and local stakeholders continue the work independently.

Focussed and professional

Our projects focus on water and education but also include gender issues and community development. We prepare young children for school, support young people with labour market integration, and instruct small-scale farmers in sustainable methods of managing their natural resources including water, forests and land. Vivamos Mejor encourages beneficiaries and partner organisations to share their knowledge.

Efficient and transparent

Vivamos Mejor is a member of Swiss Solidarity. We monitor target achievement and measure the impact of our work in conjunction with Swiss and local universities. Vivamos Mejor was the winner of the 2016 Impact Award from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the NADEL Centre for Development and Cooperation (ETH-NADEL).

We guarantee a transparent use of funds by regularly visiting local projects, as well as expecting that the local partner organisations submit operational reports and are independently audited. The Swiss accounts are independently audited by BDO AG. We operate a lean business model and we only spend as much money in Switzerland as is necessary to ensure that our work is carried out professionally and efficiently.

Vivamos Mejor

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Integration into the job market

A local recruitment office assists the qualified young people to find stable jobs with a guaranteed minimum wage and the necessary social insurance. Placement staff remain in contact with the young people and their employers during the probation period and provide support with any difficulties..

Target group

Direct: 220 young people aged between 17 and 25.

Indirect: 1000 family members

Costs

The total budget payable by Vivamos Mejor amounts to CHF 489,560. For this financing we depend on contributions from companies, cantons, foundations, local councils and church councils.

Local contributions

The young people pay 150 Swiss francs for their diploma. This is a high figure taking into account their personal circumstances and means.

Project results

- 68 young people have completed their vocational training, 28 have already found a formal employment.
- 56 young people were trained in political topics. 68 young people received a state certificate as "peace actors".

- 35 parents regularly participated in the various workshops.

Results from an Impact Study

An impact study of the previous projects carried out by the Universität St. Gallen (HSG) concluded that the effects were substantial and that donated funds had been used efficiently. When compared to income before the project, women's earnings was almost double that of those in a control group. The probability of being employed rose by 48%. The women involved in the project were more satisfied on average with their work, their salary and other benefits, whilst the control group saw a slight change for the worse.

Local project partner

Vivamos Mejor works together with a local grassroots organisation in each country and only uses experienced and qualified local staff. Our long-term project partner in Colombia is the "Fundación Apoyar", which was founded in 1989 and is headquartered in Bogotá. They are responsible for the operational implementation of the project as well as for liaising with state authorities. Apoyar works with results-oriented monitoring instruments and employs a fully transparent accounting system.

Project impressions



Future preschool educators in training.



Social workers offer psychosocial support.



After his professional training in administration Jefferson found a job in the Secretariat for Planning of the City of Bogotá.

