

HIGHLIGHTS NICARAGUA EVALUATION.

Reledev entered its 10th year of support for more than 1,000 women in Nicaragua living in the Municipality of Diriamba providing them with technical training and business development skills to improve their families income stability. We undertook an external evaluation of what this project has meant for these women and how well the project meets their particular needs.

Diriamba is an area which has changed considerably over the last 5 years. Improving job market trends within the tourism, manufacturing and agriculture came to a halt due to the political crisis in 2018 and the Covid 19 Pandemic compounded problems further resulting in a near collapsed job market due to falling tourism, closure of factories and decline of international investment in the country. In response to this crisis Reledev's project, implemented through the training school, Vega Baja Education Centre (CEVB) shifted focus towards supporting women to generate their own income largely in the creation of micro-enterprises.

The external evaluation highlighted the relevance of the program for local women, and its effectiveness in its medium term, the following are some notably findings and conclusions.



1 VET COURSE

CEVB is the only educational training school for women in the area since all other publicly funded education centres for adults are located in central urban areas. For women in Diriamba the distance and problem of poor transportation makes attendance prohibitive even with no course fees.



1,000 WOMEN

Thinning of the local job market, disproportionately affects women who have low educational attainment and low levels of income, a situation which limits the available avenues for income generation.

Products or services that potentially generate income must also have low start-up costs, and skills which manual and easily learned. The CEVB courses are tailored accordingly and dovetail with other entrepreneurial courses offered by Andecu.



750 PRODUCTS

A new program resulted out of Covid 19, by forming a group of 10-15 student to operate a sewing workshop, initially producing 10,000 masks to satisfy a local shortfall.

The program evolved into a Reledev supported **'Textile Business Start Up Program'**. 60 women have participated to produce 750 commercially sold uniform pieces, including medical coats, hospital scrubs, surgical caps and chefs hats. The revenue assists these women to purchase their own sewing machine and to train them to start their own business.



112 PLANT KITS

Plant growing kits combined with cooking courses in CEVB have helped 112 families overcome growing financial challenges providing a model for self-sustainable sources of food with vegetable gardens to produce healthy meals at next to no cost.

The kit is an integral part of the cooking courses in CEVB focused on the use of home-grown ingredients to produce meals and street food sold locally as a source of income.



85% SUCCESS*

Systemic poverty is often linked with low personal aspirations which inhibits women seizing real opportunities. The study emphasised the value the program has for personal growth, particularly in the way women transitioned towards more confidence and aspiration.

On completion of their course, many formulate a business plan and aim to start a micro-enterprise by enrolling in the Andecu Entrepreneurship courses to springboard towards their goals.

**301 of the 470 women (64%) in evaluation period 2017-2021 had completed entrepreneurship courses in line with the technical training they received. Of the 41 women who directly were individually surveyed 85% reported they were active in income generating activities with 80% being in sale of products through home based enterprises and 20% through some form of employment.*