

Fusagasugá, Colombia

Terranova Restaurant and Hotel School

Instituto Superior de Ciencias Sociales y Económico Familiares (ICSEF)/Desk Hospitality

The Instituto Superior de Ciencias Sociales y Económico Familiares (ICSEF) has the status of an accredited technical college. This institute in the hotel and restaurant sector has been training young women from poor backgrounds for 50 years. Its curriculum has in the past corresponded to the structure customary in the country, whereby theory precedes praxis so that theoretical courses are taught first, and practical application comes at the end of the training sessions. Experience shows, however, that by the end of the course interns hardly remember the theory they have learned.

To improve the range of training and to make the somewhat remotely situated school more attractive, the ICSEF is redesigning its curriculum according to the principle "learning through doing". The ICSEF leadership turned to the Limmat Foundation and Desk- Hospitality, a Zurich-based best-practices



center, to get the expertise for this change. In 2019, the three partners worked together to develop the Terranova project. The key objective of this realignment is to introduce the dual education system which forms the basis of apprenticeship training in German-speaking countries. The apprenticeship

period is divided between theoretical learning in a vocational school and part-time work in a company. This enables the young people to quickly integrate their knowledge into real-world practical experience and develop routines and skills.

This vocational training model is more or less new - to Colombia. There are very few companies that have the competence and the capacity to train apprentices. The Limmat Foundation and the management of ICSEF had to set up a new curriculum and realign the previous content and objectives with the new methodology. Every semester now follows this pattern: a theoretical block course on a specific subject is immediately followed by an internship at the Torreblanca Cultural Center which is located near the school.

The students gain further practical experience in an in-house production facility where products from the region are processed into convenience food items. Products such as fruit jams and sauces, like those of any other food processing company, are sold through shops or directly to consumers. The brands created are registered with the Chamber of Industry and Commerce.

The preparatory phase and the introduction of the new system were guided by an expert from Desk Hospitality working on-site. This guidance focused primarily on converting the old curriculum and adapting the didactic and methodological practices of the teaching staff to the dual system. In the past, the majority of the practicum instructors did the work themselves while students acted as assistants. However, in the new curriculum, the students come to their practicum with an existing base of relevant knowledge and the ability to work more independently. Teachers are now more likely to act as coaches who supervise the students and intervene only when necessary.

The technical content of various subjects such as English, ecology, nutrition, accounting and organization also had to be revised, supplemented and updated. Appropriate software was purchased and the necessary training provided. In July 2019, the first class of students to be trained under the dual system began its course.

Project costs	CHF 230,000
Local partner and other contributions	CHF 150,000
Limmat's contribution	CHF 80,000