



HEDWIG AND  
ROBERT SAMUEL  
FOUNDATION



ANNUAL REPORT

2024

*"Give youth a chance."*



## Dear Reader,

When I first visited Nicaragua 35 years ago, the country was still in the midst of a civil war between the Sandinistas and the Contras, who were fighting for power. The economy was in ruins, the infrastructure dilapidated, and the state's finances depleted. The population was in desperate need of help, and since our foundation was already active in the neighbouring countries of Costa Rica and El Salvador, it made sense to extend our support to Nicaragua. Still under the protection of government troops, I visited social institutions and delivered the most urgently needed supplies on site.

Shortly thereafter, peace returned, and many young people who had been forcibly conscripted and had spent years fighting on opposing sides found themselves in the streets. Without a qualification or professional training, and without any prospects. That was the moment when the foundation decided to refocus its activities on education and training, with the aim of giving young people in need and without any perspectives a future once again.

This was followed by the construction of our first Center for Technical Education. On the grounds of a former farm not far from Managua's international airport, we would eventually train thousands of young people over

the course of thirty years in a wide variety of fields and place them in stable jobs.

On 11 June 2024, President Ortega – who had by then become a dictator himself – brought this to an abrupt end. Civil society engagement, which Ortega had welcomed so warmly during his first term in office, was now branded as subversive, uncontrollable and dangerous. Like the 5,000 charitable organisations before us, we too were prohibited from continuing our work for the benefit of the population, and our assets were seized by the state.

Of course, this is extremely painful, but we find comfort in looking back on 35 years of successful work in Nicaragua – work of which we can be proud and from which we have learnt a great deal. These lessons are something even a dictator like Ortega cannot take away from us, and we will continue to put them to good use in our own training centres and in new projects for the benefit of the people.

Sincerely

Martin Barth  
President of the Board



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## WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

### ABOUT SAMUEL FOUNDATION

Hedwig and Robert Samuel Foundation was established in 1932 by a merchant couple from Düsseldorf of the same name. It is a non-profit foundation under private law which focuses on supporting economically disadvantaged young people in the area of technical education. It falls under the category of operating foundation. Since 1993, we have been initiating and implementing our own projects for technical education and have been mainly working in Central America and Asia. We also cooperate with other aid organisations in Germany and abroad. The head office of the foundation is located in Düsseldorf. The foundation has its own branches and Centres for Technical Education in its project countries. The foundation's activities are mainly financed through the income generated from the administration of its properties.



## VISION - MISSION

### OUR PRINCIPLES MAKE US STRONG

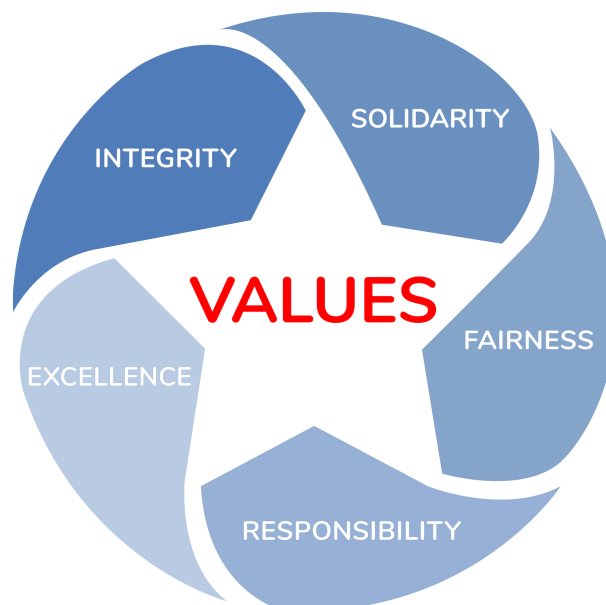
The thinking, strategic planning and concrete actions of the Hedwig and Robert Samuel Foundation are based on the following guiding principles.

### OUR VISION

A world of fair educational opportunities and future prospects for everyone.

### OUR MISSION

To empower more and more people to leave the cycle of poverty through qualified education and professional training and, thus, also improve the prospects of the following generations.



[Learn more about our guidelines](#)



## ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

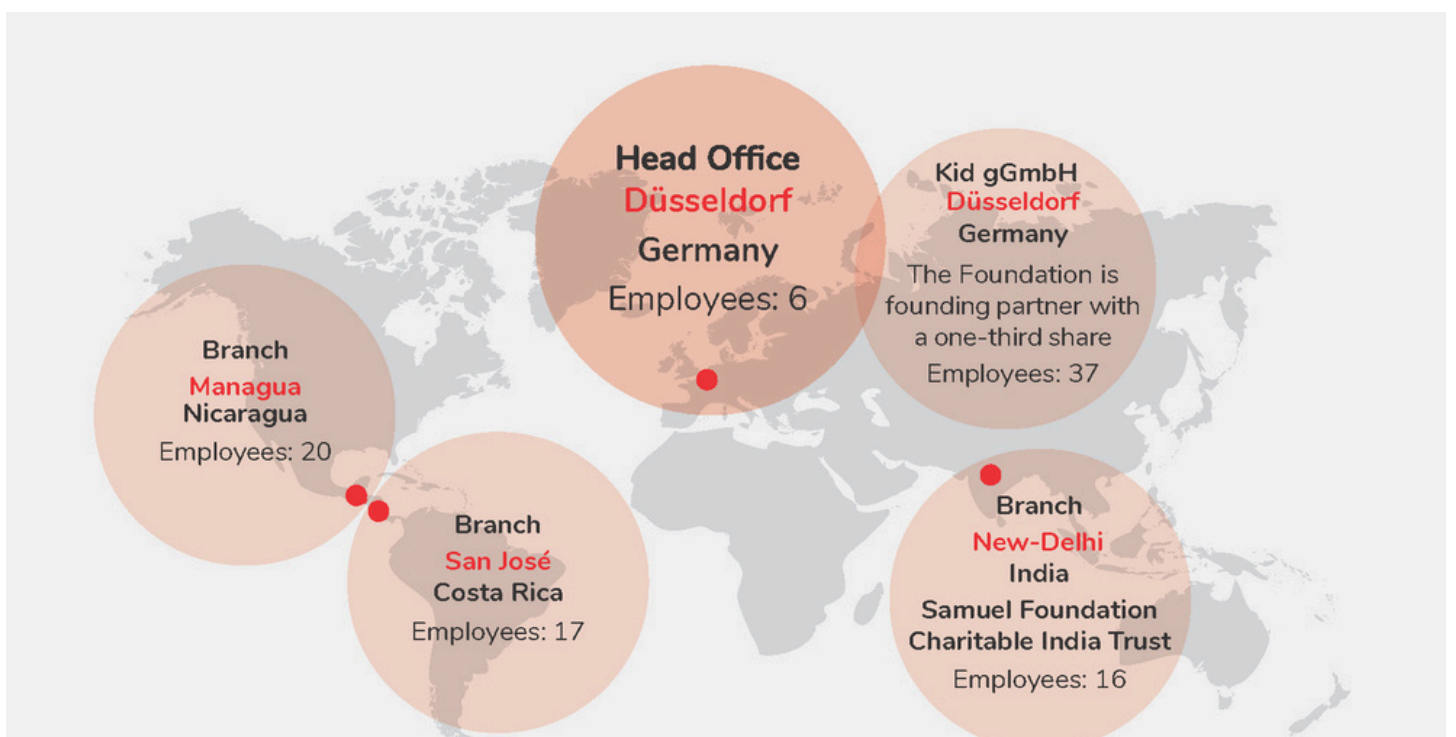
### BOARD OF THE FOUNDATION

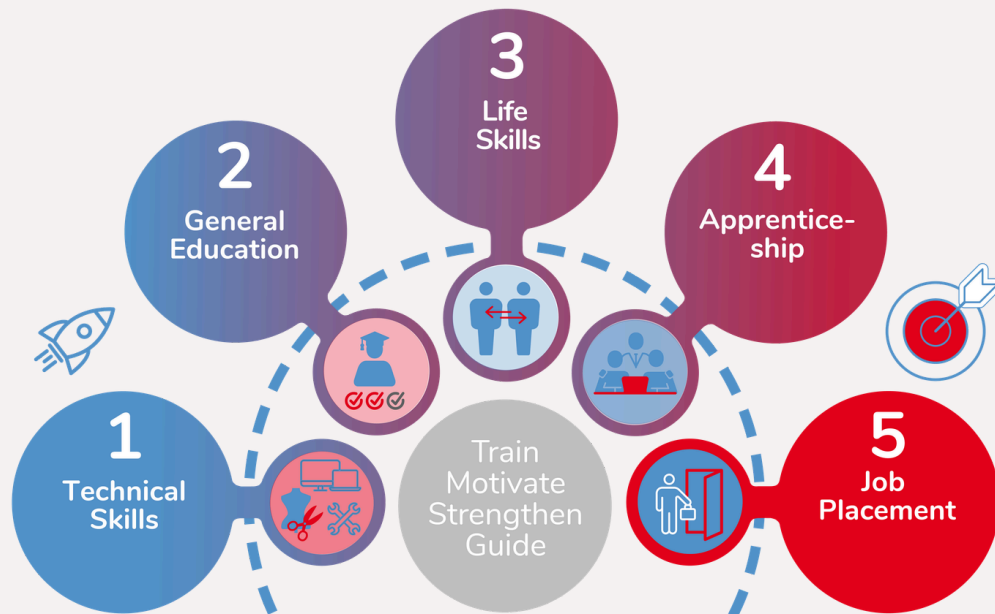
From right to left

**Martin Barth**, lawyer, he was appointed to the board in February 1984 and assumed the position of Managing Director of the Board in January 1990. Since April 1999, he has been President of the Board.

**Karin Reuter**, foreign language correspondent, has been an honorary member of the board since May 1999.

**Michael Barth**, construction engineer, has been an honorary member of the board since May 1999.





## OUR EDUCATIONAL APPROACH – HOLISTIC AND SUSTAINABLE

In our centres, we provide economically disadvantaged adolescents and young adults with the opportunity of receiving a professional and holistic technical education based on the model of the German dual system.

The dynamic developments of today's labour markets place high demands on all job applicants. Interdisciplinary thinking is becoming increasingly important. Therefore, we deliberately do not limit ourselves to teaching technical skills in our centres but rather focus on a holistic approach.

All the foundation's technical education programmes are designed for a duration of 15 or 19 months on a full-time basis, including a three-month company apprenticeship. During this time, our students acquire all the necessary competences to thrive in modern labour markets, to successfully shape their later professional lives, and react flexibly to new developments in the future. In teaching these so-called „key competencies for lifelong learning“, the foundation follows the recommendations of the European Union framework of reference, enables the students to fully participate in social life and successfully manage transitions on the labour market.

In addition to technical skills in theoretical and practical blocks, the full-time technical education includes the teaching of general education competencies in the areas of communication and language, English as a foreign/second language and digital skills. The curriculum is supplemented by a comprehensive personality training including employability. A three-month compulsory apprenticeship in a company or enterprise cooperating with the foundation completes the technical education.

However, our concept does not end here - we go one step further and actively place our graduates in qualified employment. Thanks to our large cooperation network, we regularly succeed in placing over 90% of our graduates in suitable companies.

This is how the foundation offers completely new perspectives for young people and the start of a better future.

The full-time technical education programmes are free of charge for the students. The vocational training courses offered by the foundation on a part-time basis are financed through the contributions of the participants, cooperating organisations or public institutions.



## OUR TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

For more than 30 years, the foundation has been providing economically disadvantaged young people access to a qualified technical education for occupational fields in which skilled personnel are urgently needed. When selecting and designing its programmes, the foundation is always considering the demand and the prospects on the respective labour markets. In India, Costa Rica and Nicaragua, the Samuel Foundation provides training in its own centres with high quality standards and in close cooperation with authorities and companies. We are offering careers in the following fields.

### Costa Rica | Nicaragua

(until June 2024)

- > Full-time technical education with professional qualification
  - >> Car Mechanics | Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Technology | Accounting Assistance | Administrative Assistance
- > Duration: 19 months including a three-month apprenticeship
- > Extra: Part-time vocational training courses

### India

- > Full-time technical education in Fashion Design & Management with professional qualification
- > Duration: 15 months including a three-month apprenticeship

## PREREQUISITES FOR RECEIVING A SCHOLARSHIP

In order to receive free technical education at one of the Samuel Foundation's centres, applicants must meet the foundation's admission criteria in terms of economic need, age, and school-leaving qualifications and successfully complete a comprehensive application procedure.



## DEVELOPMENTS IN 2024 | AN OVERVIEW

The overriding issue of the year for the foundation was the forced closure of our Centre for Technical Education in Nicaragua by Daniel Ortega’s authoritarian regime. On 11 June 2024, we learnt from a publication in Nicaragua’s Official Gazette that, by presidential decree, our operating licence had been revoked with immediate effect and all the foundation’s assets in Nicaragua – the Centre for Technical Education, land and inventory – had been confiscated. As with the approximately 5,000 NGOs that had previously been dissolved or expelled from the country, the justification given was the false claim that the foundation had failed to meet its reporting obligations for years.

As a result, we had to suspend our technical education programmes overnight, terminate the contracts for the 237 students at that time, and lay off all employees. It was a traumatic experience for everyone. Thanks to our strong local network and the support of our branch in Costa Rica, we were nevertheless able to place the majority of the graduating class first in apprenticeships and subsequently in permanent positions.

In contrast, operations at our branch in Costa Rica remained stable and successful in 2024. This is due in particular to the professional dedication of the local team and the reliable political framework.

Of particular significance was the successful completion of a cooperation project with the San José-based Fundación Rahab in June. The project, co-funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation, aimed to support women affected by sexual violence and involved both, improving the infrastructure of training rooms and workshops and running courses to enhance professional skills.

In India, too, we have been able to successfully continue our usual high-quality training work, even though the organisational and administrative burden is constantly increasing due to ever-stricter procedures imposed by the national financial supervisory authority to prevent the financing of terrorism, making it more difficult to focus on our training activities.

Given the particular challenges faced, the training outcomes for 2024 remain extremely positive across all project countries. A total of 302 students successfully completed their training at the Centres for Technical Education in Costa Rica, India and Nicaragua; 272 of them were placed in permanent employment.

>>



>> In Costa Rica, 59 participants successfully completed one of the part-time vocational training courses on offer.

The events in Nicaragua, combined with the wealth of experience gained from 30 years of high-quality technical education, have prompted the Foundation to look for multiplier scenarios that promise greater reach and lower investment risk for a comparable financial outlay. Through a process based on multiple selection criteria, we have thus identified Peru and Nepal as new project countries, as they offer comparable opportunities for cooperation with existing training institutions. The first preparatory steps for commencing project work were taken during the reporting year, and the course has been set for 2025.





## OUR WORK 2024 | COSTA RICA

Since 1996, young people from economically disadvantaged backgrounds have been given the opportunity to undertake high-quality training at the Samuel Foundation's Centre for Technical Education in San José, thereby significantly improving their long-term prospects. We currently offer 125 scholarship places there across four technical education programmes: Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Technology, Car Mechanics, Accounting Assistance and Administrative Assistance with emphasis on English. The new batch commenced as scheduled in April this year.

During the reporting year, the work of our centre in Costa Rica was once again characterised by a commitment to holistic educational support, social responsibility and strong partnerships.

As early as January, our students were getting involved as part of their compulsory community service. For example, they refurbished a playground for the charity Asociación Obras del Espíritu Santo, thereby making a tangible contribution to improving the living conditions of people in need.

In February, an important safety workshop was held, organised by the local police, who provided practical and preventative training that significantly raised our students' safety awareness.

In March, the German Ambassador, Mr Daniel Kriener (see photo), and his wife hosted the 2024 cohort of German volunteers in Costa Rica for a lunch at the embassy. This year's volunteer of our foundation, Anna-Lena, was also invited and was delighted to have the opportunity to get to know everyone.

In partnership with the Banco de Centroamérica, one of the largest banks in Costa Rica, a series of financial literacy workshops were organised. These workshops provided our students with the basic knowledge they need to manage their finances responsibly.

In May, students of the career Car Mechanics gained practical insights into the latest developments in the industry during a field trip to the Expo 2024 vocational trade fair.

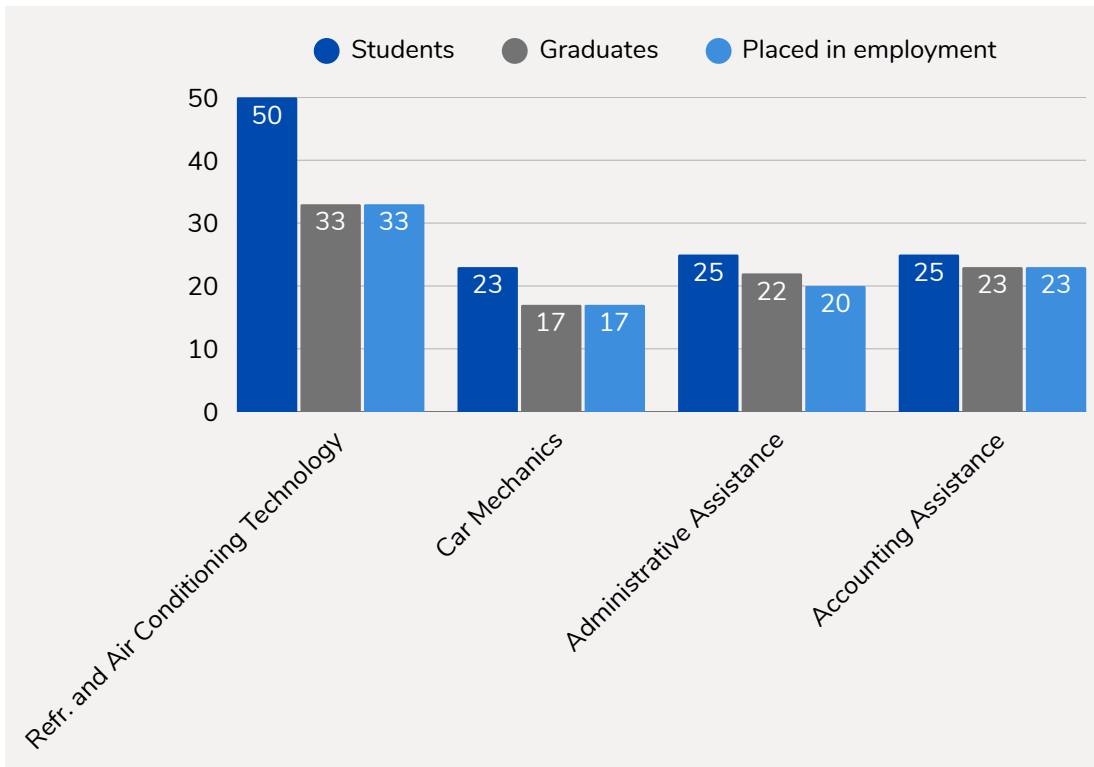
In October, the students took great pleasure in participating in various projects with FUNIPAR, an organisation that promotes the inclusion of young adults with special needs.

The year concluded with a blood donation campaign, driven by the commitment of our students and staff.



## SUCCESS IN NUMBERS | COSTA RICA

In Costa Rica, 95 young men and women (out of an initial 123) successfully completed their 19-month technical education. After passing their exams, we were able to place 93 graduates – 98% of the total – in the open labour market within six months. In addition, 59 participants completed one of the vocational training courses on offer during the reporting year.



**98%**  
placed in  
employment



## OUR WORK 2024 | INDIA

To offer young people a long-term way out of a lack of prospects and poverty, the Samuel Foundation has been active in India since 1993 and currently provides 110 young people at two locations in Delhi with the opportunity to complete a technical education in Fashion Design and Management.

The training year in New Delhi got off to a late start. Due to bureaucratic hurdles, the 2024–25 batch could not start until early September rather than early August as planned.

Prior to this, the branch had already received the prestigious ‘Great Place to Work’ certification in February. This award underscores the foundation’s clear commitment to a positive, appreciative and supportive working culture.

Another focus was on strengthening the students’ future and life skills. In cooperation with the National Informatics Centre (NIC), a cyber security workshop was held to raise awareness of the responsible and safe use of digital media.

In addition, a self-defence programme for female students, offered and organised by the Delhi

Police, boosted the self-confidence of the young women and confidence in their own actions.

Due to high levels of air pollution in November, the training had to temporarily switch to online lessons.

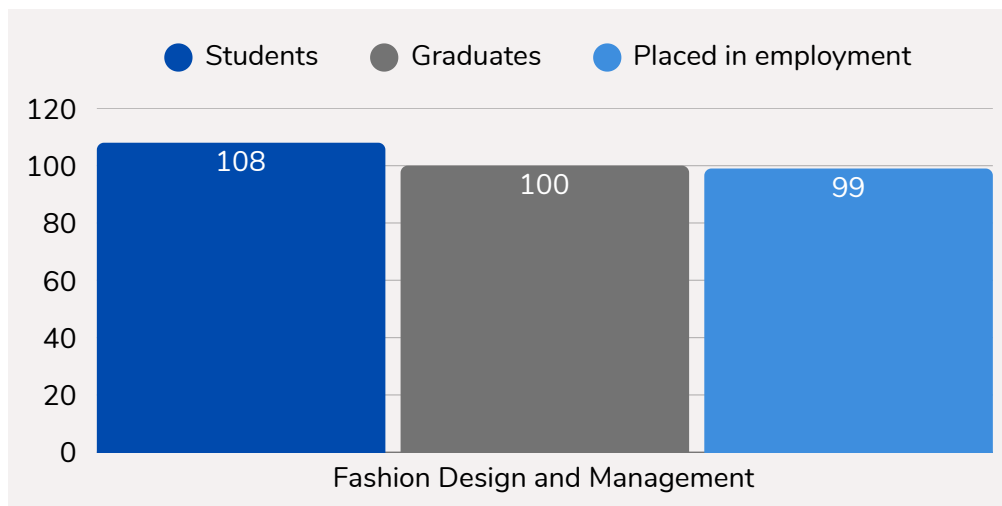
A highlight of the year was the foundation’s 30th graduation ceremony in India, which brought together alumni from three decades and took place in a particularly festive setting.

A key focus of the year was the mental health of the students. In view of growing performance demands and social pressures, the need for targeted support among our scholarship holders became clear. The foundation responded proactively by introducing regular mindfulness sessions. The sessions taught participants practical methods for stress management and emotional stabilisation and helped to strengthen their ability to concentrate, their resilience and their personal well-being in the long term.



## SUCCESS IN NUMBERS | INDIA

In India, 100 young men and women (out of an initial group of 108) have successfully completed their 15-month technical education programme. After they had passed their exams, we were able to place 99 graduates in the open labour market within three months.



**99%**  
placed in  
employment



## OUR WORK 2024 | NICARAGUA

Since the early 1990s, the Samuel Foundation has been offering technical education for socially disadvantaged people in the capital, Managua. At the start of 2024, interested young people were able to choose between four full-time careers at our Centre for Technical Education: Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Technology, Car Mechanics, Accounting and Administration with emphasis on English.

The year 2024 began as planned for the Samuel Foundation's project in Nicaragua. In February, representatives from Nicaragua's Ministry of the Environment (MARENA) visited our Centre for Technical Education in Managua and indicated the possibility of a donation in kind to improve the technical equipment. The application process for the new batch also proceeded as normal, enabling a new batch to commence their training in April.

On 11 June 2024, however, the year took a dramatic and decisive turn: after 35 years of successful work in Nicaragua, the Samuel Foundation had its operating licence revoked without any legal basis. At the same time, President Ortega's regime confiscated the foundation's entire assets, including the centre, land and inventory.

The closure comes against the backdrop of the political crisis that has been ongoing since 2018, characterised by massive human rights violations

and the systematic suppression of civic engagement. To date, more than 5,000 national and international NGOs have been banned.

The allegations officially levelled against the Foundation have been proven to be groundless, as all operating licences were duly issued right up until the end.

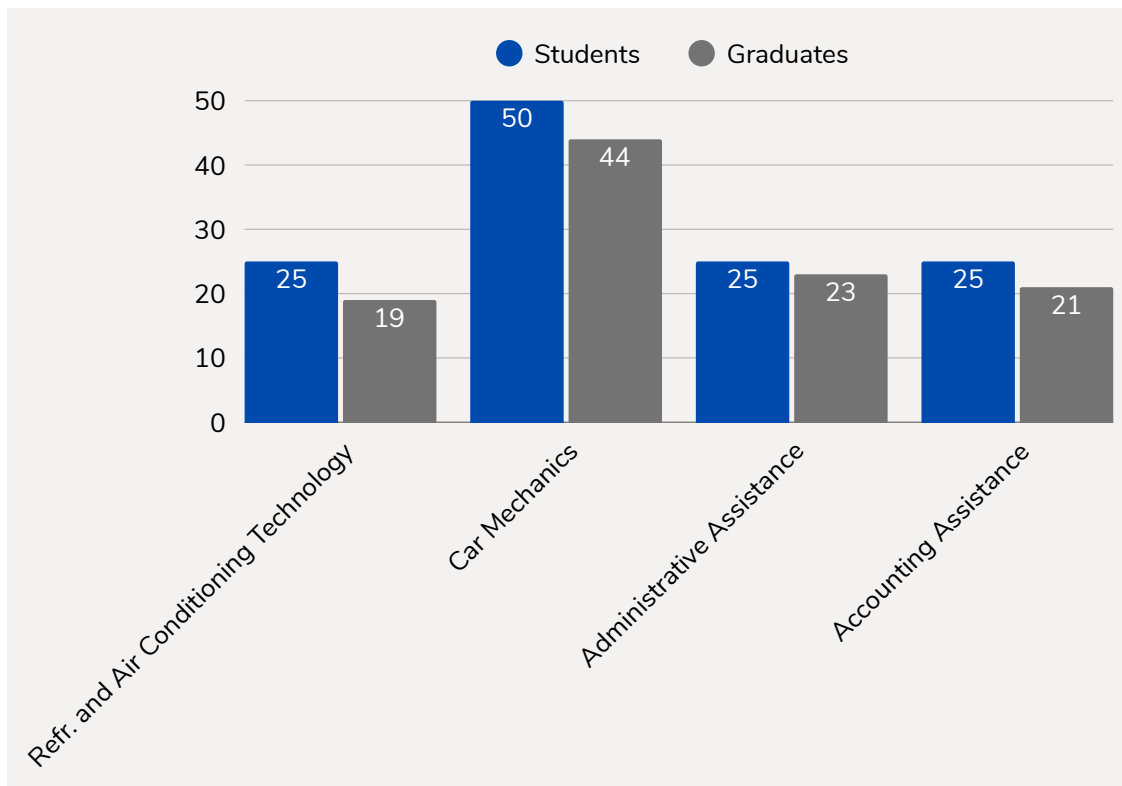
The closure of our centre directly affected 25 staff members and 237 students. As no alternative provision was made by the state, the foundation developed a comprehensive support plan through its branch in Costa Rica. The students in the graduating batch were on the verge of completing their training. They were placed in company apprenticeships from Costa Rica and also received their diplomas from there. In addition, the students from the newly started batch were offered the opportunity to continue their training in Costa Rica.

Our heartfelt thanks go to our local staff, who have carried out the foundation's work with dedication and passion over many years. We wish them all the very best for the future. A huge thank you also goes to all cooperating companies and partners who have provided us with invaluable support over the years. Without their help, our work would not have been possible.



## SUCCESS IN NUMBERS | NICARAGUA

In Nicaragua, 107 young men and women (out of an initial 125) were able to complete their 19-month technical education programme and obtain professional qualifications. Through our branch in Costa Rica, around 80 graduates were placed in one of our long-standing partner companies in the open labour market.



**75%**  
placed in  
employment



# 35 YEARS

## OF COMMITMENT IN NICARAGUA - A LOOK BACK

The Samuel Foundation began its work in Nicaragua with the establishment of a branch office in Managua in 1989. The country was in the final stages of a civil war that had been raging for 10 years between the Sandinista government led by Daniel Ortega and the Contra rebels, who were mainly supported by the USA. Both sides had previously joined forces to overthrow the Somoza family's dictatorship, which had ruled the country since the 1930s, in a bloody conflict, but had subsequently fallen out over the division of power. The country was bled dry, and there was a shortage of everything. The foundation, which by this time had already carried out smaller projects in the neighbouring countries of El Salvador and Costa Rica, saw, like countless other aid organisations, the great hardship of the population and decided to help. In the initial phase, it supported local institutions such as a children's home, a health centre and a primary school in helping the poorest of the poor.

### 1990-2010: EL TEPEYAC

As part of these relief efforts, we came into contact with the El Tepeyac health centre, run by the Sisters of the Congregation of the Oblates of the Sacred Heart, located far from the old colonial town of Granada, and have supported it ever since with financial and in-kind donations over a period of 20 years.

We were deeply impressed by the selfless and dedicated care that the sisters regularly provided to up to 200 patients each week. For most of those seeking help, it was not only the only accessible medical facility, but also – particularly for the many mothers – the sole source of urgently needed baby and children's food.

### CREATING NEW PERSPECTIVES

Although the first free elections and the victory of a democratic government in mid-1990 offered hope, the heavily indebted state had little scope for forward-looking policies. Young people in particular lacked prospects, as most of them had no chance of finding qualified employment without training. This ultimately prompted the foundation to become specifically involved in practical and, in particular, professional training in the skilled trades.



## OUR OWN CENTRE FOR TECHNICAL EDUCATION 1992/93

Subsequently, in 1992/93, the Foundation built and opened its first Centre for Technical Education on a three-hectare site it had acquired for this purpose in the capital, Managua. Over the course of more than three decades of our training activities on site, the facility has been renovated several times and continuously expanded, most recently to include eight classrooms, two computer training rooms, three large workshops, as well as a canteen, an administration building and sports facilities. The range of courses offered at the foundation's centre - the first being Car Mechanics - has also developed. Other courses were added, including Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Technology, Bookkeeping, Office Management, Construction trades and Commercial Assistance for the tourism sector. Most recently, up to 250 young people were trained annually in the four specialist areas of Car Mechanics, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Technology, Accounting and Administration with an additional qualification in English.

## PARALLEL FUNDING OF EXTERNAL PROJECTS

Alongside its focus on its own technical education programmes, the foundation has consistently supported projects with similar objectives. One such example is a co-funded project with the BMZ (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development) to renovate and expand the "El Divino Salvador" school in Bello Amanecer, a district of Ciudad Sandino west of Managua, where many large families live in precarious conditions.

Thanks to the cooperation project between the local parish, which runs the school, and the Foundation, six new classrooms were built and equipped. This enabled a significant increase in the number of pupils in years 1 to 6 and the opening of three additional groups in the upper school.

In recognition of the foundation's decades of support, the Nicaraguan government officially designated the Samuel Foundation as a "Misión Internacional" in 2008.





## ADDITION TO THE PROGRAMME THROUGH PART-TIME VOCATIONAL TRAINING COURSES

From 2019 onwards, the Samuel Foundation also offered part-time vocational training courses as an alternative for those who either did not meet the entry requirements for standard technical education programmes in terms of educational qualifications or age, or who, due to their precarious financial situation, could not afford to be out of work for long periods.

The eight- to ten-week courses were mostly offered in cooperation with other non-profit organisations. However, this has become increasingly difficult in recent years, as more and more NGOs have had to cease their activities in Nicaragua. Consequently, we were also unable to continue offering this programme from 2023 onwards.

As part of the general crackdown on NGOs, the foundation was eventually met with the same fate as many charitable organisations in Nicaragua before it. On 11 June 2024, the Ortega regime forced the unlawful closure of our institution and revoked the foundation's operating licence. What had begun in the late 1980s as a struggle for freedom under a young Sandinista president, Daniel Ortega, came to an end in 2024 at the hands of that very same president, who had since become a dictator himself.

## WHAT WILL REMAIN?

By the time it closed, the foundation had enabled more than 3,800 young people in Nicaragua to receive a full-time technical education and had helped over 800 participants in vocational training courses to build a better life for themselves. This impact will endure – like a seed that will hopefully continue to grow even without our direct support.

## A THANK YOU FOR THE VALUABLE SUPPORT OVER THE YEARS

Over the years, the foundation's work has received widespread support from a variety of partners. A network of companies has offered our students work placements and taken on the majority of them in permanent employments, supported the centre with donations in kind and by running workshops, to name but a few examples. The German Embassy has supported the foundation for many years, repeatedly providing it with generous donations and assisting with the completion of formalities following its closure.

Partner organisations such as Terre des Hommes and SwissContact have provided financial support for the foundation's vocational training courses. For many years, there has been a fruitful professional exchange with Nicaraguan authorities such as the national training authority INATEC and the Nicaraguan Ministry of the Environment MARENA. And our students, too, have supported other organisations every year – such as facilities for people with disabilities, children's homes and even the zoo in Managua, to name but a few – as part of the community service hours integrated into the programme.

# CONTACT DETAILS AT A GLANCE



President of the Board:  
Martin Barth

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## BRANCH NICARAGUA

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“Augusto César Sandino”  
Contiguo a la Terminal de Buses 105  
Managua | Nicaragua



# OVERVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR GRADUATE FIGURES

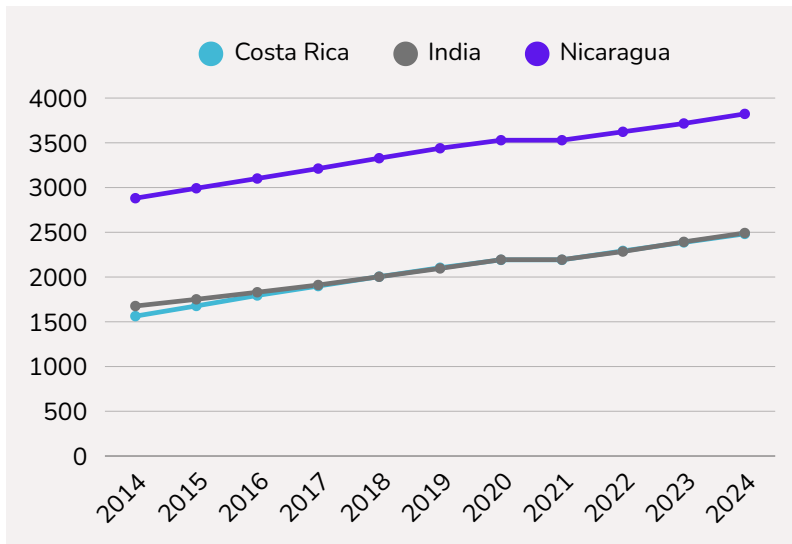
Thanks to the Samuel Foundation’s educational work spanning more than three decades, we have been able to show many young people a sustainable and long-term path out of poverty. Since we began our work in our project countries up to 2024, just under 2,500 students in both, India and Costa Rica, and more than 3,800 young people in Nicaragua, have successfully completed their technical education.

Over the last ten years, around 920 in Costa Rica, around 940 in Nicaragua and in India

around 810 students successfully completed their full-time technical education. Since 2007, we have also been offering evening vocational training courses in Costa Rica. Over the past ten years, we have provided training to a total of around 1,180 participants in various courses here, including around 60 in 2024.

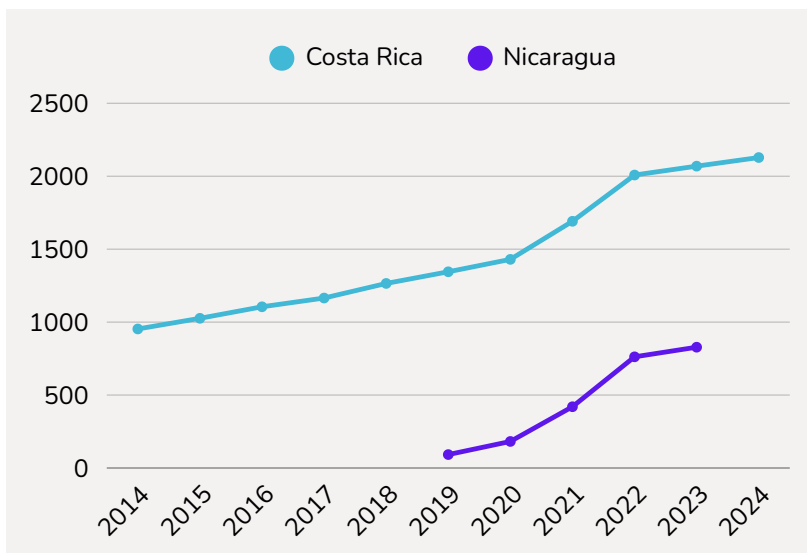
Our centre in Nicaragua has been offering vocational training courses since 2019; by 2024, a total of over 828 participants had successfully completed a course. Unfortunately, the programme had to be discontinued after that.

## Graduates of full time technical education programmes (accumulated 2014-2024)



The initial figures are based on the number of successful graduates up to 2014.

## Graduates of part-time vocational training courses (accumulated 2014-2024)



The initial figures are based on the number of successful graduates up to 2014.

## FINANCE | BALANCE SHEET AS OF 31.12.2024

ASSETS	
<b>A. CAPITAL ASSETS</b>	
I. Intangible assets	13.665 €
II. Tangible fixed assets	28.070.707 €
III. Financial assets	102.258 €
<b>B. CURRENT ASSETS</b>	
I. Inventories	38.000 €
II. Receivables and other assets	247.648 €
III. Cash in hand, bank balances and deferred income	3.085.132 €
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>31.557.410 €</b>

LIABILITIES	
<b>A. EQUITY</b>	
1. Foundation Capital	20.090.107 €
2. Retained earnings	5.190.700 €
3. Profit carried forward	2.986.553 €
4. Annual surplus	383.346 €
<b>B. ACCURALS, DEFERRED INCOME AND SPECIAL ITEMS</b>	<b>64.902 €</b>
<b>C. LIABILITIES</b>	<b>2.841.802 €</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>31.557.410 €</b>

## FINANCE | PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT 2024

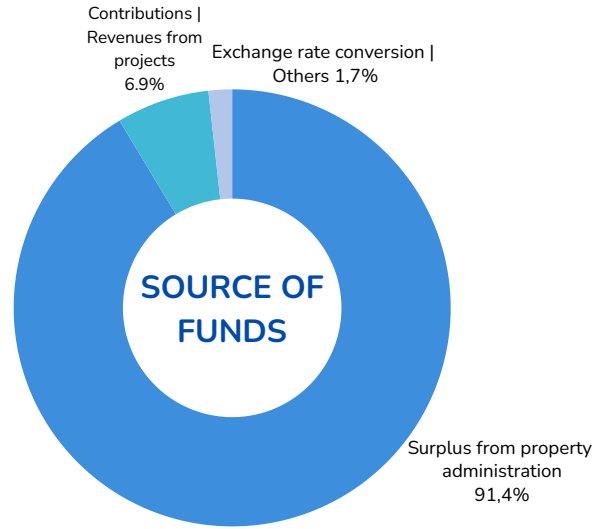
REVENUES 2024	
Surplus from property administration	2.204.600 €
Contributions   Revenues from projects	165.700 €
Exchange rate conversion   Other	42.500 €
<b>SUMME</b>	<b>2.412.800 €</b>

EXPENDITURES 2024	
Expenditures project funding in Germany and abroad	1.630.300 €
Expenditures project supervision	266.500 €
Public relations   Fundraising expenses	57.100 €
Administration expenses	57.100 €
Expenditures interests   Depreciation	18.500 €
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2.029.500 €</b>
<b>ANNUAL SURPLUS</b>	<b>383.300 €</b>

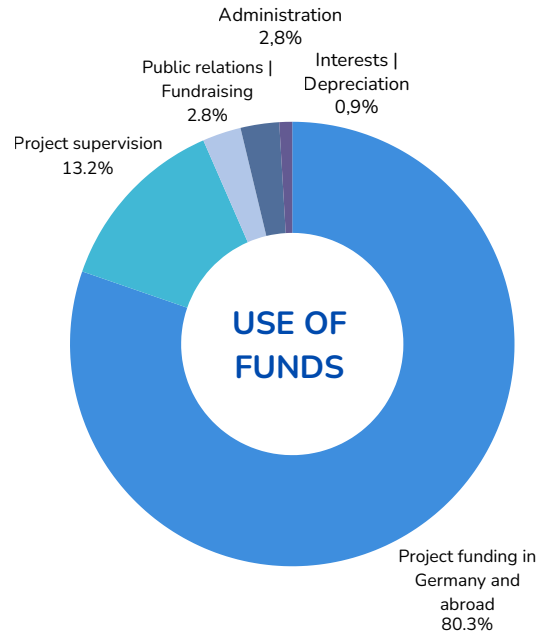
Following the final results of the audit by the auditing company Securia GmbH, the balance sheet and income statement were issued with an unqualified audit opinion.

# FINANCE | SOURCE OF FUNDS | USE OF FUNDS 2024

SOURCE OF FUNDS	in thousands €	in %
Surplus property administration	2.205	91,4%
Contributions   Revenues from projects	166	6,9%
Exchange rate conversion   Other	42	1,7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2.413</b>	<b>100%</b>



USE OF FUNDS	in thousands €	in %
Project funding in Germany and abroad	1.630	80,3%
Project supervision	267	13,2%
PR   Fundraising	57	2,8%
Administration	57	2,8%
Interests   Depreciation	19	0,9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2.030</b>	<b>100%</b>



## IMPRINT

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