

POLITICAL EDUCATION AS PART OF THE GUATEMALAN CULTURE

By: Snackity Snacks

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DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

In Guatemala, there is a deficit in public education, which has been aggravated by the pandemic. Due to the difficulties involved in conducting online classes, the Ministry of Education decided to prioritize the learning areas of mathematics, language, and natural sciences; and temporarily postpone courses in social studies, body language, history, among others. (Perez, 2021). The limitation of courses offered by the ministry will present a delay in comprehensive training, leaving gaps in the civic, social, and political education of young people, which could negatively impact the social, cultural, and political development of students.

Based on this, our project "Political education as part of the Guatemalan culture" focuses on promoting basic knowledge about citizen's rights and duties, with the aim of improving the civic and citizenship formation of young people, mainly from the marginal urban area and rural Guatemala.

To achieve this, we made short, entertaining, and informative podcasts where we cover the essential topics for the formation of citizens. Topics include rights and duties, justice, the Constitution of Guatemala, the culture of peace, the rule of law, and citizen participation. We work in partnership with Guatemalan radio institutions such as Radio Sonica, Radio Quezada, and Institución Guatemalteco de Educación Radiofónica (IGER), who donated space and time on their radio stations for us broadcast our podcasts.

Take a look at our website, where you can listen to our podcasts:

<https://sites.google.com/student.interamerican.o.edu.gt/epcg/podcasts?authuser=0>



Our team member, Jieyu Zheng, making and editing the podcasts.

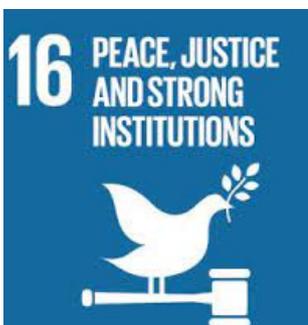
THE PROJECT'S GOALS

General Goal: To promote political education in students from marginal urban and rural areas of Guatemala to achieve a comprehensive education that contributes to the social, cultural and political formation of young people.

Specific Goals

1. Know the reality of young people in rural and marginal urban areas regarding access to education during the pandemic and their civic knowledge.
2. Provide information and training for young people through informative podcasts about their rights and duties to empower them as responsible citizens.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Goal 16: Peace, justice, and strong institutions

Goal 4: Quality Education

Our project focuses on objectives number 16 and 4 as we are providing political education to the citizens of Guatemala so that they understand the issue and make responsible decisions in the future. The podcasts will give citizens a good base of rights, duties, values, and political knowledge that will allow them to make the right decisions and lead the country of Guatemala to a brighter future, creating more responsible and effective institutions, and a more solid and peaceful society.



IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

For the development of our project, we conducted a survey of 30 young people (ages 13-23) from rural and marginal areas from the departments of Petén, Guatemala, Quetzaltenango, Chimaltenango, and San Marcos. From there we were able to identify the issues and aspects of the civic and political knowledge of the youth we needed to reinforce. In the first survey, 30% of the teenagers declared that they had not received civics or citizenship classes at school. We also noticed that 33.3% of the young people did not know their rights, and if they claimed to know them, it was difficult for them to recall them. 50% did not know about the laws or the constitution of Guatemala, and 43% did not know about the Peace Agreement of their country.

Therefore, we created podcasts including the topics about rights and duties, justice, the Constitution of Guatemala, the culture of peace, the rule of law, and citizen participation. We shared our work with the young people who were previously surveyed. And now, we can see that 85.7% are confident about their knowledge of their rights; all of them responded correctly to our survey, demonstrating that there has been an increase in the teenager's comprehension and knowledge of the civic, political, and historical aspects of Guatemala.

Finally, 100% of them answered that they feel more like informed and prepared citizens after having listened to the podcasts. According to data from the 2018 census, 65.3 percent of homes in Guatemala have radios (Díaz, 2020). Thanks to our partnership with local radios, we were able to further expand the project, increasing our impact at a national level. With "Radio Quezada", we were able to broadcast our podcasts on March 9, 11, and 13 and every Monday and Friday of the month of April, reaching approximately 14 thousand people from the department of Jutiapa who listened to all 7 podcasts.

Furthermore, the radio station "Radio Sónica" helped us with the reproduction of our podcasts on April 19th, in the departments of Guatemala City and Sacatepéquez. In these departments, 80% and 79% of the population listen to the radio, respectively (Díaz, 2020). Reaching approximately 1,057,406 people who probably listened to the podcasts on the radios.

Finally, the radio station "Institución Guatemalteca de Educación Radiofónica" (IGER) has coverage in the 22 departments of the country of Guatemala, allowing us to expand our podcast nationwide, impacting as many Guatemalans as possible.

SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROJECT

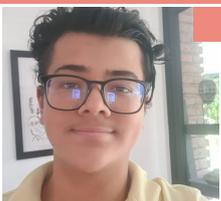
This project is sustainable. We would continue working with the radio stations Radio Quezada and Institución Guatemalteca de Educación Radiofónica (IGER) for the broadcasting of new and old podcasts. They will also have permission to reproduce and transmit the podcasts on their radios as part of their educational content. That way, our podcasts would continue enriching the citizens.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR EXPERIENCE

Throughout the entire project, we have had many highlights that we will remember for the rest of our lives. This experience has opened new ideas and opportunities for us to express our creativity and learn from new experiences. One of these highlights was the whole process of making the podcast. None of us knew how to make a podcast, but we slowly began learning how to create and edit them. Although it is still not perfect, we made progress by learning from our errors in order to improve. Another highlight from the project was the experience of being able to diffuse basic political information that many of the citizens in Guatemala did not know. We are glad to have helped the citizens of our country get informed and spike their interest in several of the topics that the podcast talked about.

PARTNERSHIPS

- "Institución Guatemalteca de Educación Radiofónica", which included our podcast in their radial educational program that covered the 22 departments of the country of Guatemala.
- "Radio Sónica" helped us with the transmission of our podcast covering the departments of Guatemala City and Sacatepéquez.
- "Radio Quezada" helped us with the transmission of our podcasts covering the region of Jutiapa.
- Jennifer Velázquez, the coordinator for the broadcasting of the podcasts in Radio Sónica and editor of the scripts.
- Evelyn Santos, the coordinator for the transmission for the podcast in "Institución Guatemalteca de Educación Radiofónica" (IGER).



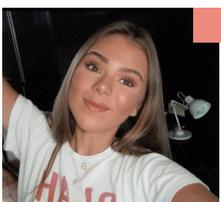
DIEGO

I believe that during this project I have learned a lot of new skills. A skill that I was really not good at before is time management and I'm still not the best at it, but thanks to this project I was able to learn how to manage my time wisely. I also reinforced my skills to communicate orally, I normally get really nervous speaking to a crowd and just thinking about how many people are going to hear the podcasts just blows my mind and makes me more nervous, but after doing all of the podcasts I got less nervous at speaking. Another skill would be problem-solving. Finally I reinforced my teamwork skills.



VANESSA

I was very impressed with my personal improvement throughout the project. I learned to get involved more in group decision-making. I also learned that things aren't always going to go the way they are planned. Deadlines have also been an issue for me, however, I managed to finish everything on time and I'm proud of myself for that. I would finally like to add that my heart is enriched now that I know I've done something good for the future of my country and the community itself. Hopefully, we can continue educating the future of Guatemala.



ANA SOFÍA

During the course of this project, I was able to learn several new things and reinforce some other skills. Some of the new things I learned were how to communicate my ideas in a well-ordered form, both orally and written. I developed a sense of critical and creative thinking since we had to come up with appropriate ideas for the script. During the pandemic, we learned adaptability since we had to come up with ideas of how to carry through the work with the new living rules. The skills I would say I reinforced would definitely be teamwork, it was essential we all worked together and had each other's backs during this project. I think we did a pretty good job at doing so and therefore achieved a project this well-executed.

SIU YEN RODRÍGUEZ - LEADER



This project allowed me to learn several things, mostly, that everything is possible. At the start of the project, I was scared if we would be able to achieve such high goals, or if radio stations would allow teenagers to transmit their podcasts, but we did it. Even if we are in the middle of a pandemic we still found a way to build a better world. I learned a lot about teamwork and the importance of communication and cooperation, since the combination of everyone's ideas, perspectives, and work formed a unique project. Finally, I believe I acquired the skills of leadership, teamwork, and organization, that would stick with me for the rest of my life.

JIEYU ZHENG - SECRETARY



Throughout this entire project, I have learned and enhanced several valuable lessons and abilities that I can apply to my daily life and in the future. Some of these abilities are problem-solving, critical thinking, adaptability, and podcasting. Everyone in the team had a rough start, but we pulled through and achieved the goals that we proposed. I appreciate everything that my group has done, without them, I wouldn't be able to comprehend how essential teamwork, collaboration, adaptability, and communication are. Those are some of the characteristics that are fundamental when working with several people, especially with a project of this magnitude. Without them, your team wouldn't be able to make any progress.

REFERENCES

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