

Evaluation object: The final evaluation was conducted between December 2021 and March 2022 and assessed the achievements of the above mentioned, BMZ co-funded project at the Centro Juvenil Don Bosco in Managua (CJDB). It aimed at the improvement of the living conditions of marginalized youths between 15 and 30 years through labor market integration (as employees or entrepreneurs). Main activities were creation and accreditation of 5 new service oriented trades, modernization of motor mechanics workshop, implementation of soft and life skills workshops, strengthening of the job placement office, capacity development for trainers, institutional networking and career guidance for graduates.

Evaluation methodology: The final evaluation is based on a mixed-methods approach with analysis of qualitative and quantitative data. The evaluation team applied mainly secondary data analysis, individual interviews with project staff and beneficiaries as well as group discussions, site visit and questionnaires. Around 130 key informants were interviewed remotely or in person, depending on availability.

Key findings (in line with OECD-DAC Criteria)

☞ **Relevance:** The project identified the needs of young people well and responded to the political and socioeconomic context appropriately, responding to the policies of the national and regional agendas. The approach to areas such as labor intermediation and insertion, training of entrepreneurs could have been better.

☞ **Effectiveness:** Most of the outcomes have only partially been achieved. The biggest challenge is to find employment for young graduates, whose percentage is still very low with 25%. Nevertheless, enrollment for the new trades has been over achieved (goal: 479, actual: 561), 65% of the students graduated, 38% made an internship and 5% are self-employed.

☞ **Coherence:** The project was not fully compatible with other interventions in the country, sector or institution. The project established synergy with some civil society organizations, and with companies, this contributed to the achievement of the goals. These synergies could have been better to avoid duplication, for example joining the Alliance for youth employment in Nicaragua. The coherence with the government sector was very punctual only with INATEC, for the certification of courses. We have already mentioned how difficult it is to work with the government sector in Nicaragua.

☞ **Efficiency:** According to the donor and the audits, the management of funds was transparent, and the information was delivered in due time. It was impossible to assess the efficiency in terms of costs per young graduate, since there is no data for this calculation. In terms of efficiency, it could be concluded that the distribution by items in the budget did not correspond to the needs for meeting goals, especially concerning labor market integration.



☞ **Impact:** The evaluation team finds positive impact in most areas, especially in the professional technical training of young people and in strengthening the capacities of the CJDB. The impact to the lives of the students and graduates cannot comprehensively be assessed at this point in time, but the likelihood of getting a job, which eventually improves the quality of life of the young people, has definitely increased through the project, which undoubtedly has repercussions on the probability of getting a job in improving their quality of life.

☞ **Sustainability:** In relation to sustainability, there are undoubtedly effects that are sustainable, such as those related to the development of capacities at the individual level of young students and employees of the CJDB and at the organizational level in the CJDB. Those linked to institutional sustainability are also sustainable. The positive impacts could be maintained if certain adjustments are made to the training processes and, above all, to the process of intermediation and labor insertion. CJDB is required to have a fundraising and sustainability strategy.



Everything mentioned above in relation to effectiveness and efficiency must be analyzed considering that the project was executed in adverse framework conditions that limited its operation. Therefore, it is difficult to make an exact balance of effectiveness and efficiency. This environment refers to the situation generated by the political crisis of 2018 and the COVID-19 pandemic. Both phenomena constituted inescapable obstacles that negatively affected the management of the project. Risk mitigation strategies of CJDB was always positive, looking for alternatives to overcome them and continue the execution for the achievement of the goals.

Major Recommendations of the Evaluation Team:

⚙️ **Cooperation** - The necessary strategic alliances must be ensured before starting the project implementation process, or at least have a written commitment of shared interest in the subject and collaboration. In the same line, estimate time and resources are necessary when the processes involve the participation of other actors and require a preparation phase.

⚙️ **Project Management** - The budget must be in correspondence with the expected scope of the results and indicators so that the funds assigned in the budget to each result allow their achievement. The indicators must be formulated as measurable, achievable, or realistic, with a results orientation. The quality of planning needs to be improved, it is suggested that it should do participatory planning.

⚙️ **Training** - Strengthen the training model for young people considering a holistic approach that includes the development of personal and technical skills: professional technical training, entrepreneurship, job service and post-training support and business establishment, designing training processes.



⚙️ **Internships** - It is necessary to clarify the objectives of the internships and define straightforward processes for all stakeholders (student, company, and school). It is, further, not permissible for young people to undertake unpaid internships of up to 3 months, it goes against the principles of decent work.

⚙️ **Capacity Development** - To achieve technical and operational sustainability, it is necessary to strengthen the job service/placement office with human resources and with knowledge and technology resources, as well as hiring personnel with experience in monitoring and in entrepreneurial training and support.

⚙️ **Sustainable Venture Capital** - If it is planned to include entrepreneurial training, it must be considered that these are training and accompaniment processes that require sufficient resources and time. Young people in vulnerable conditions are not subject to credit by the financial system. Seed funds are required to succeed in setting up entrepreneurship. Otherwise, it is better to narrow down the scope of the project.

Who we are

By providing comprehensive education and vocational training, Don Bosco Mondo e.V. particularly supports disadvantaged children and adolescents in Africa, Asia, Latin America, enabling them to live independent lives. The reliable partners in this endeavour are the Salesians of Don Bosco. With over 7,000 children and youth centres in more than 130 countries, Don Bosco provides young people with knowledge, skills, and orientation. The “Don Bosco Pedagogy” is synonymous for loving care and professional support. It does not only help young people to develop confidence in their own capabilities, but also conveys values as creativity, team spirit, tolerance, and respect.

Get in touch!

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