

Extra PD-ABQ-180  
NICA Eval. Mid Term 96541

**Non-formal Vocational Education: Youth and the  
National Reconstruction of Nicaragua (524-0310).**

MID-TERM EVALUATION PREPARED BY SALESIAN MISSIONS, MARCH 1992.

**I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

This emergency project was identified in May 1990 and negotiated in September 1990. The grant was made effective and obligated September 28, 1990 and the project was initiated October 1, 1990. The closing date is March 31, 1993.

The development objective the project was designed to meet is the crisis experienced by young adults in Nicaragua as a consequence of ten years of civil war and economic destruction. Not only do young people not have skills permitting them to earn a decent living, but they have also lost (or never had the chance to acquire) moral and civic values. The chances of them developing as responsible members of society contributing to the economy are therefore very slim. The project finances short-term training for productive employment as well as civic education.

The purpose of the evaluation is to use process indicators to evaluate efficiency and effectiveness in execution of project activities and to review impact through identifying the benefits of the project in relation to the lives of the students and the institutions implementing the project. This is a mid-term evaluation, so recommendations for mid-term corrections are incorporated in the conclusions below. Observations pertinent to future emergency reconstruction projects are in the conclusions and recommendations sections of this executive summary. Issues of sustainability are addressed in the conclusion of the evaluation.

The study method adopted has been: (i) review of project office materials and information; (ii) analysis of experience gained through regular project monitoring visits, regular site visits and interviews with key personnel; and (iii) Job Market survey agreed upon between U.S.A.I.D./Managua and Salesian Missions and financed under the project to address the issue of employment and employability of project trainees given the continuing deterioration of the national and local economies.

The principal findings are as follows:

- insufficient attention was given initially to marketing project courses directly to returning combatants, so the majority of trainees seeking to enroll come from sources traditional to

Salesians. While many are ex-combatants, a proportion of students are younger than the proposed age range and are school dropouts;

- 8,404 students are projected to graduate rather than the 7,370 planned;

- While women's employment opportunities are more restricted than those of men, both in the formal and informal sectors in Nicaragua, the project targets reached will comprise three quarters women and one quarter male graduates;

- neither the formal nor the informal sectors of the economy will provide paid work or unpaid work placement in the short and long term because of the economic crisis which continues in Nicaragua. The target of 60% of trained graduates in paid employment by the end of the project is therefore infeasible;

- student information systems and curricula need attention;

- an opportunity exists to develop a practical and social skills-oriented curriculum in office arts with the objective of enabling motivated and intelligent young women with little basic education to compete in the job market with better educated young women possessing more social skills and university training.

#### **Conclusions are as follows:**

- direct negotiations with ex-combatant organizations is necessary in order to attract more returning combatants to the program;

- now that the Job Center is well-established, a continuous effort to identify sources of work, to promote the concept and practice of unpaid work-placement in the formal and informal sectors and to train trainees in job-seeking, small business and interviewing skills should be maintained to the end of the project and, possibly beyond the end of the project. The effort should be directed through all five institutions;

- the Salesian communities in Nicaragua have responded effectively to the triple tasks of learning USAID project administration skills on the run, mounting a major education exercise from scratch and meeting project targets despite a six month delay in initiating the full range of courses;

- the Sisters should develop a nine-month office arts course teaching practical and social skills necessary for office work to the most poor young women;

- the project should advertise the need for and seek to place graduates in unpaid work placements in the formal and nonformal sectors of the economy in Masatepe, Granada and Managua;

- continuous attention to maintaining management information systems is needed to meet USAID requirements;
- the Salesians should offer basic education in literacy, numeracy and social skills as a pre-entry level course at each institution participating in the project.

Evaluation recommendations and lessons learned fall into two sections: project design and development objectives related to the most poor in Nicaragua.

### Project Design

1. Because the project was designed as an emergency response to the crisis situation and the reconstruction needs of the country, the time frame and project staffing did not allow adequately for provision of desirable activities in institutional development, staff orientation and training. These included the logistics of moving the Centro Juvenil Don Bosco from very limited activity to full-time, fully equipped large-scale activity. Project success in responding promptly to the emergency is attributable to Salesian commitment and competence.

#### Recommendation No.1

Projects designed for similar situations in the future should provide for adequate levels of staffing and skills for project management and a longer start-up period.

2. Three-month short courses were thought to be most appropriate to the concentration level of potential students, the amount of time the most poor students could deprive their family of their wage-earning capacity and adequate teaching of basic manual skills. Experience with students and with formal and nonformal sector employers is demonstrating that longer courses will be of greater benefit to the most poor in the present situation in Nicaragua.

Employers prize work experience and good quality skills. Formal I.Q. tests have revealed startlingly low levels of general and basic education which must be improved if students are to be trainable and employable. In both formal and informal sectors, employers are seeking employees with work experience and a wide range of skills. Also, in both sectors, trainees with three month course experience and poor social and basic education skills are competing for low level jobs with young people who have received good formal education and training to university level.

#### Recommendation No.2

Emergency reconstruction projects will continue to find the three-month course the most acceptable response to the immediate perceived needs of the most poor. The time horizon of people in most need is unlikely to extend beyond three months and

institutions can organize such programs at short notice with minimal problems. Experience shows, however, that an effective institutional response would also include: use of standardized tests to identify the baseline in basic education and skill levels; initial and continuing education in basic numeracy and literacy; providing easy access to continuing education in vocational or technical skills; public campaigns promoting job creation or programs providing work experience; and training of trainees in good work habits, self-marketing, basic entrepreneurship and interviewing skills.

3. With benefit of hindsight, there could have been a better fit between the development goals and activities of the project and the arrangements for serving the target group. More attention could have been given in project design to: (i) strategies for identifying and locating ex-combatants throughout the country, (ii) marketing the courses through their organizations, and (iii) distribution and setting up of courses in representative or in isolated geographic areas of the country in order to ensure proper coverage of young adults and ex-combatants. Courses are offered in Salesian schools. Those principally for women are offered in Granada and Masatepe. Granada is not an area with a high concentration of combatants. However, CJDB offers a range of courses for both sexes in an area of high settlement of ex-combatants. The Maria Mazzarello school, the other base in Managua, works with women only. Given the rapidly changing country situation and the political, time and personnel constraints, more detailed planning attention to the above considerations was not feasible, however.

#### Recommendation No.3

Design of future reconstruction projects should include a review of the geographic, social and political location of the target population and strategies for reaching them where they live.

#### Development Objectives and the Needs of the Most Poor

1. The most poor need paid employment. How to provide that in a declining economy and without creating dependency is a project design issue. It is also an economic and social issue. In the Nicaragua context, for example, neither the informal nor the formal sectors of the economy have been creating jobs for several years and unemployment is increasing. Therefore, the target of 60% of course graduates in paid employment by the end of the project must be adjusted.

#### Recommendation No.4

Nevertheless, in countries experiencing difficulties restarting the economy, job-creation ("empleo minimo") may be the necessary complementary development investment to the financing of a nonformal vocational education project. It is the only way to provide paid employment to the most poor. (Nicaragua small

enterprise development experience so far has demonstrated success mainly among highly skilled and well-educated workers.)

2. The most poor and the least educated need focused, repeated and good quality education and training in order to become contributors to the economy, their families and their country. The project inputs of vocational training, civic education and a job-search facility have proven insufficient to equip individuals to contribute to the economy. The assumption made in project design that jobs would become available to trainees has proved not to be correct because the economy (formal and non-formal sectors) is not creating a demand for skilled labour - - and less still for semi-skilled labour of the type trained under the project. In the special case of most poor women, the openings simply do not exist. The formal sector expects to employ only skilled and experienced adults in the short and mid term. In addition, unemployment is so high that the most poor are in unequal competition for the same jobs with individuals who have better educational levels and social skills.

#### Recommendation No.5

In investing in human capital, consideration should be given to including small business training and development, adult basic education, easy access to initial and continuing vocational and technical education and, job creation programs. In a developing country with an economy in crisis, investment in human capital and a combination of all the above inputs may be the development investment necessary until the economy begins to improve.

#### Lessons learned about the design and implementation of this type of development activity.

The following factors have contributed to the successful start-up and implementation of this project. It can be deduced that all would be required for a successful emergency reconstruction project:

- a backup organization experienced in A.I.D. project design and A.I.D. expectations during implementation, including accounting, procurement and other administrative tasks;
- a backup organization experienced in working with implementing organizations with little prior experience with A.I.D.;
- an implementing organization with the well-established networks at all levels of government, society and community which allow the speedy resolution of legal, financial, bureaucratic and other issues which is essential to fast execution of a project;
- an implementing organization with personnel well used to high levels of responsibility, undertaking complex organizational tasks and negotiating solutions internally and externally;

- an implementing organization willing to learn from mistakes;
- a highly focused implementing organization with buildings, trained and motivated personnel and a well-understood program to offer in a national emergency or national reconstruction.
- competent implementing organization personnel who have the ability to grasp complex issues quickly and develop pragmatic, solution-oriented approaches to problem solving.

## II. DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES:

### Economic, Political and Social Context of the Project

#### Economic Context:

In 1989, following ten years of Marxist-Leninist-oriented Sandinista government, a democratic government was elected. The economy was near total collapse. Expectations for an improved economy, better chances of employment and the improvement of the quality of life for the most poor were high. In March 1992 these are not fully met given the complexity of the internal and international political and economic situation. Inflation has been reduced through structural adjustment, but at the cost of jobs. Unemployment is calculated at 55% by some groups. At the same time the purchasing power of the cordoba has decreased, accentuating poverty and reducing the quantity of money in circulation. National production and exports have also declined.

The need for the project continues to be demonstrated, however:

(a) Large numbers of young people are entering the job market and open unemployment is highest among workers with low educational levels. Skilled workers have a better chance of getting a job. These findings are substantiated by the project job market survey conducted in February 1992 and covering the formal and informal sectors. One source (FIDEG) suggests the situation is more critical. Whereas in 1989 19% of those searching for work took six to nine months to find a job, in 1991 almost 50% took this length of time to find work. The informal commercial and services sector has expanded while the indications of open unemployment and underemployment continue to increase. These rose respectively from 5% to 18% and 21% to 43% between 1989 and 1991. (Fundacion Internacional para el Desafio Economico Global, January 1992).

(b) The informal sector provides the first and often the only source of work, particularly for urban women. According to FIDEG, 52% of those with work are in informal sector employment. Sixty percent of working women are occupied (or underoccupied) in this sector. Long term employment prospects in the informal sector are, however, very poor. While 50% of men and women surveyed had

been in work for a minimum of a year, only 22% had been there for two or three years.

(c) Poor people need to maximize their earning capacity simply in order to survive. FIDEG states that 68% of the women and 51% of the men actually employed earned less than one "canasta basica" (essential family purchases) of 53 products. Households headed by women are the norm in Nicaragua, yet only 10% of women in work earned the cash equivalent of two "canastas basica" from 1990 to 1991.

#### Political and Social Contexts:

The political and social context of the project was clear in early 1990. The country was entering a period of political transition with a fragile and depressed economy and the prospect of thousands of demobilized combatants returning home to compete for jobs with dismissed government employees, returning expatriates and young people leaving school in large numbers. Neither the ex-combatants nor the young people leaving school had had stability growing up. Education had been interrupted for everyone except expatriates so that education and training levels were poor. (Estimates of actual figures returning to the workforce are: Resistance 22,000; ex-military 50-70,000; repatriated 50,000; and government retirement 11,508 to June 1991). Creating employment and employability were priority reconstruction tasks. The project therefore focussed on employability of youth from 18-25 years of age and the most poor who are the target group served by Salesians worldwide. Women are 50% of the target population of the project. Ex-combatants were also expected to be major beneficiaries.

Salesians were selected to implement the project because of their existing educational facilities, their proven track record in Nicaragua and their middle of the road political position, which was expected to allow them acceptability to both sides of the political arena. The Minister of Education agreed to the development objective, approved the choice of Salesians and stated that the Ministry did not have the institutional capacity to meet emergency short-term needs of unskilled and unemployed young men and women whereas the Salesians did. MOE has since focused on the formal school system.

#### Family and Community

The social situation of urban poor and most poor young people at present is identified in a socio-cultural survey conducted from September to December 1991 by the Salesians (Padre Horacio Macal). It is representative of the capital city. The sample was 491 young people between 7 and 26 years of age taken from the

approximately 4000 participating in educational, sports and social activities at the Centro Juvenil Don Bosco, Managua. Of the sample, 75% were male.

Of the sample, 54% lived with both parents and 31% with their mother only; 68% originated in the capital city and 30% in the interior; 72% were studying and 21% were studying and working. Of the total sample, 22% had achieved primary education, 42% middle school education and 29% the level of bachillerato (high school graduates) or some equivalent beyond "educacion media." Of those surveyed, 54% had a monthly family income below 600 cordobas de oro (\$120). Father, mother and older brothers (jointly) are principal contributors to family income.

Almost 82% of the sample owned their homes, which are made of brick, block or wood (27%, 67%, 27%, respectively). Of the sample, 22.3% surveyed had access to all basic services and more than one room in their house.

The young people commented on problems in communication with their parents. They rated community problems with first priority as follows: drug addiction 21%; alcoholism 20%; truancy 19%; juvenile delinquency 16%; unemployment 10%. The low priority given to unemployment is probably because of the youth of many surveyed. Of the sample, 62% had a radio in the house, and 28% had T.V. Asked to name the problems of young people, the group surveyed identified unemployment, anxiety and alcoholism consistently in first, second and third orders of priority.

#### **Project Implementation Performance**

The Program Description (Attachment 2) of the Grant Agreement specifies targets in paragraph C as follows:

" Up to 7,370 youth trained in trades and skills adequate for their entry into the workforce. All participants will have completed courses with durations of between three and nine months.

" Up to 60% of trained youth (excluding dropouts) assisted by a follow-up job placement program and entering the active workforce where they will become productive members of Nicaraguan society.

" Up to 7,370 youth will receive democratic and civic training which fosters respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction to race, sex, language or religion.

" Produce and disseminate a manual for civic and moral education and conduct nonformal civic, sports and social activities involving no fewer than 50,000 youths through seven Salesian institutions throughout the country."



## Target One - Status

2,592 young people have been trained and have graduated from three-month courses in masonry, carpentry, cooking, computer use, sewing, electricity, plumbing, metal milling, typing, welding or lathe work. Of these, 1,830 are female and 762 are male.

520 young people have been trained and have graduated from six-month courses. Of these, 380 are female and 140 male.

250 young people have graduated from nine-month courses. Of these, 70 are female and 190 male.

This is a total of 3,362 young people who have been trained and have graduated from Salesian institutions up to March 31, 1992.

928 young people are in training on March 31, 1992, in three-month courses in typing, computer use, sewing and cooking. Of these, 813 are female and 115 are male.

445 young people are in training on March 31, 1992, in six-month courses in typing, sewing, carpentry, cooking, electricity and metal milling. Of these, 295 are female and 150 are male.

250 young people are in training on March 31, 1992, in nine-month courses in sewing, carpentry, metal milling and welding. Of these, 180 are female and 70 male.

By the end of the project, an additional 2,784 young people are expected to have been trained and to have graduated from three-month courses in typing, computer use, sewing and cooking. Of these, 2,489 are expected to be female and 295 male.

Also by the end of the project, an additional 445 young people are expected to have been trained and to have graduated from six-month courses in typing, sewing and carpentry. Of these, 295 are expected to be female and 150 male.

Again, by the end of the project, an additional 190 young people are expected to have graduated from nine-month courses in carpentry, sewing and welding. Of these, 70 are expected to be female and 120 male.

3,560 females and 1427 males (total 4,987) have been trained or are in training. The projected total target is 8406, 1,036 higher than the target in the Grant Agreement.

#### Target Two - Status

As of March 31, 1992, between 3% and 5% of trained youth (excluding dropouts) are in the active workforce. As of the same date, 600 young people have received training from the Job Center in entrepreneur business courses.

To March 31, 1993, 15% of trained youth (excluding dropouts) are expected to be placed in unpaid work placement in the nonformal sector of the economy.

#### Target Three - Status

As of March 31, 1992, 4,985 youth have received democratic and civic education.

To March 31, 1993, 8,404 young people are expected to have received democratic and civic education.

#### Target Four - Status

As of March 31, 1992, 45 master copies of the Democracy Education Manual have been printed for the use of the instructors of the different courses of the project.

To March 31, 1993, 103 copies are expected to have been printed and used by the teachers.

On average in any one month, 4,000 young people make use of the Centro Juvenil Don Bosco for recreation, clubs, sports and nonformal civic education activities. Comparable figures for the other Salesian facilities are about 5,000 young people in any one month.

The Grant Agreement also specifies numbers and types of courses.

Tables below specify achievements to March 31, 1992.

**Achievements by numbers and subject matter of courses.**

**STUDENT GOALS BY COURSE PERFORMANCE**

**NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS**

Course	CJDB Goal	(a)	(b)	Sisters Goal	(a)	(b)	Total Goal	Total (a)	Total (b)
Masonry	120	60	60	---	---		120	60	60
Carpentry	240	120	60	160	80	40	400	200	100
Cooking	---	---	---	480	100	75	480	100	75
Sewing	300	140	70	960	380	220	1260	520	290
Electricity	300	150	50	---	---	---	300	150	50
Plumbing	120	---	---	---	---	---	120	---	---
Metal Milling	170	30	20	---	---	---	170	30	20
Typing	1080	600	320	1200	212	48	2280	840	668
Welding	280	120	80	---	---	---	280	120	80
Metal Lathing	240	30	20	---	---	---	240	30	20
Totals	3,930	1,850	600	3,440	1,012	1,023	7,370	3,362	1,623

(a) Number of graduated youth as of February 28, 1992

(b) Number of students currently enrolled

Achievements by numbers of students and by institution (March 31, 1992).

## **Beneficiaries**

The Grant agreement refers only to youth aged 18 - 25. The project document specifies that beneficiaries were expected to be 7,370 persons and that most of the participants would be older teenagers. Younger students could, in exceptional circumstances be accepted, especially into the nine-month courses at the Centro Juvenil Don Bosco. Fifty percent of beneficiaries were expected to be women: the four schools run by nuns would attract mainly women and about 15% of CJDB students were also expected to be women.

Several issues have arisen in course of project implementation:

### **Concentration of students in the lower age range.**

Parents from the poorest families are bringing 12- to 15-year-old students (boys in particular) to the Centro Juvenil Don Bosco hoping to enroll them in technical training so that they can begin contributing to the family income as soon as possible. Most are not accepted because their manual dexterity, maturity and concentration levels make the machinery too dangerous for them to work on. Exceptional cases would be, for example, the oldest son of a very poor family provided personality, dexterity and intelligence level were promising. This has always been the policy of the Centro Juvenil Don Bosco which focusses on the most poor and abandoned young people.

It is not surprising to find 12-, 13- and 14-year olds seeking admission to nonformal vocational and technical training courses offered under this project. Throughout Latin America, desertion statistics reach 40% in the final years of primary education in the poorest areas. Young girls and boys begin to earn a living around 8 years of age - particularly those in the poorest parts of the country. Centro Juvenil Don Bosco fixed the lower limit at 15 years of age. The average student age is 18.

Acceptance of students of this younger age range into basic technical education was routine in USA and Europe up to 20 years ago and is routine for Salesians and other non-formal training institutions in developing countries.

The demand for training is coming primarily from young people who have recently left school or who will soon leave school, rather than from the demobilized ex-combatants.

There was a strong expectation that the majority of trainees in CJDB (approximately 50% of the project target) would be ex-combatants. It is not clear whether this is the case. Observation of trainees at graduation ceremonies suggests there are few men in the upper age range (who might be assumed to be ex-combatants). Salesians who have interviewed candidates for

admission to courses say applicants are reticent to answer questions on past allegiances and past activities. Salesians also say however, that attitudes and vocabulary observed in discussion groups demonstrate that there are many adherents and ex-combatants of the left and the right.

A special survey of students conducted by Salesian Missions in January 1992 to address the issue bears out the first observation. The majority of respondents simply did not answer or answered no to questions on military affiliation. The table below summarizes the findings of the survey. The results are inconclusive because of noncooperation of respondents and since individuals in the upper age range also include, older women taking advantage of typing, computer, cooking and sewing classes.

With hindsight it is clear that Salesian advertising is attracting the traditional Salesian clientele (which includes ex-combatants), but that a special promotional effort would have been necessary to reach more ex-combatants. As history has unfolded it is clear the promotional effort would have included: mass media and personal meetings with political groups and organizations working for the demobilized and, possibly, the municipalities. Inevitably, to meet the demand which would have emerged, the program would have had to include courses offered in a variety of locations outside the Salesian settings in Managua, Granada and Masatepe. This would have meant changes in project design, acquisition of additional training sites, relocation of equipment and tools, reallocation of personnel and an increased management workload. Since January, and in order to meet the needs of more ex-combatants, the Project Director and Coordinator are advertising through radio and the press and meeting with ex-combatant organizations.

There follow a series of tables on project beneficiaries studying in January 1992 relating to the above discussions. Totals do not equal totals of students studying and enrolled.

JANUARY 1992  
CENTRO JUVENIL DON BOSCO  
Age Distribution of Students

Class	Total Class	Age 15-17	18-19	20-25	26-30
Welding a.m.	27	22	2	3	
Welding p.m.	24*	15	2	5	
Lathe work a.m.**	41*	27	4	3	
Lathe work p.m.***	26	20	1		
Milling a.m.	27*	18	6	2	
Milling p.m.	26* (1, 14 yrs.)	23	1		
Carpentry 1 a.m. Carpentry 2	25 (2, 14 yrs.) 6	16 6	6	1	
Carpentry 1 p.m. Carpentry 2	15	9 4	1 2	4	
Sewing a.m.	22	no data	no data	no data	no data
Sewing p.m.	32	"	"	"	"
Electricity a.m.	20	"	"	"	"
Electricity p.m.	23	"	"	"	"
"Ajuste" **** a.m. Basic mechanics	27	21	3	1	
"Ajuste" p.m.	15	10	5		
Typing 1 a.m. Typing 2 a.m.	30 30	no data	no data	no data	no data
Typing 3 p.m. Typing 4 p.m.	30 30	"	"	"	"
Graphic arts***** Years 1, 2, 3	9,10,10	18	2	5	
Computers 1	30	no data	no data	no data	no data
Computers 2	29	"	"	"	"
Computers 3	30	"	"	"	"
Computers 4	30	"	"	"	"

- \* Difference in total due to ages not registered
- \*\* Two 13 years, three 14 yrs. in addition
- \*\*\* Two 13 years, three 14 yrs. in addition
- \*\*\*\* Two 14 yrs. in addition
- \*\*\*\*\* Four 14 yrs. in addition

Table Evidence of ex-combatant status of beneficiaries.

**CJDB JANUARY 1992**  
**CENTRO JUVENIL DON BOSCO SPOT SURVEY**  
**Ex-Combatant or Other Status and**  
**Religious Background of Students**

Specialty Course	Resistance		Military Service		In Hiding		Refugees		Out of Country	Religion (See below)				Sub-total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		C*	JW*	E*	O*	
Computer	1		10	—	1		1	—	3	64		3	4	71
Typing			5	—						71	1	2	2	76
Carpentry	1				2				1	17		4	3	24
Sewing										13		3	6	21
Milling			2	—						12			1	13
Lathe work			4	—			1	—	3	25		1	3	29
Welding	1		4	—	1		1	—	2	21		3	5	29
Mechanics														
Cooking														
Electricity	1	—	7	—		—		—	4	27		1	2	30
Construction	1		4		1		2		2	16	2	2	6	26
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>309</b>

\*C = Catholics

JW = Jehovah's Witness

E = Evangelicals

O = Others (Comprises 27 No religion, 1 Bahai, 2 Believers, 2 Atheists)

**WOMEN'S INSTITUTIONS**  
**1991**  
**Sample Age Distribution**

Class	Total in Class	Age 15-17	18-19	20-25	26-30	31-40	41-50
Colegio Maria Auxiliadra, Granada							
Typing A1	22 (4 aged 14)	10	4	4			
Typing B1	37 (16 aged 14)	13	3	5			
Computers A I a.m.	21	4	4	13			
Computers A II p.m.	21	4	2	15			
Computers B I a.m.	20	1	2	17			
Computers B II p.m.	20	2	2	16			
Colegio Maria Auxiliadra, Masatepe							
Typing Sept.-Dec. 1991	35	no information					
Sewing Sept.-Dec. 1991	45	"					
Sewing Sept.-Nov. 1991	21	"					



WOMEN'S INSTITUTIONS  
 INSTITUTO PROFESIONAL MARIA AUXILIADARA - GRANADA  
 Age Distribution of Students  
 1991 - 1992

	Total in Class	Age 13-15	16-17	18-19	20-25	26-30	31-40	41-50
<u>Sewing</u>								
March - Aug. 1991	25	7	6	4	5	1	1	---
Sept. - Dec. 1991	22	6	4	1	1	0	3	---
Jan. - March 1992	35	22	8	---	---	3	2	---
<u>Cooking</u>								
March - Aug. 1991	17	5	---	2	8	1	1	---
Sept. Dec. 1991	26	11	11	---	1	4	---	---
Jan. - March 1992	20	8	3	4	2	3	---	---
<u>Typing</u>								
March - Dec. 1991	17	2	4	5	6			
Group Two 1991	27	7	9	4	6	1		
Group Three 1992	37	27	7	1	1	1		
TOTALS	226	95	52	21	30	14	7	

\*Totals will not total across because some ages were not registered.

**MARIA MAZZARELLO - MANAGUA SPOT SURVEY**  
**Age and Demobilization Status of Students**  
**January 1992**

N.B. Numbers in Each Age Range Not Accurate Representation of Total Number of Students or of Number Sampled

	Age* 15-17	18-19	20-25	26-30	31-40	40+	Demobilization		
							Resistance	Sandinista	No Answer
Cooking	4	3	2	1	5	1	---	---	20
Computers	7	22	44	14	9	---	1	---	94
Sewing*	18	4	2	3	3	---	---	---	35
Typing	80	51	25	12	2	---	2		216**

\* Cooking      Four 13-14 yrs. old  
 Sewing        Five below 15 years  
 Typing        Twenty-one 13 years  
                   Twenty-five 14 years

\*\* +1 Refugee  
 +1 Left the country

**Course Content**

At the design and early implementation stages, there appears to have been universal overestimation of the academic level of the target group, the volume of work that could be undertaken in the teaching time allotted and the range and level of skills that could be achieved by trainees over a three month period. Adjustments began in October 1991 with the arrival of a replacement project coordinator. The Salesians are to be commended for finding a replacement project coordinator who is a specialist in education theory and practice and an experienced researcher, evaluator and teacher trainer.

The adjusted curricula are skill-based rather than career position-based. The original curricula listed skills that would be expected of an individual filling an apprenticeship or assistant position. A comparison of the course content outlined in the project proposal and the course outlines attached as Annex E shows: a reduction in the range and complexity of operations expected to be taught; serious attention to the time allocated to teaching each operation and the associated theory and a modular approach to the curriculum. In general, the adjusted course outlines seek to impart a precise number of skills in a certain time.

The project proposal anticipated very low educational levels in the 18 to 25 year old age group of ex-combatants and individuals with interrupted education. Nevertheless, it did not include provision for adult basic education in the numeracy and literacy essential for training in mechanics and secretarial skills. Use

of the OTIS stratified sample survey to identify the Intelligence Quotient (I.Q.) of a sample of young people interviewing for computer and welding courses beginning January 1992 has revealed startlingly low levels throughout the 15 to 25 year old age range. Details are in Annex One.

The range of skills taught and offered to potential trainees continues to be adjusted to the reality of their educational level and the teaching time available. Teacher orientation held in January 1992 following a full year of experience with this special group of trainees focussed on upgrading teacher understanding of definition of student learning goals, methodologies of evaluation of student skills achieved and, the concepts informing modular curricula. Future teacher orientation will address the issue of adjusting course content and educational goals and objectives to the educational and skill level of the students as measured during admission interviews.

A complete three-year course offering has been constructed from the courses financed by USAID in CJDB where a core group of students (360 by the end of the project) are rotating through a variety of options on a three year cycle comprising:

Year One: one semester of welding and one semester of basic mechanics;

Year Two: two semesters of lathe work with wood and metal;

Year Three: two semesters of metal milling.

All applicants are offered options within the list of courses originally proposed, though these are now divided with USAID agreement into three and nine month options as follows:

Three-month courses:

Computers  
Typing  
Masonry,  
Plumbing  
Electricity

Nine-month courses  
General Mechanics including  
Welding  
Basic Mechanics (Ajuste)  
Lathe work  
Metal milling  
Graphic Arts  
Sewing and Tailoring

#### Carpentry

Moral and Civic Education are taught each week to all students, once as a special subject using materials developed with USAID funding for primary and secondary education in the schools and every day as part of the morning or afternoon reflection and address given to the different shifts. The content covers moral and civic issues, democracy education, current events in life, study, Nicaragua and the world and personal ethics. The project director has written a manual on democracy education which is printed, distributed and used by teachers in participating institutions.

Practical orientation in democracy is provided by the Salesian system of promoting self-management among students. Class and group leaders are elected and trained in group process and management of selected tasks. The groups provide feedback through a student council and Saturday morning meetings which address areas of behavior, levels of student satisfaction or dissatisfaction and community issues.

#### Educational Workload by Institution

The project financing has enabled the Centro Juvenil Don Bosco to start functioning again to full capacity as a vocational and technical training institution for the first time in ten years. The Salesians have been able to resume their vocation of working with the most poor and full-time in technical education. CJDB teaches the widest range of courses and the Salesians there accept the management responsibility and tasks associated with project coordination and management. For the Sisters working in the other four participating institutions, participation in the project has added more tasks to a full workload which consists of teaching and managing day school, organizing and managing afternoon and weekend community development activities and the routine of the community.

The teaching workload is undertaken by paid staff, the management workload is shared between Salesians, Sisters and the project office staff hired for the purpose.

The educational workload was unevenly distributed between institutions in the design stage. CJDB as a specialist vocational institution offers 12 training options, only two of which would traditionally be open to women. The women's institutions are offering cooking, sewing, typing and computer training. These classes are in demand among the most poor and their children, particularly those with the lowest levels of formal education. The one carpentry class in Masatepe is having trouble recruiting and keeping students because of the local perception that it is inappropriate to have the workshop in a girls' school and because a rival course in a school nearby is actively recruiting students.

The four women's institutions are producing large numbers of typing and computer-trained students and beginning to develop nine month courses oriented to office skills. It is arguable that the quality of teaching is suffering because of the large numbers of students in one class, though this is not a major issue in self-learning classes like typing and computer use.

An opportunity may be missed to provide good quality office arts training to enable the poor women to compete with university and private-school trained more affluent young women in the job market. However, detailed work needs to be done to develop a good, practical office arts curriculum adjusted to the modern office machinery and techniques for Nicaragua. For poor students with minimum social and basic education skills, additional education and training time would be needed.

### **Project Implementation Performance**

This section focusses on four indicators of project implementation performance: keeping to the timetable; meeting project targets; institutional development and the effectiveness of the shared management model adopted for this project.

Keeping to the timetable.

The project was begun on October 1, 1990 as planned. Neither Salesian Missions nor the Salesian communities in Nicaragua are planning an extension. The goal is to meet or exceed teaching targets by the closing date of March 31, 1993.

Teaching the full range of courses was scheduled to begin in December 1990 in CJDB and in March 1991 in the Sisters' institutions. CJDB began teaching computer use and typing in December 1990 as scheduled, began half the full range of courses in April 1991 and fielded the full range of courses in August 1990, eight months late. The Sisters began offering most courses in March as scheduled.

The delay is attributable to two unrelated and unplanned occurrences: the need to invest in the equipment necessary to guarantee the electricity supply to the Centro Juvenil Don Bosco and slower than anticipated equipment procurement process. However, even if the equipment had been delivered by the end of February as originally planned, the full range of courses could not have been offered until the electricity supply was installed in CJDB and connected by the National Supply Corporation in late July 1991.

In developing the project, the electricity supply was thought to be sufficient for the additional machinery to be added to workshops in the CJDB. However, Nicaragua is continuing to experience electricity shortages and, in November 1990 it became clear the supply was becoming fluctuating, insufficient and never reliable enough to guarantee the safety of the lathe motors and computers. Three transformers and high tension wiring were installed, however, because of delay in delivering transformers from the USA, Siemens, the local contractor, finished installation in early July rather than in April as contracted.

Tools and equipment were to have been purchased and shipped by the end of February 1991. Computers and typewriters were installed on time by mid-December. Following competitive bidding in the USA, a procurement services agent was selected and contracted by early December 1990. In January 1991, a Salesian (who had been involved in completing remodeling work up to that date) travelled to Washington D.C. and worked with Salesian Missions to review the equipment lists and specifications. Bids and completion of purchasing took three months; packing and shipping four weeks. First shipments arrived in Managua in May, most equipment arrived by July 10, and was inventoried and distributed in two weeks. The final shipment arrived in early August. There were no problems with customs.

Other important time deadlines were met within a few weeks of the scheduled date. The project began as planned on October 1, 1990, the project office was installed, staffed and equipped at the end of November of the same year and teaching and auxiliary staff contracted by April 11, 1991, a few weeks later than scheduled. Classroom remodeling in the Centro Juvenil Don Bosco was scheduled to terminate in December 1990 and in the other institutions in February 1991. All remodelling, including unexpected additional work was completed by the end of February with the exception of typing and computer classrooms in Maria Mazzarello, Managua, which were completed by the end of March. Orientation training scheduled for March was held in early April. In-service training for teachers was not planned initially and was introduced in July 1991 and January 1992.

Meeting Overall Project Targets  
(as of February 28, 1992)

Masonry	CJDB-Managua	Target	6 courses, achieved	2
Carpentry	CJDB-Managua	Target	10 courses, achieved	6
	CMA-Masatepe	Target	8 courses, achieved	4
Cooking	IPMA-Granada	Target	16 courses, achieved	8
	Col M.M. Managua	"	16 courses, achieved	3
Computers	CJDB-Managua	Target	36 courses, achieved	20
	CMA-Granada	Target	16 courses, achieved	8
	Col MM Managua	"	16 courses, achieved	4
Sewing	CJDB-Managua	Target	10 courses, achieved	6
	IPMA-Granada	Target	8 courses, achieved	2
	CMA-Masatepe	Target	8 courses, achieved	6
	Col MM Managua	"	24 courses, achieved	7
Electricity	CJDB-Managua	Target	10 courses, achieved	6
Plumbing	CJDB Managua	Target	6 courses, achieved	0
Metal Milling	"	Target	10 courses, achieved	6
Typing	CJDB-Managua	Target	36 courses, achieved	20
	IPMA-Granada	Target	8 courses, achieved	4
	CMA-Granada	Target	8 courses, achieved	4
	CMA-Masatepe	Target	8 courses, achieved	4
	Col MM Managua	"	16 courses, achieved	4
Welding	CJDB-Managua	Target	10 courses, achieved	0
Metal Lathing	"	Target	10 courses, achieved	6

Institutional Development.

The experience gained in managing this project will serve Salesians well in managing future A.I.D. or other international donor-financed projects, particularly those with large program components. While Salesians have their own financial, inventory and other systems, the demonstration effect of the project has been to introduce and familiarize Salesians and Salesian Sisters with the range of financial management techniques demonstrated in the Guidelines for Financial Management for PVO's developed by USAID for use in Philippines: financial management reporting systems (including a simple computerized system (DAC 101)); general accounting systems, internal control systems for all project expenditures, activity-based financial planning, a budgetary system and application of the Standard Provisions of A.I.D. particularly in relation to inventory, procurement, contracting, competitive bidding and international procurement. Salesians have also internalized the concept of counterpart funding as well as regulations governing use of fees collected during the project.

Salesian Missions' management strategy has been continuous and close supervision of all aspects of the project through a pattern of regular visits to all project sites in Nicaragua. The same project manager and consultant accountant have been retained for the implementation period so that the institutional memory has been preserved and communicated both to the incoming Salesian Project Director who arrived in January 1991 and to the replacement Coordinator (an educational research specialist) who began work in January 1992.

The Salesians and the Salesian Sisters in Nicaragua have successfully mastered unfamiliar procedures making good use of backup provided by Salesian Missions personnel. Firstly, the five institutions collaborating on the project had no prior experience of managing projects working to the strict and stringent regulations of a donor agency. This has been achieved using backup, technical assistance and learning by doing. Secondly, the five institutions had never worked jointly on a project towards common goals. The necessary procedures for meeting, raising issues, solving problems and complying on management systems were developed in a very short time by the Salesians and the Sisters all in the context of financial management systems and the budget of the project.

In conclusion, the Salesians have also successfully learned project-related vocabulary and skills. The project management in Arlington, Virginia makes sure all discussions take place in the context of the project budget, meeting the project targets and agreements with A.I.D. The effects of this are that the directors and senior staff in all five institutions will have very little difficulty in formulating future projects in conceptual terms, in identifying and defining developmental activity targets, and in identifying and calculating investment and program costs. The only project development concepts and skills remaining to be taught are the concepts of the logical framework and measuring development impact.

Salesian Missions brought and applied the following skills to the project: project design, costing and negotiation, procurement and contracting, supervision and training of individuals unfamiliar with A.I.D. norms and procedures, ability to dialogue and represent the A.I.D. point of view in the traditional Salesian context and, project implementation experience and overview.

The Salesians and Salesian Sisters in Nicaragua brought and applied the following skills to project implementation: country knowledge, contacts and expertise, remodeling design, costing and supervision, excellent planning and implementation skills and experience in the field of management of vocational and technical education.



A Salesian Community operates autonomously within a country, raising its own funds from private and public sources, defining its own policies and plans and making its own financial decisions. Naturally, the following adjustments in attitude and procedures have to be made in the process of acting as implementing agency for a project financed by A.I.D.:

- operating within the conventions of project execution as a contractor answerable to an external financing organization;
- managing finances, procurement and inventory in accordance with U.S. Government regulations;
- allocating resources to expenditures which the Salesians would not normally consider priority, e.g., insurance and specialist staff;
- hiring specialist staff to manage an independent project office;
- meeting conventional detailed project reporting requirements;
- working in collaboration with and accepting the final authority of external agencies, i.e., the USAID and Salesian Missions.

Significant learning experiences have been:

- conceiving a project and writing it down with the help of a consultant as a project proposal and, as a result, planning and undertaking something much larger than might normally have been envisaged;
- successfully implementing the whole;
- responding speedily and constructively to an audit in December 1990 which identified serious problems in formal contracting and closeout procedures; accounting for petty cash; unorthodox procedures used by personnel for cash transfer and cash advances.
- delegation of work to paid experts such as specialists in proposal writing, procurement services; accountants; university level research;
- discovery of the multiplicity of steps and negotiations (transfer of funds from one budget category to another, resolution of procurement issues, local competitive bidding, drawing up and negotiating a contract (in line with Standard Provisions) required to install the electricity substation in the CJDB;
- working in collaboration with other experts in project implementation, reporting and technical areas;

- working to meet pre-defined targets;
- negotiating decisions with Salesian Missions and USAID.;
- accepting the novel institution of use of consultants;
- managing consultants through defining their tasks, collaborating on preparation of terms of reference, ensuring the consultant did the work and, following through on negotiated recommendations.

The adjustment has not been made and the results are not satisfactory in two areas: (i) It is taking time for the project office personnel to become integrated into the workforce of the Centro Juvenil Don Bosco, though they are accepted by the Directors of the Sisters' institutions. They are perceived as taking authority away from the Salesian managers of the Centro Juvenil Don Bosco. (ii) It is taking all the Salesian institutions some time to accept the necessity (for the first time) of producing performance data and accepting its usefulness.

#### Conclusion

Overall, the high risk strategy of Salesians learning as the project goes along has proven valid. Salesian institutional and implementation capacity has been demonstrated not only in the resourcefulness with which problems have been addressed and solved but in the speed with which the project was put together and executed. This is the place to note that in addition to executing the project:

- the five institutions learned to collaborate for the first time in order to meet project goals;
- in early 1991, in four weeks, the five institutions recruited over 400 candidates for interviewing for the first phase Georgetown Scholarship Program and provided Georgetown's staff office space and backup;
- the CJDB accepted and absorbed eight Peace Corps volunteers;

Effectiveness of the shared management model adopted for this project - lessons learned.

Salesian Missions works all over the world assisting Salesian communities in the planning and management of projects financed by USAID and other international donor and financing organizations. The conventional A.I.D. model for a P.V.O. project

is a U.S.-based agency which manages an office in-country. Policy, management and planning decisions are made largely in the U.S.A.. Project execution and routine administration are carried out in-country. Detailed country knowledge develops in the country office.

The traditional model described above is inappropriate to the situation of Salesian Missions and Salesian communities for the following reasons:

- The communities do not relate to SM in the way described;
- There is no formal institutional link between SM and the communities, so there is no authority or hierarchical relationship. Instead, the relationship has to be collegial.
- The SM objective is to seek like interests between USAID Missions and Salesians in country and to use its technical skills to backup local Salesian project proposal design, negotiation and execution. This is a resource and institutional development role.
- SM operates on a very low cost overhead, is a nonprofit organization and seeks to develop the project identification, management and evaluation skills in Salesians rather than handling them centrally.

#### Lesson One: Developing a collegial relationship:

Salesian communities in Nicaragua relate to the Provincial hierarchy based in San Salvador, El Salvador. Policy and other issues that cannot be defined and decided between SM personnel and the community are handled at the Provincial level.

Salesian Missions financed through project and non-project funds, both contractors and the salary of a staff member who have taken the community through the various stages of project implementation.

Through project funds SM has supported the following:

- technical assistance to provide expert and continuous help in responding to the audit report of February 1990, development of financial administration and inventory systems and introduction of the project accountant and senior Salesians to the mechanisms of financial planning, budget-based financial decision-making and use of a computer for maintaining and presenting inventory and accounts. This proved necessary given the lack of managerial and administrative skills among otherwise well-trained individuals whose working life has developed over the last 15 - 20 years in Nicaragua.

- use of technical assistance hired in Nicaragua for the special task of doing a job market survey in Managua, Granada and Masatepe. As in the case above, there was some initial resistance to hiring people to do a job Salesians may well have felt they themselves could accomplish. This is based on the Salesian vocation to work with the most poor and the parallel assumption that funds should go to that purpose only.

- also as in the case above, the technical and intellectual contribution made by the individuals hired was very much appreciated by Salesians once they were introduced to the conceptual framework and special expertise of these individuals. Financial planning, computer based accounting and the issues relating to training for the marketplace are now incorporated into the thinking of the individual Salesians, the practice of the community and the implementation of the project.

Lesson Two: External managers should work with Salesians to phase themselves out within the first year of project execution.

Having to use an external advisor on project implementation is never popular with local implementing agencies for reasons of autonomy, nationalism and institutional self-esteem. External advisors should work to phase themselves out and focus on backup, trouble-shooting and on executive decision-making when necessary. Key contributions have been:

Backup and trouble-shooting: report preparation always in consultation with the project office and Salesians; finding, hiring and preparing terms of reference for consultants; equipment purchase using A.I.D. procurement regulations and procedures; preparing time-lines and charts as reference points for Salesians initiating many complex activities simultaneously - especially in the initial period; bringing Salesians back to key points in project design; explaining the purposes and procedures of external organizations seeking collaboration such as the Peace Corps, Georgetown University Scholarship Program, etc; and acting as liaison until a relationship was built up; articulating the A.I.D. institutional perspective and requirements.

Executive Decision-making: raising the unfavorable audit report to the Provincial level and detailing all steps to be taken by Salesians, project staff and technical assistance contracted; authorizing essential additional expenditures; proposing amendments to project actions.

Lesson Three: Installation of a project office in the Salesian Community has not been fully successful.

Salesians are well-educated and highly motivated to acquire new skills. They have good reason to be reluctant to delegate important and unfamiliar functions to hired staff. Use of an external manager complemented by technical assistance in content

and skill areas unfamiliar to Salesians has proven the most appropriate strategy for institutional development. The Salesians have now acquired familiarity with the new knowledge and skills and are now in a position to decide in future projects which functions to delegate to existing or additionally hired staff and which to retain for themselves.

Lesson Four: Salesians need development education and training in project writing skills in order to become self-sufficient in project identification, preparation and dialogue with U.S. financing agencies.

In order to strengthen the development orientation of Salesians, Salesian Missions; together with Catholic Relief Services, is seeking to finance a 10-day project identification, management and evaluation course (including use of the log frame and objectively verifiable indicators) following the successful Salesian Missions model developed under its Cooperative Agreement with A.I.D..

#### Job Placement and Follow-up

Economic and Industrial conditions make it impossible to meet the project target of 60% of graduates "entering the workforce where they will become productive members of the Nicaraguan economy".

The Job Center (now called) Centro de Ubicacion Laboral was established in May 1991. Activities have been:

- 37 visits in 1991 to Managua employers resulting in an offer of six internships from Telco.
- visits to present the function of the Job Center and describe the productivity of the project to: Procon, Telcor, Esso, Shell, Nicalit, MCT, Texaco, Ministry of Labour, Director General for Employment, Eniplas, INSSBI, INCA, Encafe, Solca, Mibrinra, Laboratorios Rarpe, Siemens, IMEP, Rolter, Milca and Victoria Brewery.
- preparation and handing over to employers of a job-identification sheet for filing in the Job Center.

The Job Center has also worked on the following activities:

- completion of the employer database;
- collaboration with researchers on the job market survey;
- development and teaching of short courses for 600 students on how to look for a job, how to dress for an interview, how to

behave on the job, seeking a job and interviewing and how to maintain a conversation even when feeling socially inferior;

- meeting a target of 60 visits to potential employers;
- collaboration with Junior Achievement on developing a course for small business development to be taught to project trainees (600 to date).

Additional tasks have been:

- advertising the need for paid or unpaid jobs through press and radio;
- developing similar programs with the Sisters.

#### Job Market Survey

The Job Market Survey was conducted by a researcher on loan from the Nicaraguan Instituto Nacional de Administracion de Empresas assisted by two Nicaragua postgraduate students. Together with 16 trained CJDB volunteers they reviewed a range of official, local employer and street data on paid and unpaid work availability in Nicaragua in February 1992.

The research findings show little hope for jobs for skilled or semi-skilled workers, paid or unpaid in the short and medium term. Consequently Salesian Missions recommended abandonment of any project target level related to paid employment. Instead, on the basis of survey findings, Salesian Missions proposed:

- (i) Putting in place an unpaid work experience program with a target of 15% success in locating project graduates with a minimum of 15 non-formal sector employers identified through the job market survey.
- (ii) Intensifying support to the Job Center in order to improve employability of young graduates and also to maintain contact with possible employers in Granada, Masatepe and Managua.
- (iii) Diversifying the offering of three month courses into six and nine month courses without reducing the target of up to 7,370 youth trained by the end of the project.

#### Research methods and findings

The research methodology was to draw conclusions from: official data, a recent Salesian survey (OTIS standardized tests) establishing Intelligence Quotient (I.Q.) of Centro Juvenil Don Bosco applicants and, structured interviews with 154 non-formal and 23 formal sector employers in Managua, Granada and Masatepe.

The study found that employment possibilities had reduced in the last four years in Nicaragua. Future demand for employees in the formal sector would be for experienced individuals with formal qualifications and would depend on improvement in the economy in the short and long term. The nonformal sector had places for graduates of CJDB courses, but would not employ anyone until the economy improved - and not for the next year. Of the 154 nonformal employers interviewed in Granada, Masatepe and Managua, 98 said they would accept an apprentice in six month's time, of whom 34 would take someone unpaid for a short placement and 24 for a longer placement.

Options for young, poorly educated and nonformally trained young people are therefore: unemployment; unpaid work placement; continuing education and training; improvement in basic education and social skills and, possibly some participation in small business enterprise schemes. The executive summary, full report and complete recommendations of Salesian Missions are in Annex One.

The survey also found that project graduates were in competition for the same jobs in formal and nonformal sectors with better educated young people with better social skills. Father Macal's I.Q. study (February 1992) completed on all the applicants to computer and welding courses demonstrates the multiple disadvantages poverty brings to the search for employment. The sample demonstrated serious problems with spacial orientation, manual dexterity, social skills, vocabulary, literacy and numeracy together with lower than median I.Q. These were all attributable to poor environment and education. Salesian Missions concluded that basic education in literacy and numeracy as well as social skills would be needed in addition to good vocational training if the poor were to be able to (i) compete in the job market and (ii) make best use of nonformal vocational training on offer.

### Project Impact

Project Impact can be analyzed in relation to two factors: institutional development of the local Salesian communities and benefits accruing to the lives of the target population of the project.

Local Salesians have demonstrated they can implement large scale, high volume, emergency projects, keeping to the timetable and responding creatively to unforeseen circumstances. They have also demonstrated the ability to work with USAID. Salesians have become aware that there is a range of expertise in project thinking, definition of goals of vocational education and training, manpower planning, small business development, costing and accounting which goes beyond their already excellent

experience. Salesian technical experience has been applied to this project through serious and detailed sociological and educational attainment survey work, design and supervision of remodeling, development of technical teaching and educational program management

Young men and women trained in a skill have been exposed to civic and democratic education, discussion groups on many issues, self-management of class democracy and the social training and personality development imparted by the Salesian system. They have also been introduced to concepts of developing business plans, self-marketing and networking to find a job, improvement of social skills and how to interview effectively. This is all in addition to acquiring a skill taught over three, six or nine months.

Young men and women entering the project program have learned there are no jobs available to them immediately. They accept they need to continue to seek education or training in order to become employable in a depressed economy which is not producing jobs at present and where they are in competition with better educated and trained individuals for the same job.

#### Sustainability

The effects of the project which are likely to become sustainable development impacts are:

- equipping of CJDB and the four Sisters' schools for young adult and adult continuing education and training. Teaching will continue for the foreseeable future on five sites in Nicaragua;
- the understanding of the project identification, design and implementation cycle gained by the Salesians;
- the orientation and training experienced by teachers paid under the project;
- the understanding of the issues of manpower planning, employability, job market analysis and training young people to market themselves gained from technical assistance by young people and by Salesians;
- the orientation to project-specific financial planning and management gained by the Salesians;
- the skills acquired by young men and women;
- the social and educational benefits gained by young people through participation in classes with individuals from many backgrounds;



- the learning derived from exposure to discussion of civic, moral and democratic issues.

The project was designed as an emergency response to the lack of training and training programs in the country following demobilization. It was not designed as a manpower planning or job creation project. Development impact is therefore specified in terms of the impact on participating institutions and participating individuals and not in terms of jobs created or jobs obtained as a result of participation in the project.

Nevertheless, the failure of the economy to provide the expected jobs raises a development issue. One of the most difficult issues in development financing and the design of vocational education projects is what are the costs and what are the necessary inputs to rendering the least advantaged employable or financially viable and, additionally, do the norms of cost-effectiveness apply in this particular case?

In part, this is an efficiency issue. Conventionally, development investment in vocational education and training is only agreed where there is a reasonable expectation that jobs will be found by graduates when they leave training. Proponents of an alternative position assert that investment in development of human capital is a development investment which requires no justification. In addition, specialists disagree whether the rate of return on investment in vocational education is calculated over the life of a specific project or over the life of the machinery and tools which the project finances. Some specialists in the economics of technical education worldwide accept the heavy up-front investment in machinery, equipment, plant and maintenance as essential and disagree with the labour market economist position which would justify this investment only when the economy provides an acceptable (defined in terms of cost-effectiveness) number of jobs immediately following training. This argument is based in the fact that technical education can never produce, nor the economy ever employ, enough graduates to justify calculation of a good rate of return on investment since up-front costs for specialized machinery, spare parts and maintenance are so high in comparison with statistics for schools teaching school age children.

Conceivably the sustainability issue in this project can be outlined in terms of the design of emergency reconstruction projects to meet the training and employability needs of the poor in an unstable economy. In light of the continuing decline of the Nicaragua economy and in order to achieve sustainability, future projects may focus on "work study", "empleo minimo" or paid and unpaid "sandwich courses" to enable young people and young adults to gain the technical education and work experience necessary to enable them (in an improved economy) to compete for jobs with

young people from more affluent families with better social skills and more formal education. In a situation of widespread unemployment, very low levels of social skills and basic education and inability of the economy to produce jobs, the sustainable development impact of a nonformal vocational training project may require the following package of inputs: adult basic education in literacy and numeracy; initial and continuing nonformal education and training in vocational skills; training in social and "citizenship" skills ; support towards self-marketing and interviewing and, grounding in small business development concepts and skills.

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# Estudio del mercado laboral de Nicaragua

## OPCIONES PARA EL PROYECTO DE EDUCACION VOCACIONAL NO FORMAL

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Informe  
MISIONES SALESIANAS  
AGENCIA DEL DESARROLLO INTERNACIONAL (AID)

Preparado por:  
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MARZO DE 1992

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### I. Introducción

#### A. Presentación y agradecimientos

El presente estudio entrega datos sobre las condiciones actuales y las tendencias prevaletentes en el mercado laboral para los egresados del Programa de Educación Vocacional No Formal de las Misiones Salesianas.

Las autoras desean agradecer la valiosa ayuda recibida tanto de las personas responsables de los centros educativos pertenecientes a la Misión Salesiana en Granada y Masatepe, especialmente la del padre Horacio Macal, S.D.B. como la de los jóvenes que colaboraron con la realización de la encuesta sobre el sector informal.

#### B. Antecedentes

##### 1. Programa de educación vocacional no formal de las Misiones Salesianas

El objetivo del programa es responder a la crisis que atraviesan los jóvenes nicaragüenses después de más de una década de guerra civil y desastre económico. Los jóvenes se preparan en áreas que les permitan ganarse la vida, además de obtener instrucción en moral, cívica y deberes ciudadanos. Se pretende que ambos campos les ayuden a incorporarse a la sociedad nicaragüense y a convertirse en ciudadanos responsables y productivos. (Proyecto de Educación, p. iii).

El proyecto capacita a los estudiantes en los campos prácticos vocacionales siguientes: carpintería, soldadura, fresador, ebanistería, costura, cocina, mecanografía, albañilería, tornería y operador de computadoras. La duración de los cursos es de

tres a nueve meses. Para impartir se utilizan las instalaciones ya existentes en las cinco instituciones Salesianas participantes en el Programa.

Los jóvenes participantes (la mayoría entre 18 a 25 años) provienen de los sectores marginales de la sociedad nicaragüense y normalmente no tienen acceso a una educación formal después de terminar la educación primaria.

##### 2. Proceso de búsqueda de datos:

Datos oficiales sobre la situación actual de empleo para la juventud o acerca de las tendencias de la actividad del sector informal en Nicaragua son muy pocos. El Banco Central de Nicaragua, el Instituto Nicaragüense de Estadísticas y Censos, el Ministerio del Trabajo, el Instituto Nicaragüense de Investigaciones Económicas y Sociales, la Fundación Interamericana para el Desarrollo Económico Global entre casi no tienen datos al respecto.

Sin embargo, la información utilizada en este informe proviene de los datos oficiales existentes, datos publicados o colocados por otras agencias, nuestro propio estudio de los sectores formal e informal (cuyos resultados aparecen en otros capítulos del presente) y de las observaciones y planteamientos de diversos sectores de la empresa privada, organizaciones no gubernamentales relacionadas con el sector, y del gobierno.

##### 3. Enfoque del estudio:

El presente estudio se enfoca principalmente en el sector informal de la economía nicaragüense, ya que se consideró al inicio del proyecto que era el sector que mayores posibilidades

tenía de generar empleo para los egresados de los centros de instrucción salesianos, dado el nivel de preparación técnica de los egresados del programa. La investigación sobre las posibilidades de empleo en el sector formal y sobre la posibilidad de que egresados se organizaran para la creación de microempresas son aspectos que completan la presente investigación.

### C. Algunas observaciones

#### 1. Alcance del proyecto:

De acuerdo a los registros de egresados a la fecha (febrero 1992) y las proyecciones realizadas por las instituciones Salesianas participantes en el convenio con AID, se estima que el total de jóvenes beneficiados por este proyecto será de 8,404 jóvenes. Este número sobrepasará la meta establecida inicialmente (7,370) en una cantidad de 1,034 egresados equivalente a un 14% adicional del total proyectado. En parte esta participación refleja la gran demanda que existe de parte de los jóvenes por programas de capacitación y por otra parte la alta eficiencia de las escuelas salesianas de ejecutar el proyecto dentro de los límites establecidos de tiempo y cupo.

#### 2. Expectativas erróneas sobre los alumnos:

A juicio de los investigadores, el tiempo asignado a los estudiantes para estudiar sus materias no es suficiente para que capten las destrezas o herramientas básicas que se pretenden. Creemos que las expectativas de AID sobre la habilidad de los estudiantes son erróneas, dada la naturaleza excepcional de este grupo. Hay dos factores que nos llevan a completar esta observación:

##### a. Capacidad intelectual

El nivel de preparación académica de los aspirantes a estudiar en los programas vocacionales es considerablemente más bajo de lo esperado para una población normal. Esto se sabe por los exámenes de ingreso para los cursos. Además de medir el Coeficiente Intelectual (CI) de los alumnos a través del examen OTIS intermedio, se les practican exámenes de matemáticas y español. Podemos tomar los resultados de dos grupos de aspirantes a participar en el Proyecto. De el grupo "x" para el que tenemos datos obtuvimos lo siguiente:

##### *Estudiantes de computación:*

- Su CI promedio es de 88.72 puntos, con una desviación estándar de 9.596 puntos. Su promedio queda más de 11 puntos bajo el promedio de una población normal (100 puntos) Dado el tamaño de la muestra de n: 267 aspirantes, esta diferencia es significativa a cualquier nivel de significancia normalmente aplicada a estudios de este tipo.
- Casi el 90% de los alumnos en computación mostraron un CI bajo la media de una población normal, que usualmente mostraría un 50% bajo la media.
- El porcentaje de aspirantes a estudiantes con un (CI) menor o igual a 85 puntos (una desviación estándar bajo la media de una población normal) es igual a 36.7%. Si se

compara esta cifra con una población normal se encuentran dos veces más personas en este grupo de las que se esperaría encontrar en una población normal (aproximadamente 18%).

Sería importante anotar que los estudiantes de computación representan el grupo de mayor edad, mayor CI y también mejores notas.

##### *Estudiantes de soldadura*

- Su CI promedio es de 75.48 puntos, con un desviación estándar de 9.52 puntos. Su promedio queda a 24.52 puntos bajo la media de una población normal. Dado el tamaño de la muestra (n= 192 aspirantes) la anterior diferencia igualmente es significativa, por cualquier nivel de significancia normalmente aplicado a estudios de este tipo.
- El porcentaje de aspirantes con un CI menor de 85 puntos (una desviación estándar bajo la media de una población normal) es de 85.41%
- El 98.95% de los aspirantes tiene un CI bajo la media de una población normal.
- El % de los aspirantes tiene un CI bajo 70 puntos (2 desviaciones estándar bajo la media de una población normal) comparado con el 2.5% que normalmente se espera encontrar con un CI así. Este grupo normalmente se considera "excepcional."

##### b. Edad de los alumnos:

Existe un porcentaje significativo (40%) de aspirantes a entrar a los cursos, para los cuales tenemos datos, que tienen 17 años o menos. Esto se debe a la particularidad de la sociedad nicaragüense, que ha asignado responsabilidades serias desde muy temprana edad a la juventud nicaragüense. Aunque entendemos que el proyecto especificó una orientación hacia jóvenes de 18 a 25 años, las realidades actuales lo hacen difícil fijar una edad para la participación en un programa de este tipo.

### 3. Estructuración de los cursos:

La duración y contenido de los cursos no son suficientes para llenar las expectativas de enseñanza del profesorado. Los docentes han mostrado sus inquietudes sobre el asunto y nos han manifestado que muchos de los estudiantes no han podido lograr el nivel mínimo de sus materias dado el corto tiempo permitido para estudiar, aún cuando han habido recientes consideraciones sobre la duración de los programas. Nuestras observaciones apoyan este punto.

### 4. Escolaridad de los estudiantes :

El estudio de zona (Macal, pag. 39) de los alumnos determina que un 80% de los alumnos que atienden los cursos impartidos en el Centro Juvenil Don Bosco, en Managua, consideran estos estudios como un medio de mejorar su preparación global como personas y además estudian la secundaria. Este por-

centaje se considera alto, considerando la orientación del CJD, pero refleja la tendencia existente en cuanto a la escolaridad de los alumnos.

### 5. Deserción estudiantil

El porcentaje de deserción estudiantil dentro del programa varía en cada centro educativo. Los registros formales muestran que los niveles más bajos se encuentran en Managua (alrededor del 5 %). Los niveles más altos se dan en Masatepe, el lugar más rural de la muestra. La inestabilidad económica de los estudiantes se considera la causa principal de la deserción.

### 6. Tradición nicaragüense en contratación de personal.

Nicaragua es un país en el que tradicionalmente los empleadores (formales e informales) contratan nuevo personal a través de contactos familiares y amistosos. Las personas prefieren dar empleo a alguien "recomendado" por una persona amiga o conocida. Asimismo, los desempleados en búsqueda de trabajo prefieren buscarlo ellos mismos usando el mismo sistema de "conectes". Los mecanismos formales, tales como oficinas de ubicación todavía no tienen la confianza y aceptación tanto de empleadores como de posibles empleados a nivel general. Por esta razón el trabajo asociado con el establecimiento o mejoramiento de estas oficinas en Nicaragua, supone un esfuerzo mayor del esperado por agencias de desarrollo.

## II. Situación de Empleo (1990 - 1992)

### A. Antecedentes

#### 1. Situación económica:

A partir de febrero de 1988 el gobierno de Nicaragua inició un programa de ajuste que incluyó políticas severas de recortes presupuestarios que se tradujeron en incremento de la tasa de desempleo (compactación del número de activos de la administración central). El fenómeno de desempleo masivo se agudizó a partir de ese momento.

En 1989, la crisis económica continuó; el PIB real disminuyó en 2.8%. Para 1990, la situación económica continuó siendo extremadamente difícil, con una disminución del PIB de 4.4%, continuándose la tendencia depresiva iniciada en 1982.

Con el cambio de gobierno en abril de 1990, se inició un plan de Recuperación de la economía nicaragüense, llamado "Plan de los 100 Días", cuyo objetivo era el control de la inflación y la estabilización de la economía. Este plan no tuvo los resultados esperados, ya que no se pudo bajar el déficit fiscal y seguir una política monetaria contractiva.

Contrario a las expectativas iniciales del nuevo gobierno nicaragüense y de AID en cuanto a la reactivación económica nicaragüense, ésta se ha iniciado en un ritmo mucho más lento de lo esperado.

El Programa de Ajuste Estructural ha resultado en un aumento considerable en la presión por un puesto de trabajo. Esto se debe no sólo a la natural incorporación de fuerza de trabajo al mercado laboral, sino también por los desmovilizados de guerra ex miembros de la Resistencia nicaragüense (22,000), los ex militares del Ejército (estimado entre 50 y 70 mil), los repatriados (calculados en 50,000) y las personas que se acogieron al plan de Conversión Ocupacional, estimados en 11,508 al 30 de junio de 1991. De acuerdo a datos del Ministerio de Economía y Desarrollo, el porcentaje aproximado de microempresas que fracasaron durante el año de 1991, clasificadas como de comercio al por menor y de servicios, fue entre un 10 y 11 % del total de microempresas legales inscritas en dicho ministerio. Es de suponer que al menos este porcentaje de microempresas, originadas a partir de la aplicación del plan de Reconversión generó con su fracaso, un aumento de la población económicamente activa (PEA) en búsqueda de empleo.

La recesión económica ha alcanzado niveles elevados. La producción industrial a partir de 1990 se vio impactada fuertemente por la restricción de liquidez en la economía y la baja demanda de producción. Las ramas más afectadas en cuanto a la producción y el empleo fueron: textil-vestuario, químicos, plástico-papel y metal-mecánica. Estas ramas están directamente relacionadas con las áreas de capacitación técnica impartidas por los centros Salesianos.

A los factores de estancamiento de la actividad productiva se añade la incertidumbre asociada con la política de privatización, lo cual contribuye al no "despeque económico".

#### 2 Situación Actual

El conjunto de políticas económicas implementadas por el Gobierno de Nicaragua a mediados de 1990 así como los cambios estructurales introducidos en la economía (1990-1991) han provocado una fuerte contracción en la demanda de mano de obra remunerada en el Sector Formal de la economía.

De acuerdo a oficiales publicadas por el Instituto Nicaragüense de Seguridad Social y Bienestar (INSSBI) en julio de 1991, el total de trabajadores del sector formal registrados en dicha institución se redujo de 249,087 trabajadores en enero de 1991 a 224,123 para junio del mismo año, lo cual representa una reducción del 10% del empleo en el sector formal.

El sector informal, por otra parte involucra al 52% de la población ocupada. Este sector ha ampliado su importancia también con relación a la Población Económicamente Activa (PEA), pasando de un 40% en 1989 al 43% en 1991.

Las cifras oficiales del Ministerio del Trabajo estiman que la PEA en Nicaragua asciende a 1,386.3 miles de personas, las cuales equivalen al 34.7% de la población total del país (3,999.2 miles de personas). La tasa de la PEA ya representa 0.3% más que la calculada para el año 1990 (34.4% de una población total de 3,870,000 personas). En términos concretos, la PEA se

incrementó en 54,749 personas entre 1990 y 1991, un aumento de 4.1%.

En contraste, el total de ocupados, aún cuando aumentó en términos numéricos (de 1183.4 miles de personas a 1197.5 miles) mostró una disminución en la tasa de empleo de 2.5% sobre lo calculado para el mismo período el año anterior.

En el desempleo abierto también se observa un incremento significativo: de 147,800 personas en 1990 (11.1% de PEA) a 188,800 (13.6%) para el siguiente año. Este incremento en el desempleo (27.7% en términos absolutos) representa un aumento de 2.5% en la tasa de desempleo.

La situación del subempleo es más dramática: De 593,600 personas dentro de esta categoría en 1990 (44.6% de la PEA) pasó a 741,700 trabajadores en 1991 (53.5% de la PEA) lo cual indica un aumento porcentual de 8.9% con relación a los niveles de 1990. (Ver cuadro Situación del Empleo, #1)

Además de estos indicadores macroeconómicos, los datos sobre desempleados jóvenes indican que éstos constituyen el 28% de la población económicamente activa. Del 60% de los jóvenes despedidos más del 50% provienen de empresas grandes con más de 51 trabajadores. El resto proviene de empresas medianas y pequeñas. Un 27% de estos jóvenes desempleados pudieron colocarse en un empleo, y una tercera parte de éstos lo hicieron en empleos temporales.

Todas las cifras anteriores permiten obtener una imagen del deterioro de la situación laboral en Nicaragua, especialmente para los jóvenes, en el último año.

Datos relativos a la oferta y demanda de la fuerza de trabajo registrados en las seis oficinas de empleo que ha empezado a manejar el MITRAB, ubicadas en las correspondientes regiones del país, muestran el nivel de calificación y sector de procedencia de la oferta de fuerza de trabajo así como sector de actividad económica, nivel de calificación requerido por los empleadores. (Ver Cuadros # 2 y 3).

## B. Sector Formal

Uno de los problemas que más afecta al sector formal de la economía nicaragüense es el de la reducción de la demanda interna y la necesidad de reducir costos. Esto ha forzado a muchas empresas a este sector a reducir su mano de obra.

En el caso del sector industrial, las empresas aducen que su producción se ha reducido por la falta de competitividad de sus productos ante los importados. Las empresas exportadoras vieron reducidas sus actividades debido a iliquidez y falta de financiamiento.

Es notorio el hecho de que la situación de desempleo, ha impactado también en la fuerza de trabajo con mayor calificación y profesionales, quienes pasan irremediamente a gravitar sobre el sector informal urbano, se estima que la proporción de profesionales que han ingresado al sector informal se ha duplicado con relación a 1989.

Los autores de este estudio consideran este dato extremadamente significativo ya que indica el poco dinamismo que presenta el actual mercado laboral, la generación de puestos de trabajo del tipo ocasional y de reducida remuneración.

## C. Sector Informal

Durante los años 1990 - 1991, se da un aumento en el número de unidades económicas especialmente de microempresas cuyo objetivo fundamental es el de dar respuesta a los empleados subutilizados.

Como se ha mencionado anteriormente, del total de la población ocupada, un 52% trabaja en el sector informal. El 51.5% del total de la población que labora en este sector, está constituido por mujeres, clasificadas de la siguiente manera: comercio (28.5%), servicios (12.0%), trabajo doméstico (11.0%).

El panorama de ubicación de las jóvenes en el proyecto de Educación Vocacional No Formal está marcado por desempleo generalizado, especialmente en las ciudades del interior.

Casi un 50% de las personas que actualmente trabajan en el Sector Informal, tienen como máximo un año de estar en ese empleo, un 22% entre 2 ó 3 años y apenas un 8% 5 años o más. (FIDEG, Enero de 1992).

## III. Estudio de posibilidad de empleo en el sector informal para egresados del Programa de Educación Vocacional No Formal

Para identificar mejor la situación de empleo para los egresados del Proyecto de Educación Vocacional No Formal hicimos dos estudios de la demanda laboral: uno enfocado al sector informal, y otro al sector formal.

### A. Propósito:

El presente estudio identifica las fuentes potenciales de empleo y demanda laboral en el sector informal para los técnicos vocacionales egresados del programa Salesiano de educación no formal.

El estudio ha sido enfocado hacia aquellas empresas cuya demanda de puestos de trabajo pudiera estar directa o indirectamente relacionada con la naturaleza de las carreras técnicas ofrecidas en el mencionado proyecto de educación al corto plazo (6 meses a 1 año).

Se exploró también la posibilidad de que un porcentaje de los egresados conformaran microempresas orientadas al sector servicios.

### B. Diseño del estudio

#### 1. Selección de la muestra:

En colaboración con las diferentes oficinas de la Alcaldía de Managua: Oficina de Coordinación de Distritos, Oficina Responsable de la Vivienda del Distrito III, Oficina de Contratos

de Arriendo y Dirección General Legal, Oficina de Recaudación Fiscal, Receptoría de Impuestos, Dirección General de Cómputos y Dirección de Registros al contribuyente, se identificaron las zonas donde se concentra la mayor actividad informal.

En Managua, éstas fueron: Carretera Norte, Mercado Oriental, barrio San Judas, barrio Los Angeles, Ciudad Sandino y el trecho comprendido entre los semáforos de la Centroamérica y el Mercado "Roberto Huembes." Igual procedimiento se llevó a cabo en las alcaldías de Granada y Masatepe.

Una vez identificadas las zonas, se realizó la encuesta cubriendo el 100% de ellas.

## 2. Diseño de la encuesta:

La encuesta orientada al sector informal de la economía se concentró en tres puntos:

1. análisis de la situación actual de la empresa y de demanda laboral.
2. investigación de nuevos puestos de empleo en el corto plazo (6 meses) y los factores asociados con el surgimiento de tal empleo.
3. Las posibilidades de incorporar al mercado laboral a los egresados del programa, como aprendices remunerados.

Además de esto, se consultó sobre las destrezas necesarias en los diferentes negocios ahora y en el futuro y sobre la situación general del establecimiento (Ver anexo #4).

## 3. Ejecución de la encuesta:

La encuesta se realizó con la cooperación de 16 jóvenes ex-alumnos del Centro Juvenil de Managua y miembros de sus grupos juveniles. Ellos recibieron capacitación sobre el proceso de levantado de la encuesta, así como del alcance y cobertura de la encuesta en particular, por parte de las investigadoras.

Después de entrevistar a las personas directamente involucradas con las áreas potenciales de generación de empleo en el sector informal para egresados del programa, en Managua, Granada y Masatepe encontramos que:

- a. las encuestas fueron contestadas apropiadamente.
- b. menos que el 2% de ellas es cuestionable.
- c. dada la buena cobertura de las entrevistas en ocho sitios entre Managua, Granada y Masatepe, creemos que las respuestas son significativamente representativas del sector informal.

En el proceso de ejecución de la encuesta tomamos una orientación especial hacia los puestos de trabajo que pudieran ser ocupados por los egresados, especialmente soldaduras, talleres de torno y eléctricos, carpinterías, sastrerías, panaderías. También se exploraron puestos que no estuvieran estrictamente ligados con la globalidad del programa educativo ofrecido por los diferentes centros educativos de la Misión Salesiana.

Los diferentes equipos de encuestadores debidamente supervisados por los autores del presente estudio, encontraron que entre un 10 y un 30% de la población encuestada no quiso participar en la encuesta. La tasa restante de 90 a 70% se considera alta, dada la tendencia histórica de los nicaragüenses de no participar en actividades de esta naturaleza (como fue mostrado en las encuestas tomadas antes de las elecciones históricas de 1990).

La encuesta se realizó durante las horas laborales de la mañana (8 a.m. a 12 del mediodía), y fue exhaustiva en cuanto a que abarcó un importante número de empresas ubicadas dentro del sector informal que pudieran convertirse en fuentes de empleo para los egresados del programa al corto plazo. En total tuvimos la participación de 154 empresas en el estudio.

No fueron incluidas en la muestra, aquellas empresas alejadas del campo de las destrezas enseñadas en el programa de educación vocacional no formal, como farmacias, bares y centros de expendio, que aún cuando tuvieran plazas no se convertirían en puestos potenciales de empleo para los egresados.

## C. Resultados

De los datos obtenidos por la encuesta, se obtuvieron los siguientes resultados:

1. El 83.12% del total de encuestados considera que la situación económica de su negocio ha empeorado o sigue igual de mal que el año pasado.
2. Sólo un 14.29% considera que su negocio ha mejorado en relación al año anterior.
3. Puede comentarse que la percepción de la mayoría de los encuestados con respecto a su situación económica era la de "por qué pregunta usted algo tan obvio?". Incluso varios encuestados sostuvieron que no era suficiente una marca de "X" para graficar la gravedad de su situación, que era más preciso el símbolo "XXXXX."
4. Aún cuando el 14.3% de los encuestados cree que su negocio ha mejorado, sólo un 9.09% del total puede traducir esa mejoría incremento de actividad económica y contratación de personal ahora o en el futuro inmediato.
5. Geográficamente, en Managua es donde se observa el menor porcentaje de empleadores que consideran que su situación ha empeorado en relación a 1991 (42.9% del total capitalino). Esta percepción aumenta en Granada, con un 45.5%, y es aún más marcada en Masatepe, con un 56.3% de los encuestados compartiendo esta creencia.
6. Las ramas más optimistas en cuanto a la situación actual son las de los talleres de metal-mecánica, eléctricos y de costura. Sin embargo, esto no se traduce en oferta de apertura de puestos de trabajo.
7. En principio, el 63.5% de los encuestados se mostró dispuesto a recibir como aprendices a los egresados de los centros Salesianos. De éstos, un 40.82% no pudo precisar

cuando aceptarla a los muchachos o expresó que eso dependió de la reactivación económica general del país. Otro 25.5% expresó que sólo puede recibir aprendices dentro de seis meses o más.

8. Sólo un 22% del total de los encuestados demostró interés en recibir graduados como aprendices sin paga en el más corto plazo (de 1-3 meses). De éstos sólo un 35.3% darían un pago mínimo (ó el 7.8% del total). Este es el porcentaje que se considera más realista dada la inestabilidad del mercado laboral nicaragüense.

Podemos concluir que existe muy poca demanda laboral en el corto y mediano plazo en empresas del sector informal. Inclusive un mejoramiento de la economía tendría un impacto mínimo en el empleo dada la subutilización del empleo actual del sector.

## IV. Estudio del Sector Formal

### A. Propósitos

Abordamos el sector formal de la economía para obtener información sobre la demanda laboral actual en este sector, a fin de completar en lo posible nuestra imagen de la situación y explorar las posibilidades de empleo para los egresados del Programa de Educación Vocacional No Formal.

En el sector formal existen sectores cuya reducción de empleo fue superior al 10% global registrado por el INSSBI, tales como el sector público presupuestado, 30.7%, servicios públicos (agua, luz) con alrededor de 12%, sector minero 18% y sector agrícola - silvicultura con 11%.

### B. Diseño del Estudio

#### 1. Selección de la muestra

La muestra se escogió de entre 23 empresas con más de 50 trabajadores en planilla. Las consultas se realizaron en Managua, Granada y Masatepe.

#### *Managua:*

En la región de Managua, se seleccionó una muestra de cada rama directamente relacionada con la naturaleza de las destrezas impartidas por los centros Salesianos.

Las ramas en cuestión se clasifican de la siguiente manera: Metal-mecánica, Construcción, Madera, Textil-vestuario y productos químicos.

De cada rama se seleccionaron un mínimo de tres empresas. Las empresas seleccionadas tienen más de 10 años de estar laborando bajo las condiciones económicas imperantes, y tienen una reputación establecida en el sector. Se tuvo cuidado de que las empresas seleccionadas representasen también el sector privado, estatal y el recientemente privatizado.

El total de empresas encuestadas en Managua es de 18. Se consideró suficiente este número debido a que representa un

27.7% del total de Industrias grandes establecidas en Managua.

#### *Granada*

En la ciudad de Granada se seleccionó a la totalidad de las empresas grandes en la ciudad, de forma que los datos obtenidos reflejan la situación actual de la demanda laboral.

#### *Masatepe*

En la región de Masatepe no existen empresas grandes, aunque sí hay un sector formal representativo compuesto por talleres especializados en la fabricación de muebles y dulces típicos de la zona.

### 2. Diseño de la encuesta

Las preguntas de la encuesta se basaron en el formato utilizado anteriormente por la oficina de ubicación del Centro Juvenil Don Bosco, ya que consideramos que satisfacía nuestros requerimientos en cuanto a enfoque de las preguntas formuladas.

Dado el mayor grado de organización de las empresas del sector formal, las preguntas se orientaron a:

- la demanda laboral a corto plazo.
- requisitos indispensables para clasificar en la empresa
- tipo de capacitación adicional brindada a trabajadores nuevos
- Expectativas de realización de prácticas laborales a corto plazo para egresados del programa

(Para formato de la encuesta, ver Anexo # 5).

### 3. Ejecución de la encuesta

Los investigadores se hicieron cargo por completo de la realización de esta parte del estudio. Se visitó personalmente a las empresas en horas laborales durante el período comprendido del 20 al 27 de febrero, el 100% de las empresas respondió a las preguntas.

### C. Resultados

#### *Masatepe:*

No hay empleadores grandes del sector formal en esta zona.

#### *Granada:*

El sector formal de la ciudad de Granada está constituido por grandes industrias procesadoras con más de 15 años de sólido prestigio y marca reconocida.

El 100% de los empleadores del sector formal de Granada, no está en condiciones de recibir aprendices con o sin paga, o empleados como tales. Estos empleadores manifestaron que no tienen planes de ampliación en un plazo no menor que cinco años, dada la situación de baja demanda interna que presentan estos productos.

No existen posibilidades en este sector de generar demanda alguna para los egresados del programa salesiano. Pudimos establecer como causales las siguientes:



- no existen planes de expansión de las instalaciones físicas, ni de ampliación de las líneas de productos fabricados.
- se lucha por la reducción de los costos de producción para volverse competitivos ante la ola de invasión de productos importados a más bajo precio y mayor calidad.
- la rotación de personal es insignificante.

#### Managua:

Encontramos que el sector formal de Managua es quien podría generar una demanda relativamente mayor que Granada y Masatepe, por la gran cantidad de industrias establecidas en la Capital (65 industrias)

El 24% de los empleadores en Managua manifestó tener una demanda de fuerza de trabajo a corto plazo.

La demanda se orientó básicamente a las siguientes áreas:

*Soldadura, carpintería y vestuario:* Para estas únicas ramas se encontró una demanda en el siguiente número de puestos de trabajo: 6 soldadores calificados, 23 ebanistas experimentados, 3 tapiceros, 200 costureras industriales especializadas en el armado de pantalones y 25 auxiliares generales de fábrica.

Aún cuando existieran actualmente puestos de trabajo, la experiencia es un requisito indispensable para el 70.6% de los entrevistados.

Respecto a la pregunta sobre las posibilidades de recibir egresados para la realización de sus prácticas laborales, el 61% de los encuestados respondió no estar en capacidad de hacerlo.

*Rama Metal-mecánica:* El 80% de los entrevistados en la rama metal-mecánica considera que la experiencia previa, se traduce en una mayor rapidez en la realización de las tareas y menos riesgo profesional en cuanto a la ocurrencia de accidentes de trabajo. Normalmente éstos realizan algún tipo de prueba para seleccionar a sus posibles empleados.

El 20% restante considera que la escolaridad es un requisito fundamental, especialmente al tratarse de trabajos que requieren algún tipo de especialización: fabricación de barriles metálicos, diseño de muebles metálicos para oficinas y fabricación de ventanas de aluminio y vidrio. Los trabajos antes mencionados requieren de extrema precisión y perfecto acabado final.

El 100% de los entrevistados en la rama metal-mecánica tiene disposición para capacitar técnicamente al nuevo empleado.

El 60% de los entrevistados en la rama metal-mecánica presenta necesidades futuras de personal, sin embargo de éste, solamente un 50% son plazas para empleos permanentes y el 50% restante responde a plazas temporales (1-3 meses).

*Rama Madera:* Respecto a la rama madera, el 75% de las empresas encuestadas manifestó tener necesidades futuras de personal para llenar 23 puestos de trabajo en el ramo de la ebanistería. Sin embargo, todas ellas señalaron que la experiencia es un requisito que no podían eludir. Cabe agregar que

estas empresas no tienen entre sus políticas aceptar egresados para la realización de sus prácticas laborales.

*Rama Textil-Vestuario:* La rama textil-vestuario es la rama que a corto plazo (1-3 meses) presenta una demanda de 200 puestos cuyo requisito fundamental es la experiencia en trabajos que requieran precisión milimétrica.

*Rama de la Construcción:* El 100% de las empresas encuestadas manifestó incertidumbre en cuanto a la posibilidad de la creación de nuevas plazas de trabajo. Cabe hacer notar que los puestos de trabajo en este sector se han caracterizado por su temporalidad.

En cuanto a los requisitos para los nuevos empleados, se consideran la salud y la fortaleza, en primer lugar y, la experiencia en segundo. La totalidad de las empresas entrevistadas manifestó que no sería una experiencia enriquecedora para los estudiantes en este momento, la realización de sus prácticas laborales, dado lo deprimido que se encuentra este sector.

## V. Posibilidades de formación de microempresas

En la búsqueda de alternativas al empleo remunerado, se exploró la posibilidad de que algunos de los egresados se convirtiesen en microempresarios dentro del sector servicios. Se entrevistó a personas que laboran en organismos relacionados con este sector, tales como el Programa de Apoyo a la Microempresa (PAMIC), el Consejo Nacional de la Pequeña Industria (CONAPI), la Asociación Menonita para el Desarrollo Económico (MEDA) y CARE Internacional.

Según las opiniones y experiencias recabadas, para que un grupo que forma una microempresa tenga éxito, en cualquier sociedad, existen requisitos básicos:

- debe enfocarse a llenar un espacio en el mercado
- contar con un mínimo de capital a invertir
- manejar inteligentemente su capital de trabajo (flujo de caja)
- contar con mucha iniciativa y entusiasmo.

La clave para el éxito es la diferenciación del servicio y la calidad. Lo anterior supone un nivel de preparación académica que en la actualidad no poseen los estudiantes que participan del Proyecto de educación vocacional no formal.

Dentro del desarrollo de microempresas en Nicaragua, existe una alta tasa de fracasos. Como ejemplo pueden citarse los datos que maneja MEDA. De las 182 microempresas que ellos financian cortadas a febrero de 1992, 115 ya están morosas.

Otros programas como el PAMIC, ofrecen ayuda a proyectos específicos, con estudios serios sobre factibilidad y necesidades de inversión. Si puede prepararse un preproyecto para microempresas en servicios, existen posibilidades de que sean apoyados y puestos en marcha.

En la actualidad, en el CJDB se está desarrollando el Programa de Empresarios Juveniles, con una duración de 27 semanas. Se espera que el curso de capacitación sea un laboratorio vivencial para los estudiantes (un mínimo de 50) en la formación de una empresa.

Sin embargo, dado el relativo corto tiempo asignado a los programas de estudio del Proyecto de Educación Vocacional no Formal dudamos que los egresados tuvieran las destrezas necesarias para poder iniciar microempresas con algún grado de éxito, si se mantienen las condiciones actuales.

## VI. Conclusiones

### A. Demanda Laboral

1. *Descenso en la demanda laboral.* La estructura demográfica laboral de Nicaragua ha experimentado cambios estructurales importantes a partir de la implementación de los programas de estabilización y ajuste estructural. Los efectos de esta restructuración son el aumento en el desempleo y un fuerte descenso en la demanda laboral, situaciones que requerirán cambios drásticos para poderse superar.
2. *Impacto de la reducción del empleo en el sector público.* No se debe olvidar que desde 1988 las políticas económicas tienden hacia la reducción del gasto público vía la reducción del número de empleados públicos, entre otras. el impacto negativo de tales reformas hacen sentir en la tendencia decreciente de la población ocupada, especialmente en el sector juvenil y de baja preparación académica.
3. *Proyección de la demanda.* La opinión expresada por los empleadores de los sectores formal e informal es que existe alguna disponibilidad para trabajar y emplear, pero esto depende en gran parte de la reactivación de la economía. Cuando ésta se da, se necesitará personal capacitado en todos los estratos de la actividad laboral.

### B. Posibilidades de empleo para los egresados del programa

1. *La meta de empleo.* Las expectativas de que un 60% de los egresados pudieran ser empleados al finalizar su capacitación en los centros salesianos no están de acuerdo a la situación actual. Además la situación actual y proyectada de empleo parece tan mala para personas sin experiencia que dudamos de la habilidad de la economía nicaragüense para dar empleo efectivo a cualquier porcentaje significativo de los egresados del Proyecto en el corto plazo. Existen varias razones:
  - poco dinamismo productivo
  - alta dependencia tecnológica
  - obsolescencia del parque industrial

— falta de competitividad de los productos nacionales ante los productos importados.

Esta es la realidad en los sectores formal e informal de la economía nicaragüense.

2. *La falta de experiencia.* Las perspectivas de empleo en el sector formal son las más limitadas para el total de la población en búsqueda de trabajo, y dado que este sector confiere mucha importancia a la experiencia (70% de los entrevistados citándola como requisito indispensable) las oportunidades para los graduados de los cursos vocacionales salesianos son aún menores en ese sector. Estos necesitarían una mejor preparación académica y más experiencia para competir exitosamente por puestos de trabajo en el sector.
3. *Las posibilidades de colocar aprendices.* Las posibilidades de realizar prácticas laborales sin paga son un poco mejores que las de encontrar empleo remunerado. Existe un 22% de empleadores en el sector informal que están dispuestos a aceptar egresados en el futuro inmediato, de los cuales un 35% accedió a aportar una paga mínima a los muchachos. En el sector formal, existe un 39% que expresa la misma disponibilidad. La alternativa de trabajo sin remuneración es muy difícil de aplicar en Nicaragua, dado el alcance de la crisis. Sin embargo, es una posibilidad de obtener mayor experiencia práctica.
4. *La importancia de alcanzar el segmento blanco de la población.* Los programas vocacionales Salesianos logran alcanzar un sector importante de jóvenes marginados, al darles escolaridad y una oportunidad de mejorar sus condiciones de vida. La marginalidad de estos jóvenes está plasmada en su poca preparación académica formal (exámenes de admisión y entrevistas) y en su procedencia. Queremos además añadir que el hecho de elevar aún relativamente pocas personas de este sector puede tener efectos mucho mayores de los visibles, por las conexiones y relaciones que existen entre muchas personas y sus parientes
5. *La necesidad de pensar a largo plazo.* Las condiciones actuales de la economía nicaragüense son contrarias a la capacitación a corto plazo. La preparación más profunda y a largo plazo es necesaria. La juventud nicaragüense debe prepararse ahora en habilidades y destrezas que serán necesarias para el desarrollo del país cuando se inicie la Reconversión Industrial. Se puede anotar que el énfasis que han dado las escuelas salesianas en materias como mecanografía y computación puede dar resultados muy buenos en el más largo plazo; al preparar jóvenes capaces de trabajar con las nuevas tecnologías.

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## VII. Recomendaciones

1. Abandonar cualquier meta que requiera que se coloquen cualquier porcentaje de los egresados en el empleo remunerado. La economía nicaragüense no es capaz en el corto plazo de generar suficiente empleo para poder dar a esta meta cualquier significado.
2. Ejecutar un programa de colocación de jóvenes egresados como aprendices sin paga utilizando el listado de personas y empresas recopilados por las investigadoras. Fijar como meta que se colocarán entre un 10 y 15 % de los empleadores del sector informal encontrados en este estudio.
3. Apoyo a la nueva Oficina de Ubicación ("Job Center") para mejorar y mantener los contactos con los posibles empleadores del sector formal e informal, resaltando así la presencia de las comunidades salesianas en el ámbito laboral de Nicaragua.
4. Dar mayor flexibilidad a la duración y al contenido de los cursos. Si los estudiantes pasan más tiempo capacitándose, con mayores fortalezas académicas, tendrán mejores posibilidades de obtener un puesto de trabajo. Se debe evitar la tendencia a pensar "algo es mejor que nada" si se está hablando de la formación de jóvenes cuya auto imagen suponemos es muy baja. Sería una injusticia pretender capacitar a alguien sin permitir un mínimo de dominio de la materia. Esto requerirá mayor esfuerzo, aún si resulta en menores números de participantes. No se ayuda a nadie con una capacitación inadecuada ya que se deja a la persona sin la posibilidad de encontrar y mantener empleo, sin orgullo en confianza en si misma o en la sociedad, que no le da una verdadera oportunidad de participar en la economía.