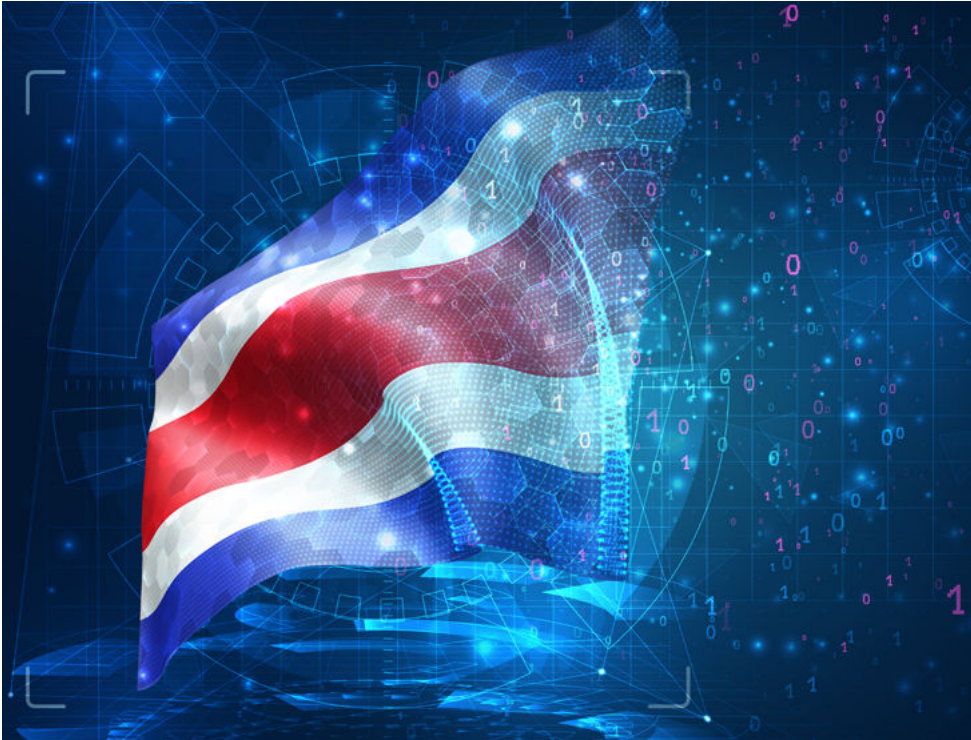


DRIVING THE TALENT TO POWER COSTA RICA'S DREAM

Fundación CRUSA leads innovative programs in partnership with the private and public sectors to build a more prosperous and inclusive society



COSTA RICA'S success story is powered by its reputation as a stable and secure base for business operations. The country has attracted hundreds of global companies to set up manufacturing and services support operations, including the likes of Amazon, Microsoft, IBM and Hewlett-Packard.

All this requires talent, and while Costa Rica is a regional leader in public education and training sector, the needs of the knowledge economy can shift quickly. According to a study by ManpowerGroup, in 2021 59% of employers in Costa Rica reported having difficulties in finding qualified candidates for work vacancies.

Costa Rica has achieved a literacy rate of 98% with 30% of 25-34-year-olds holding a tertiary qualification in 2021, according to the OECD. However, Costa Rica's model as a base for nearshoring faces challenges in the form of gaps between profiles required by companies and the human resources available, particularly as new technol-



FLORA MONTEALEGRE
Executive director

"We believe in human potential, in people's innovational and entrepreneurial capabilities, and their commitment to prosperity, sustainability and inclusion for Costa Rica."

ogies emerge and spur a need for continuous learning and reskilling.

Fundación CRUSA, a private not-for-profit organization which works to improve Costa Ricans' quality of life and employment prospects, decided to tackle the skills gap challenge. The question Flora Montealegre, CRUSA's executive director, and her team asked themselves was how to generate new training models that meet the requirements of the most dynamic sectors of the economy without neglecting the particularities of the job profiles within various sectors of the population.

Fundación CRUSA creates strategic alliances to strengthen and promote the dynamic ecosystem made up by the private and public sectors plus civil society. Since 1996, the Foundation has forged more than 500 alliances with different organizations and implemented over 969 projects in every corner of the country with the overarching aim of building a more prosperous, sustainable and inclusive Costa Rica.

The organization's latest major step toward achieving these goals is its CRUSA 22-27 Strategy, a framework for impact projects such as a financing of return to employment (FORTE) scheme initially directed at 150 women with different socioeconomic profiles from various parts of the country who were offered practical digital skills such as managing MERN stacks on Amazon Web Services (AWS).

"We have many challenges but also many opportunities to work together to design and implement the necessary solutions for human talent development in Costa Rica."

This commitment to human potential is exemplified by an innovative partnership between Fundación CRUSA, elev8 and Amazon. The AWS-reSTART program focused on providing training in employability and certifications in cloud computing to a group of 30 women who found themselves in situations of unemployment, poverty and/or at risk of social marginalization.

The women participated in a mix of theoretical training and practical lab sessions, reinforced by a solid mentoring process and a labor intermediation strategy to help drive them toward obtaining the digital skills required in today's knowledge economy. In just four months, the program achieved labor insertion of more than 70% of the women.

For Fundación CRUSA, such results demonstrate that Costa Rica's dream of more equitable human development and higher-quality employment options can be achieved only by boosting training and professional development of the population. In this way, the active participation of Costa Rican talent in global value chains is encouraged and the country's role in the world economy can be consolidated.

"It is crucial to recognize the importance of investing in the growth and formation of human capital to ensure a prosperous and competitive future," concludes Montealegre. || ||||

