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Leading Teacher: Prince Herrera López

Project Aim: To reduce poverty in our community while saving our planet. To create a recycling centre at our school to exchange the separated waste for money.

Background: The project started when we picked two big problems that our community is currently facing. **First**, we realised that all the rubbish from our houses and school goes directly to landfills and there's no recycling involved in this process. This means the rubbish will remain on Earth for hundreds of years and a lot of it ends in rivers and seas. Sadly, there is no recycling culture in our city/country as there is just one common rubbish truck that collects waste daily. We all want a better future so we most stop this problem by doing something. The **second** problem we noticed was that many of our friends at school have dysfunctional families and very low/non income. Lot of children can't afford a pair of shoes, glasses, school supplies and this harms their education.

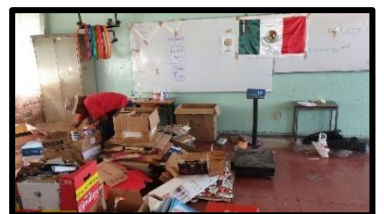
Then we had a brilliant idea where we could fix these two problems **pollution** and **poverty**. And this is how our project started:

Recycle to Educate

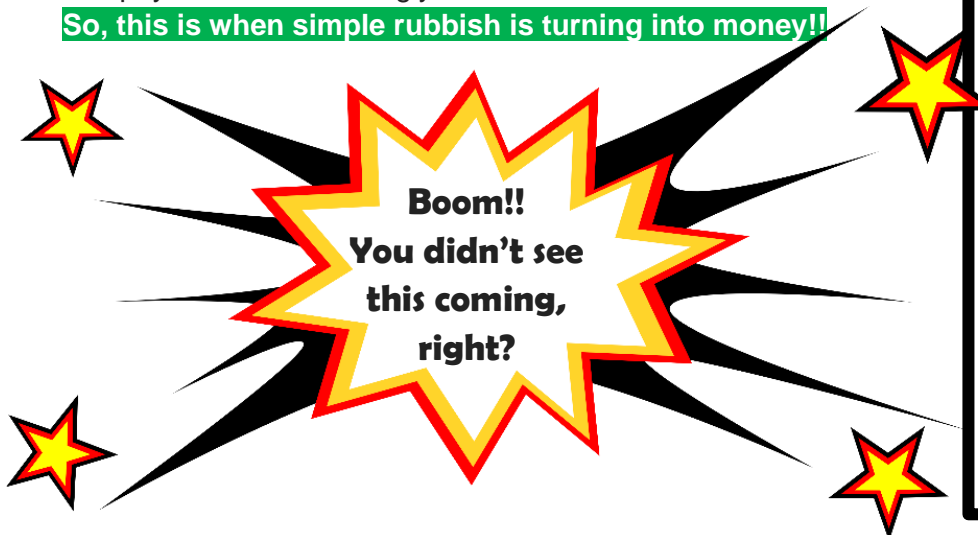
Let's get started: We brainstormed and got permission to create a recycling centre at our school where all the waste can be separated. We started by letting everyone know that at lunch time there were going to be brown boxes with the recycling sign on it to deposit plastic, aluminium (cans), etc. Also, everyone could find us if they had questions as we are always wearing the recycling hats to be



identified easily. Then we started encouraging everyone to separate their rubbish at home and to bring it to the recycling centre at school. We could not believe how much waste we were collecting weekly. And the sad thought that of all of that could stay for years damaging and polluting our beautiful planet. Later we investigated and finally got the contact of Mr. Alejandro who is passionate about the environment and started his own business collecting waste and recycling it. We arranged that he would come to our school to weigh the separated waste and pay us back accordingly.



So, this is when simple rubbish is turning into money!!



Goals

With the money we were going to collect we set the following points as main goals to focus on:

- Ophthalmologist appointment for a 2nd grade girl named María Socorro
- Glasses for Socorro
- Uniforms and shoes for a 4 children family
- School shoes for the most needed children



52kg of plastic in this sack!



Implementation & Impact: No one at school was forced to help or to participate. An seems that it was our **best strategy**. Friends from all grades started bringing their separated waste from home as soon as they learned the great feeling of helping others. Also, they realised that they all want a better and clean planet for their future. Parents were very supportive and started helping as well. The materials we separate are: plastic, aluminium, glass, paper, cardboard and tins.

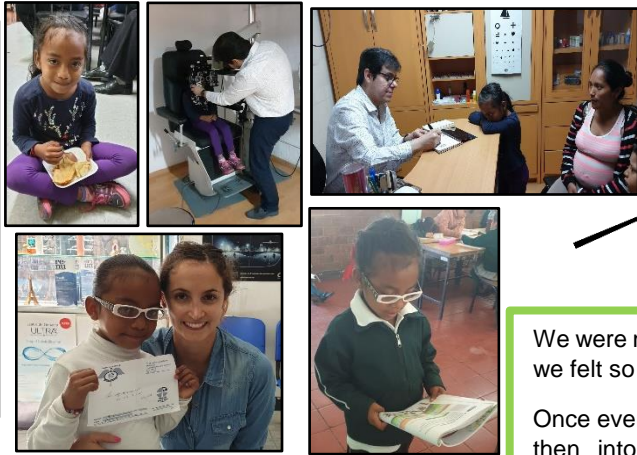
It didn't take too long when we got over 52kg of plastic to exchange for money, plus the other materials collected that week. Still our goals were far to be reached.

We open an account on **MexicoMatters** <https://www.instagram.com/mexicomatters/> and another school from our city "Vygotski del Country" contacted us as they had lot of waste to get rid of. They were about to close down the school. Also, an ice-cream shop contacted us. So, all their "rubbish" was solid gold for us.

We knew soon it was going to be possible to achieve our main goals!



- 22nd February 19**
- Ophthalmologist appointment for Socorro
 - Breakfast for her mum, younger brother and Socorro
- 5th March**
- Socorro gets her glasses 6.25 dioptrres
 - Now she can read!!



We were not giving up and after achieving our first goals we felt so rewarded!!

Once everyone saw that rubbish turned into money and then into glasses more friends continued helping. Parents started spreading the word with their families and neighbours.



- 25th March**
- Uniforms and school shoes are bought for a family of 4 children
- 30th April**
- School shoes for 8 students



It might not look a lot to you, but the families in our community have very little resources or non. Children are coming from very dysfunctional families if they are lucky to have one.

For us is very important that everyone continues attending school. Even if we are a low-class society, we can all find the way to help others. **Education is freedom in life!!!!**

We learned that our voices are powerful, and we can be heard. As our friend Naomi mentioned one day "A Global Change starts with us, Kids!"

The most rewarding experience of this project was doing it because we wanted to. Without expecting anything in return. We have already decided we are not going to stop working on this project once we submit our final report. We know the great impact we are having in our community and we are setting new goals to achieve before the end of the school year (July). For sure we will continue with it next academic year.

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For some it's just rubbish, for us is our future!!



We are grateful to all the people at Urbana 54 who made this project happened.

