

A Peace through the Expressive Arts Education Program:
A multi-systemic approach to Social Justice

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PEACE EDUCATION PROGRAM THROUGH THE EXPRESSIVE ARTS: A MULTI-SYSTEMIC APPROACH TO SOCIAL JUSTICE

Abbreviations

EXA: Expressive Arts

EXA-PEP: Peace Education Program through the expressive arts

OEDI: Guidance approach to outcomes and impact

CAI: Community art interventions

NGO: Non-governmental organization



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INTRODUCTION

"What we need then, is a new 'paradigm' - a new vision of reality. A fundamental change in our thoughts, perceptions and values" (p.16)

Fritjof Capra 1988

Peace Education through the Expressive Arts, hereafter referred to as EXA-PEP, promotes the creation of programs focused on sustainability through creativity. The target population is children, but in an effort to create safe spaces for them, where they fully can develop their capabilities, it is essential to work with teachers, parents and others responsible adults. In general, it was a mixed group formed by both local and immigrant participants, mostly Nicaraguan, of all ages, among whom women are the head of family.

Selena Sermeño (2015), PhD, theologian, psychologist and facilitator from El Salvador, specializing in trauma, explained in a Central American charities seminar, that human dignity is the fundamental seed for pain management in traumatic events. Dignity is a universal right and includes respect, hospitality, validity, curiosity, commitment and creating safe and contemplative spaces to express our feelings. It is linked to identity because we feel valued when we are recognized and taken into account. Dignity does not exist without a social context and is involved in the creation of culture.

Above all, dignity is a quality that is available in a cozy, warm atmosphere, in a place we call home. When we feel at 'home' we are able to connect with our full potential. Carrie MacLeod (2014), a member of the faculty of the European Graduate School and co-founder, director of ICAP (International Centre for Arts and Peacebuilding) in Switzerland and director of research at the University of British Columbia, defined the creation of "home" as divided into four variables: body, space, time and energy (p.1).

Through our ability to express ourselves, make connections and make decisions we build a network that we define as "home". In this conformation, household connections are important and necessary. The connections we make mobilize our social dimension. But it does not stop there, because in the awakening of our planetary reality we understand that if we are to survive as humanity, we need to act responsibly in the management of resources and the life on planet Earth, our only home.

Justice and dignity are important variables of any sustainable system and the idea of peace is based on the creation of ethical sustainable systems. To achieve this, we need changes, especially in our value systems and world-views as stated in one of the most recognized organizations called

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Earth Charter International (2001). The EXA-PEP pays special attention to sustainability because as UNESCO explains, this initiative deserves cooperation, given its importance and potential. There is a clear movement towards investment in education as a means to achieve global sustainability goals (Earth Charter 2015). Gutiérrez y Prado (1997) explain that the old scientific approach forces us to consider life as a series of mechanisms. Our vision was distorted and fragmented at the time. The new concept of "system as a living organism" is that life is constantly deconstructing and rebuilding itself, in categories such as space and time, and even the matter and energy. As such the holistic view allows us to consider the world from the point of view of relations and integration and not isolated entities (p.23). Reaffirming the need to unite, connect and network in solidarity.

METHODOLOGY

Primary attention is given to the conceptual framework of sustainability as articulated at the Earth Charter International (2001), which is one of many ethical frameworks for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society in the 21st century. It seeks to inspire in all people, a new sense of global interdependence and shared responsibility for the well-being of the whole human family, the greater community of life and future generations. It is a vision of hope and a call to action.

Because I am looking for changes in systems, processes and relationships, the program is entered with a phenomenological approach. This means that I enter with the principle of intentionality conducive to change and eco-poiesis. S. K. Levine (2015), Professor Emeritus at York University and Vice-Rector and Dean of the Doctoral program in Expressive Arts at the European Graduate School, further explains that to speak of a poietic ecology is to imply that nature can be considered as a work of art... this perspective points to a different attitude towards the world around us, one in which we accept our responsibility for shaping the environment in a way that respects its otherness as well as our own capacity for affecting it (p.10).

Reasons for using expressive arts in this program

The art of shaping beliefs

The function of art in building peace is to drive social change. However, it is well known that in practice, despite many efforts, the position of art in development strategies in Central America remains relatively marginal. By using the arts there is an intention to deliver to communities the "know-how" and experience; the goal is to take on the task of helping them understand and realize their own creative and cultural processes, setting priorities, and issuing guidelines for the development of working models, as appropriate.

Art transcends human differences such as nationality, language, sex, and social strata, religious and political beliefs and therefore it is linked to our cultural, economic, social and political systems. In this investigation it is understood that for effective social change to happen there must be profound work at this level because beliefs are the root of the untraceable conflict.

Art has the potential to promote and encourage individual changes, which are essential for social transformation. It is a universal language that arises from the human need to express themselves, to communicate and transmit experiences. Shaun McNiff (2004), expressive arts therapist and professor at Lesley University, is aware of how beauty helps us to restore the soul. He states that the perception of beauty in particular things brings a general sense of renewal, admiration and passion, all of which

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generates vital energy (p.31). UNESCO (1996) states that economic and social development without culture is like a soulless development. From the experience of EXA-PEP is here where the importance of the role of the arts in the development of sustainable cities, as impact and are directly reflected in the health, economy, environment, identity, security, and sense membership.

➤ Building sustainable communities

According to the Center for Eco-Literacy (2009) any person or thing is a system, for example, a plant, a person, a school, a community. These systems are not separate from the larger system in the world. They understand that systemic thinking requires thinking about forms of relationship, connection and context. Systemic thinking also requires several changes in perceptions, which in turn leads to different ways of teaching and different ways of organizing societies. Therefore, from the perspective of this research the school community is made up of a wide range of target populations to be addressed and monitored in order to promote effective change. Students, teachers, parents and neighbors become essential members of the system in which the school community lies and not isolated from the surrounding world it consists of other important agents of change.

Gutiérrez & Prado (1997), directors and founders of the Doctoral Program of Eco-Pedagogy at the Universidad La Salle in Costa Rica, understand that the harmonic needs of the individual with the natural reality involves the creation and shaping of spaces that fit the demands of global society, pedagogically aligned with our daily life (p.26). These learning spaces are needed to promote ethical values. In the construction of safe spaces, this EXA-PEP is interested in the ecological approach therefore we support our beliefs on theories created by The Earth Charter (2001) defined by the adoption of patterns of production, consumption and reproduction that safeguard Earth's regenerative capacities, human rights, and community well-being. The creation of safe spaces within the community that comes from sharing experiences in which the energy and information flow, is essential and necessary for the development of new sustainable social structures. A sustainable and poetic system embraces the values that promote life in building new societies in more peaceful countries and regions.

Creating safe and healthy environments where to evolve seems imperative for peace building. Karen Estrella (2011), highlights the ability of the expressive arts to facilitate change. She argues that we should open the way to share what we know, what we do, and what we have witnessed in our own practice (p.51). Expressive arts aim to change the perception of people on particular issues or conflicts. The practices of peacebuilding is a tool that helps mediate forgiveness and reconciliation with ourselves, with others and with the environment. In the process of forgiveness and reconciliation that has been mediated in this research in communities in Pavas, the role of the facilitator was to forge and hold the space in which things happen. Once the session started, control is assumed by the community itself. There is a similarity between the role of the facilitator and the role of the therapist. Estrella (2011), understands that the expressive arts are not only the practice of therapy itself, but also a practice of social change through the arts. (P.49)

➤ The role of schools

Schools are inclusive community centers, and large cultural meeting points. Here it is easy to contact the community and to nimbly work with students, teachers and parents. Berman and Jiwani (2002), Ph.D. in Psychology, and Canadian researchers agree that developing an ongoing relationship with schools and school staff is essential in any program establishment. They are also aware of the importance of offering sessions to the entire school community, linking parents, teachers, students and external services through information sessions (pp. 177-178). In our case, the invitation to participate in the sessions of expressive arts turns out to be an alternative way of

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working on values that promote life and inform, conceptualize and analyze situations, goals and future visions.

The process of making art allows us to mobilize and empower people, which is also one of the priority areas of UNESCO (2014) on education for sustainability. Art has the potential to promote and encourage individual changes, raising the productive capacities essential for true social transformation. It develops in people the ability to accommodate new circumstances taking advantage of new opportunities latent in the arts. The EXA-PEP has witnessed that the changes generated through the expressive arts are aligned to the changes proposed by Gutiérrez-Prado (1997) in pursuit of sustainable cities and communities, with the intention of building fair systems and assure the support of social structures in Central America. These are vital both to raising awareness of our environmental citizenship which can only be translated into effective action when accompanied by organized population, the will to learn, understand and claim their rights and exercise their responsibilities (p.16). The First Global Education Initiative of the United Nations (GEFI-2012) states that it is time to look at education as an instrument for global citizenship, through which to train students and invite them to get involved and take an active role both locally and globally to address and solve global challenges and become more proactive people who can achieve a just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, safe and sustainable world.

"Feelings are key elements in the search for new and more meaningful relationships. Precisely because of this, feelings are the richest, permanent and most varied source of meaningful learning" (Gutiérrez-Prado, 1997, p.55). I understand that creativity has held the breath of life, inspiration, willingness to follow, and increased sensitivity that can help navigate complex circumstances. All these qualities are necessary to promote sustainable development.

Source: Recycling Week 2014, Pavas, San Jose, Costa Rica

➤ Expressive Arts in peacebuilding

How to adapt our formal educational systems to our new poetic vision of sustainability? How to teach about the principles of sustainability? The theory has been developed by many international organizations including the UN, and the content and concepts that need to be included are clear, but we need to figure out new ways of teaching and forging these values. In the realization that old structures cannot just simply be disrupted, as an EXA-PEP we aim to find new creative and non-formal methodologies to work with our goal population.

➤ Education for Sustainability

Francisco Gutierrez (1997), one of the greatest Spanish educators in Costa Rica and his wife Cruz Prado, who teaches the Eco-Pedagogy PhD program at La Salle University in San Jose, knows that the challenge of sustainable societies today is creating new ways of being and existing in this world (p.29). In so doing we understand that to have a better life quality we need to regulate our levels of consumption in between other habits that are linked to our value system, linked to the value that we grant to the material realm. Respecting and caring for all community of life is the Earth Charter's (2001) first pillar. In between other important aspects it includes respect for diversity, understanding, compassion, love, democracy and security as important assets to consider.

Kartikeya V. Sarabhai (2014), professor at University for Peace, in a Seminar at Earth Charter International in University for Peace, that took place in Costa Rica in January 2014, where I was able to participate, explained that education should include three main assets:

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1. Eco-Literacy: education for sustainability
2. Refine Systemic View
3. Awareness/ Ethics

Sarabhai considered that sustainable development is linked to environmental, cultural, ritual, social, political and economic realms. He also mentioned cultural sensitivity, effective communication, conflict resolution and “glocal” leadership (local leadership with global view) as necessary for the achievement of a culture of peace. In my own experience the implementation of arts based peacebuilding practices have succeeded in instilling in people values that foster life. Through the expressive arts workshops, an awakening of the senses occurs that takes place in the process of art making. The EXA-PEP is designed to allow this transition to happen, while helping people have a more systemic understanding of the world, and a more interconnected vision of ourselves, in respect with others and the environment. We intend to bring into consciousness and primary attention the need to re-configure our value system shifting it to a more ethical existence.

Pilar Álvarez Laso (2014), director of UNESCO for Central America and Mexico who gave a lecture at the same Earth Charter Seminar, made reference of the importance to overcome inequality and exclusion, the need to transform economies for people to have decent salaries, the integration of the economic, social and environmental realms, the priority of ending poverty, and the need to instill peace and good governance as results of the process of achieving sustainability goals. The possibility of change within a culture is latent in the arts and allows us to achieve the construction of peaceful environments over longer periods of time. Through the developed EXA-PEP we understand that the arts are one effective vehicle for the creation of sustainable systems to structure peace, and therefore is important to practice it for this kind of development to emerge. Nevertheless there are other UNESCO (2014) goals for education for sustainability that need to be addressed as part of the solution:

- The importance of educating women, youth and excluded groups;
- The need of building a participatory supervision of the groups and accountability;
- The importance of more involvement of society; and the need of worldwide alliances with innovator partners.

In the search to understand how to face inequalities, peace, security, justice, and consumption, UNESCO (2014) underlines the need to quickly advance in the DMG (Developmental Millennium Goals) with a more integrative vision, with emphasis on ethics and justice. They believe in environmental sustainability, participatory processes and democracy, transparency and evaluation as essential components of the ambitious but simple development agenda. The main objectives for education for sustainability, as stated by UNESCO (2014) during the seminar at Earth Charter International, should be to reorganize education so that everyone can access knowledge, competencies, values and attitudes with which they can contribute to the cause; and to strengthen education programs, agendas and activities that promote sustainable development. They understand that the priority action areas should point, in between others, towards:

1. Transforming Environments of learning and teaching
2. Developing Capacities of educators and facilitators
3. Empowering and mobilizing youth
4. Accelerating local sustainable solutions

Thus the EXA-PEP interweaves each of the areas of action recognized by UNESCO, and it becomes the backbone to achieve sustainable results in the community of Pavas.

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Discussions and debates facilitated by the expressive arts are open and democratic events in which all are taken into account. The expressive arts help us express our criteria about justice and dignity upon which our policies are based. The open discussions and debates facilitated by the expressive arts are democratic events in which all of us are taken into account. The activities promote empathy and make us aware that our actions have repercussions. In other words, it brings to light our responsibilities. Our feelings are validated and recognized through community art sessions and therefore are instilled with dignity.

Thus, we conclude that Expressive Arts is a method that easily impacts the perceptions of people creating resilience through the practice of imagination and creativity that help foster a future vision. The idea of aesthetic beauty strengthens human dignity teaching about values that promote life, safety and health. The Expressive Arts instill in us hope for a better future. It allows us to play in creative safe spaces promoting education for all, children and adults, communities, corporations and State. In short, expressive arts is an excellent method that facilitates the construction of sustainable communities.

FINDINGS / RESULTS

How to give account of change?

Social transformation raises apprehension. The complexity and uncertainty of social dynamics, even on the smallest scales, makes change in these contexts a difficult element to measure and characterize.

That is why we turn to the model called Orientation to direct effects (outcomes) and impacts (ODEI) as a resource to account for the outcomes achieved in communities and human groups we work with. This model incorporates the limitations to social change and establishes spheres of control and responsibility over which the EXA-PEP can effectively give account.

Diagram 1. Chain effects as OSI (calculations based on schemes CUDECA - Brot für die Welt 2013, Welt Hunger Hilfe 2008.) model

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The ODEI approach used in this research allows me to deal effectively with the change the EXA-PEP is making in people from the communities of Pavas and helps locate where in the chain of effects are the main obstacles and difficulties in order effectively monitor results and understand which transformations need addressing. The ODEI approach forces me to have more clarity in terms of resources and activities that are provided, and helps me visualize the results to determine which use of the products has the most visible long term impact on the community. Diagram 2 summarizes the activities, outcomes, impact and transformations EXA-PEP proposed in Pavas communities in 2015.

Diagram 2, impact and transformations EXA-PEP proposed in Pavas communities in 2015.

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EXAMPLE OF EDUCATION
FOR PEACE & SUSTAINABILITY ACTIVITY

The idea that peaceful communities can be conceived through the use of the arts, is based on the promotion of hope, through increased levels of joy and creativity, which feed the imagination; and realizing that everything has potential for beauty and for change. Pollution is the most obvious and visible phenomenon of violence, we see when facing the task of transforming the spaces in the communities of Pavas. Thus one example of the EXA-PEP performed activity during the period 2015 was called:

Community Art Interventions (CAI)

A CAI is an artistic intervention directly oriented to building sustainable communities. With a holistic approach, and by seeking sustainability experiences, EXA-PEP coordinates activities with the support of various development actors: students, schools staff, parents, community leaders, and volunteers from private companies, local governments and state. We consider all suggestions stringing together a web of ideas to then translate them into the wall, while we all paint, so that we can identify with the space and make it our own. CAI that is based on these celebrations can become helpful to create networks in our search for building peace.

We operate in areas turned into open dumps, cleaning them and embellishing them with paintings, murals and mosaics. The same is done in schools and public schools where infrastructure

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warrants, so that children can develop in more beautiful, harmonious and welcoming environments, feeling good and motivated focusing in positive changes with which they can identify.

The EXA-PEP created the CAI as a methodology to invite other sectors to participate in artistic creation through volunteering its own human resources and social responsibility programs. Through them we transform environments in the community, in our attempt to reorganize the shared spaces. From our perspective companies belong to the extended school community and therefore their involvement is considered essential. The aim is to bring businesses and government agents to the most vulnerable communities to arouse empathy and compassion. After all, the transformation of perceptions must occur at all levels of society so that real change is generated. Public spaces belong to everyone and are our shared responsibility. The CAI develops also in the framework of the celebration of important dates such as Environment Week in April, Recycling Week in May and Volunteer Week in December.

Among the volunteers there is a recognition of the contribution of artistic activities for social transformation. Several allied companies adopted a fixed line to support EXA-PEP activities in 2015, aligning its corporate values and social responsibility and are currently listed as sponsors of the program. One of them tells us:

"The activities we have developed with ASART directly affect the communities in which we work and generate a sense of belonging. In addition it helps us to connect our employees with the reality of the environment ... People are eager to participate; really like the murals that have been made in schools. "

Johanna Fernandez, Regional Coordinator of Communications and Business Development Ernst & Young.

Summary ODEI - CAI

- Raw material: Paint, brushes, rollers, facilitators and trained professionals in the issue of recovery of public spaces through art.
- Activities: Training for participants, state, local governments and schools, colleges and community neighbors, design of the mural, cleaning, wall preparing, sponsorship, from 3 to 5 day of recovery of public space.
- Products: Public spaces recovered and beautified.
- Use of products: Communities and intervened institutions identify with the work and care about their maintenance. Sustainable community with healthier and safer environments becomes.

DIRECT EFFECTS OF EXA-PEP

What happened?

According to the model ODEI (CUDECA 2013, Welt Hunger Hilfe 2008), within the chain of changes, the effects are located in the area of responsibility of the EXA-PEP and answer the question: What happened?

The direct effects of the intervention are the use made by the beneficiaries of the project products, in this case the training of students, parents and teachers; works made by students and the recovery of public spaces.

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The approach Oriented towards Direct Effects and impact (ODEI) as a resource gives account of changes achieved in communities and human groups with which we work. This model incorporates the limitations posed and explains social change and establish areas of responsibility and control over which the EXA-PEP can effectively give account. From the collection of testimonies and life stories of beneficiaries, and data collected in monitoring activities, we have identified several criteria where the project outcomes become visible.

We make particular emphasis to the following cases:

>Direct effects of CAI

The EXA-PEP considers it necessary to share the know-how and involve the beneficiaries in the whole process of design and execution of the works of art, generating common identity, rootedness and ownership of shared spaces. Additionally, it contributes to greater public safety and promotes peaceful ways of living since several studies suggest that clean and tidy streets and public spaces discourage crime and increase the security discouraging vice and the homeless. (Naranjo V. 2010; Ojea M. 2015)

To stop using shared spaces as a trench, with communal claim, dignifies citizens through aesthetics, beautifying and cleaning of their environments and common meeting places. Again, the recovered space becomes an element unit and reference for the group. (Naranjo V. 2010)

An obvious impact of Community Art Interventions is that near neighbors, learn to work together, communicate and know each other better, to value the talents and contributions of others; to organize themselves to solve other common problems and continue to improve their environment. In addition, it drives accountability. Beneficiaries oversee the maintenance and care of the works, of which they are proud. Many admire what was done: *"It's for the good of the community; it's for everyone. Here everybody wants to see beautify"; "The school needed this"; "It changes things"*. This appropriation creates better conditions for the sustainability of the effects.

During 2015, the recovery of shared spaces emerged as the type of intervention that concentrated voluntary participation, particularly from private enterprise. In total, 290 volunteers were present in 5 activities in Pavas, with an average attendance of 50 people per activity day.

A visual impact is generated through the beautification of public schools, in marginal areas. The murals bring color, life and joy. Children come to see the works, identify with them and feel proud to be part of a process of creative change. Passersbys and visitors of the educational centers stop to admire the work of art, make positive comments on how to enhance and improve the appearance of the school and even take photos with them.

When retrieving spaces through the arts, with the help of the community itself, change occurs in their sense of belonging and identity building. The perception of the environment and how they interact with itself, changes. This is my space, I belong to this space, and now I care, and I occupy myself to keep it beautiful. The change in this relationship, in turn, varies the way they perceive themselves within the same space, and become a change in their individual perception.

In addition to the municipal utility of the made product, volunteers from private enterprise and the government also benefit from active participation in the event. On the one hand, they come into contact, are sensitized and identify with social realities for many unknown. That enriches and awakens their sense of solidarity, seeing that they have something to contribute to change the world a little. When you leave your comfort zone and broaden your outlook beyond purely personal interests, you think of the collective, and start acquiring a comprehensive view of social problems

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facing us as a country. Moreover, you discover your own skills and creative abilities and make fun and creativity vehicles to help others.

Their testimonies are so evident: *"It motivates us all to be here, to see that we did something nice, that we did something for the people, who really need it"; "It's good to work with communities through this kind of project"; "I love it, because it is a way to help, and on top of that it gives us all companionship; one only has to do the work ... I love seeing the faces of joy of people when we finished."* The motivation produced from feeling part of a community project to improve the quality of at the same time strengthens the identification among participants, which is the ally of a common cause binding element.

OTHER EFFECTS

Among other direct generally observable effects among teachers, parents, students and volunteers from the private sector participating in EXA-PEP, we can mention the following:

Respect for nature and community of life

Most of those who engage in EXA-PEP activities begin to see potential where none existed before. Hope is born in the action of creation that otherwise would not exist, the renewal of matter and with it, reinvention of ourselves. Participants approach the environment through the practice of observing the spaces, and its potential to reorganize them. Forgiveness is sensed, and the needed gratitude and recognition of each other is heard. The dialogue and the formation of community networks are encouraged to create sustainable systems. Expressive arts bring us closer to our own nature, the very essence of our being through the senses, recognizing that we are part of nature, admitting the duty to respect and preserve it.

Strengthening of community networks

Participants of the EXA-PEP often share what they learned with their core groups, arousing the interest of other family members, relatives and friends.

Some students end up referring to the group as an additional family, appreciate that in those spaces they can interact and share personal experiences and problems, while elaborating works that make them feel valuable and capable. At the same time, transforming waste into works of art changes the perception to the issue of recycling and helps to transform their environments.

Solidarity, commitment and collaboration

Most participants use the space and resources offered by the EXA-PEP to show attitudes consistent with values such as solidarity and commitment, evidenced in regular attendance, compliance to orders and fulfillment of duties in proposed tasks, breaking bad habits deeply rooted in their environment as desertion, selfishness, tardiness and absenteeism. This is also a good indication of a long-term impact, developing creative skills that serve as a root to generate personal resources that enable them to benefit proactively and constructively in the demands of life in all areas.

Sense of Shared Responsibility

The development of the sense of responsibility was a particularly visible impact on RAW-S students in Pavas schools. Even on parents, some of whom have a tendency to absenteeism and to

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neglect the performance and compliance of their own children. These patterns are learned by children and affect academic performance, punctuality and responsibility.

An important part for the participants to know their abilities is to engage in a project of social transformation based on art and creativity. Knowledge of this new facet enables transformation of the perception that increases the sense of usefulness, but beyond that, the sense of being creatively useful. A common element of interviews with corporate volunteers is the fact that they expressed satisfaction, after feeling that they can help a particular group of people in need. In addition, the finding that aid may be given in an atmosphere of fun and play touches the volunteer deeper.

Belonging and identity

The recovery of public spaces is an activity of great entertainment, participants develop skills often unknown that encourage engagement with the project and with the mission and vision of sustainability. Discovering that they can help in a fun atmosphere and constructive exchange between peers facilitates identification with the communal cause for which they work.

Moreover, an appropriate work becomes a reference of common identity for the inhabitants of the town, because it reinforces the sense of community and belonging. In the case of students, the process followed during the year rose from the individual need to correct behavioral problems and coexistence within the group, to generate community identification, both at school and in the localities from which the students come. This favors greater involvement and participation in seeking solutions to common problems.

There is visible progress towards building sustainable communities. Progress towards building cleaner and peaceful community spaces. It is observed that by working together to find solutions to their problems, translating designs into murals of its own vision of the world -not depend on an official directive, decision or enforcement authority figures owned by others- each brings unique talents and the best of themselves to build a common work of art.



Fuente: EXA-PEP Bitácora de fotos 2015 Escuela de Lomas del Río

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Different populations we work with understand that part of the value of art is that it facilitates dialogue and creativity. What we cannot say in words, in therapy or in everyday life, we are able to express through artistic creations. They are aware that through the arts people learn differently, by opening the senses and perceptions. Art stimulates appreciation of natural and abstract elements around us. The creative spirit awakens, and improves the overall development.

IMPACT

What changed?

According to the ODEI model, there is a stage beyond the direct effects that we have reviewed, the impact, which is the sphere of interest in which allow us to answer the question: What changed? And in this case gives us an understanding of how we approach the concept of long lasting peace in high-risk communities in San Jose, Costa Rica and how can that impact touches neighboring countries beyond our borders.

The impact of EXA-PEP communities in Pavas points to long-term improvement in the quality of life of beneficiaries, based on building a sustainable community that is transforming its latent violence into a culture of greater harmony.

The indicators in general are remarkable when beautifying the environment. Teachers and parents have transformed their personal perception and feel prepared to carry out tasks of personal and collective endeavor. Even though they are not yet able to take the lead in efforts to replicate what they learned, at least they are trained in the proper handling of solid waste, which in itself is an essential part of our self-care, because it directly affects our health.

It is necessary to note that, according to the ODEI model, the long-term impact leaves the sphere of control and responsibility of the EXA-PEP, which leads to the direct effects, but still part of the sphere of interest. However, what has been achieved during 2015 gives rise to consider the following developments:

- a) The experiences of recovery of shared spaces helps beautify and clean neglected communities and establish conditions for residents to identify with their environment. They became common references of identity converging the efforts of different actors. This translates and revitalizes in sense of rootedness and belonging of the people and aims at the realization of sustainable communities, with intervened localities that now have a better life quality.
- b) Construction of safe environments: A space recovered is a meeting point with less danger and less violence, as has been sustained throughout this document.
- c) It creates a sense of community: The tangible possibility of beautified environments and safer shared spaces encourages gathers people in the sense of communion around the problems and potentials that affect them collectively.
- d) The legitimacy and recognition of work done in the communities crystallizes in sustainable impact by generating commitment that allows the effects to persist over time regardless of the presence of EXA-PEP. That is something that is achieved by transcending the level of awareness, through the internalization of the values promoted, to arrive to the will of the individuals who compose the realities intervened. It is a willing and committed action that finally materializes the social transformation that has been launched.
- e) Communal Sustainability: beautified cities and clean shared spaces point towards generating forms of peaceful and harmonious coexistence.

CONCLUSIONS

Through the study and analysis of the actions undertaken in the EXA-PEP during 2015 in the communities of San Juan, Metropolis and Lomas del Rio in Pavas, San José, Costa Rica, we understand some of the conditions necessary for the construction of sustainable communities. By building sustainable communities we understand the creation of common spaces for peaceful coexistence, where to express ourselves freely in the exercise of our rights, and duties, promoting social justice, conflict transformation, and increasing levels of security, creating healthy environments in harmony nature.

To achieve the mission, the EXA-PEP develops artistic interventions, and through stimulation of creative skills and aesthetic sense we promote: (a) reevaluation of waste; (B) development of individual skills and abilities; (C) sustainable community; (D) roots / belonging and identity; (E) commitment and responsibility; (F) peace building and conflict transformation.

By 2015, the effects of the work in the community become visible in: (a) public spaces recovered collaborating with an atmosphere of greater safety and cleanliness; (B) women who have risen and have become skilled with new personal creative capacities; (C) children who have developed skills of tolerance and peaceful coexistence at school; (D) teachers aware of art and fun as teaching tools and as a method of stress release; (E) corporate volunteers sensitized through art interventions, collaborating with social conflicts.

APPENDIX

A Peace through the Expressive Arts Education Program:
A multi-systemic approach to Social Justice

S. Ketelhohn

European Graduate School 2016



Municipalidad de San José
Alcaldía de Barrios

03 de septiembre de 2013
OF. 1876-MB-2013

Sras.
Sylvia Ketelhohn
Vanessa vaglio
ASART

Estimados Sras:

Me dirijo a ustedes para agradecerles el trabajo realizado en el Parque Los Laureles en Pavas, donde pudimos constatar que a través de un trabajo con la comunidad organizada, la municipalidad y su representación se puede trabajar en la recuperación de espacios públicos a través del arte, haciendo uso de materiales de reutilización.

La participación de ASART fue clave para llevar el concepto a la obra y lograr que la comunidad participara de manera plena.

Al recuperar este espacio, la Municipalidad de San José ahorró alrededor de 6 millones de colones mensuales por la limpieza de ese botadero a cielo abierto, por lo que esperamos seguir trabajando a futuro en proyectos similares a estos.

Les agradecemos el interés y arduo trabajo realizado, por el compromiso y mostrarle a la comunidad de pavas que una mejor ciudad es posible de la mano de ellos.

Agradeciendo de antemano su sabiosa comprensión, se suscribe.

Atentamente

Ingr. Ingrid Ordeñana Aguilera
Jefa



Archivo

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I am writing to you to thank the work done in Los Laureles Park in Pavas, where we found that through the work with the organized community, the municipality and their represented organization we can work on the recovery of public spaces through art while reusing wasted materials.

The participation of ASART was key to bring the concept to work and get the community to participate in full.

When recovering this space the Municipality of San Jose saved around 6 million colones (12 thousand USD) monthly cleaning of the open pit dump so we hope to continue working in the future similar to the proposals.

We appreciate the interest and hard work, commitment to show the community of Pavas that a better city is possible together with them.

Thanking you in advance for your understanding subscribe

Sincerely

Emperatriz Ordoñana

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República de Costa Rica
Ministerio de Salud
Despacho de la Viceministra

DM-2990-2016
San José, 13 de abril del 2016

Señores
Embajada de los Estados Unidos de América en Costa Rica.
Central American Regional Security Initiatives

Estimados Señores:

Por medio de la presente me permito presentar a la FUNDACION ASART, Organización sin fines de lucro que trabaja actualmente en la recuperación de espacios y calles públicas a través del Arte, reformándolo en beneficio de la población.

Dicha Fundación está colaborando desde hace cuatro años con el Ministerio de Salud en la organización de los Encuentros Nacionales de Reciclaje, en los cuales lidera la recuperación de espacios públicos para la celebración del Día Mundial del Reciclaje, teniendo en su haber experiencias de gran impacto.

Además, luego de concertar con distintos actores, logró insertar la recuperación de espacios públicos dentro de las actividades a realizar del 2016 al 2021 en el Plan Nacional para la Gestión Integral de Residuos por parte de las Municipalidades. Dicho Plan se divulgará en los próximos días.

No omito manifestar que el desarrollo del tema gestión integral de residuos es de interés de la actual Administración y se encuentra dentro del **Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2015-2018 "Alberto Cañas Escalante"**, en virtud de ser un tema que impacta en la salud y en las metas medio ambientales que el país se ha fijado. Cualquier consulta contactarme al correo esther.anchia@misalud.go.cr o al teléfono 8870-6565.

Con toda consideración y estima.

Dra. María Esther Anchia Angulo
Viceministra de Salud



☐ Dr. Fernando Lleras Castro, Ministro de Salud
Dr. William Barrantes Barrantes, Director, Dirección General de Salud
Ing. Eugenio Androvetto Villalobos, Director, Dirección de Protección al Ambiente Humano
Interamerican Foundation

Apto. 18123-1090
San José, Costa Rica

Tel: (506) 2233-0403
Fax: (506) 2255-2594

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Through this I would like to introduce ASART foundation, a non-profit organization currently working in the recovery of public spaces and streets through art by achieving the benefit of the population.

This foundation has been collaborating with the Ministry of Health for four years in the organization of National Recycling Encounters, leading the recovery of public spaces for International Recycling Day, resulting in credited experiences of great impact.

After concluding with different actors the achievements they succeeded in inserted the recovery of public spaces within the activities undertaken from 2016 to 2021 in the National Plan for Integrated Waste Management by the Municipalities. This plan will be disclosed in the next few days.

I underline that the development of the issue of waste management is integral interest of the current administration and is within the National Development Plan 2015-2018 Alberto Cañas Escalante, by virtue of being an issue that impacts on health and the environmental goals the country has set. For any questions contact me at email Esther.anchia@misalud.go.cr or phone 8870-6565

With all respect and esteem

Dra. Maria Esther Anchia

Deputy Health Minister

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MUNICIPALIDAD
DE SAN JOSÉ
Gerencia de Provisión de Servicios
Departamento de Servicios Ambientales

26de abril de 2016
DSA-0315-2016

Señores
Embajada de Estados Unidos de América
San José

Estimados señores:

Reciban un atento saludo de parte del Departamento de Servicios Ambientales de la Municipalidad de San José.

Sirva este medio para reconocer el trabajo de la Asociación Artística para Niños (ASART), con quienes hemos trabajado desde hace cuatro años en el Encuentro Nacional de Reciclaje.

Esta experiencia nos ha permitido conocer de primera mano el importante trabajo que realiza ASART en materia de arte y reciclaje, así como la recuperación de espacios públicos en distintos lugares de nuestro municipio. Nos complace haber colaborado con el impacto de esta organización y esperamos seguir trabajando conjuntamente en el futuro.

Sabemos de la capacidad de la Asociación para coordinar iniciativas con diferentes sectores de la sociedad civil, el Estado y la empresa privada, y de la legitimidad de la que goza entre ellos y en las localidades en las que ha implementado sus proyectos. Su trabajo ha sido tan efectivo que solo en su primer año junto a nosotros, nos ahorró la suma de 600.000.00 colones mensuales al recuperar un espacio público en la localidad de San Juan de Pavas.

Su constancia, además de las metodologías artísticas hace que las calles se tornen más seguras y saludables creando ambientes armoniosos y amigables.

Recomendamos su presencia como aliado y gestor de desarrollo y transformación social.

Sin otro particular, se despide de ustedes,

Atentamente,

Ing. Emperatriz Ordeñana Ayerdís
Departamento de Servicios Ambientales



numérico/archivo

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European Graduate School 2016

Dear Mr.

The Department of Environmental Services of the Municipality of San Jose gladly salutes you.

Serve this means to recognize the work of the Arts Association for Children (ASART) with whom we whom we have worked for four years at the National Recycling Week.

This experience has permitted to get to know firsthand the important work ASART is doing in recycling art and recovery of public spaces in different parts of our town. We are pleased to have collaborated with the impact of this Association to coordinate initiatives with different sectors of civil society, State and private corporations and the legitimacy it enjoys among them and the communities where their projects have been implemented. Their work has been so effective that only in his first year they saved us the monthly amount of 600,000 colones (\$1200) through the recovery of a public space in the town of San Juan de Pavas.

Their perseverance, besides art methodologies make the streets safer and healthier by creating harmonious and friendly environments.

We recommend its presence as allies and development management and social transformation.

Without further,

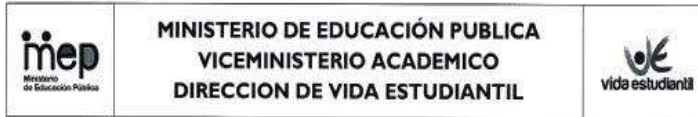
Emperatriz Ordoñana

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San José, 29 de abril de 2016
DVE-287-04-2016

Señores y Señoras
Embajada de Estados Unidos en Costa Rica
Iniciativa de Seguridad Regional Centroamérica (CARSI)

Estimada señores y señoras:

Reciba un atento saludo de parte de la Dirección de Vida Estudiantil del Ministerio de Educación Pública (MEP).

Como parte de las acciones y responsabilidades que le corresponden a esta Dirección y en concordancia con el Plan Nacional de Desarrollo de la Administración Solís Rivera 2015-2018 "Alberto Cañas Escalante", donde se señala que:

Desde el enfoque de los derechos, se considera que la educación es un derecho humano fundamental, que transforma la vida, desarrolla el potencial personal, contribuye a la reducción de la pobreza, fomenta el empleo, aumenta probabilidades de tener una vida saludable, fortalece la democracia, promueve la tolerancia, forma para la participación ciudadana y propicia actitudes en pro del medio ambiente. (UNESCO, 2014).

No obstante, la cobertura a nivel de secundaria sigue siendo baja es por esto, de vital importancia focalizar las razones por las cuales se genera el abandono ya sea por nivel educativo como por región y también por nivel socioeconómico, para aunar esfuerzos y reducir a índices menores la deserción Estudiantil, es claro que se trata de una problemática multifactorial, pero sin lugar a dudas la violencia y sus diferentes manifestaciones y consecuencias son un factor que incide enormemente en esta problemática, de ahí la urgencia de bajar la incidencia de la misma en nuestros centros educativos.

Como se señala al inicio, esta administración tiene como uno de sus empeños, incorporar y garantizar el enfoque de derechos humanos, para su pleno disfrute como un eje transversal de la estrategia de desarrollo. Y tal cosa con el fin de que la acción de las instituciones públicas vaya encaminada fundamentalmente al objetivo superior de brindar a las personas condiciones adecuadas para el desarrollo humano en armonía con la protección del medio ambiente. Para ello, es necesario impulsar políticas públicas –en diseño y gestión- que obedezcan genuinamente a las necesidades e intereses de la población en condiciones de equidad, transparencia, participación e inclusión. Se trata, sin duda, de políticas públicas que contribuyan a superar los paradigmas de la discriminación en cualquiera de sus dimensiones; es decir, por condición étnica, religión, orientación sexual, identidad de género, nacionalidad, estrato social, ideología política o cualquier otra característica dentro de la amplia diversidad humana que pueda ser objeto de exclusión social.

El Programa "Con Vos", viene a responder a esta necesidad, dentro del mismo vemos la necesidad de utilizar todas la herramientas posibles para reducir todos los pormenores que afectan la permanencia de las y los estudiantes en el aula, por lo que es necesario identificar la problemática social en zonas de

"Educar para una nueva ciudadanía"

.....
Dirección: Edificio Raventós, San José, avenida 0 y 2, calle 6, Tel: 2256-7011, ext. 2307 y fax: 2257-8021
Web: www.vidaestudiantil.cr email: vidaestudiantil@meo.oo.cr

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Dear Ladies and Gentlemen

Kindest regards from the Department of Student Life of Ministry of Public Education (MEP)

As part of the actions and responsibilities that correspond to this address and in accordance with the development plan of the administration Solis-Rivera 2015-2018 "Alberto Cañas Escalante" which states:

From the perspective of rights, it is considered that education is a fundamental human right, which transforms life, develop personal potential, it contributes to the reduction of poverty, promoting employment, increases the chance of having a healthy life, strengthens democracy, promotes tolerance, is part of citizen participation and promotes attitudes towards the environment. (UNESCO, 2014).

However the coverage of secondary level remains low and therefore, it is vital to focus the reasons why is generated abandonment either by educational level and by region and by socioeconomic level, to join forces and reduce to lower indices student desertion. It is clear that this is a multifactorial problematic, but without doubt violence and its various manifestations and consequences are a factor impinging enormously on this issue, hence the urgent need to lower the incidence of it in our schools.

As noted at the beginning, this administration has as one of its efforts, to incorporate and ensure the human rights approach to their full enjoyment as a transversal axis of the development strategy. And such a thing in order that the action of public institutions will primarily aimed at the higher goal of giving people appropriate conditions for human development in harmony with environmental protection. This is important to boost public-policy design and management-that genuinely obey the needs and interests of the population in conditions of equity, transparency, participation and inclusion. This is undoubtedly of public policies that contribute to overcoming the paradigm of discrimination in all its dimensions; by ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, nationality, social status, political ideology or any other characteristic within the broad human diversity that can be subject to social exclusion.

The program WITH YOU come to meet this need to use all possible tools to reduce all the details that affect the permanence of and students in the classroom, so it is necessary to identify social problems in risk areas where violence of any kind affects the students to break their educational cycle and simultaneously propose and implement solutions in the problems that arise in schools that are easy to access and interpretation for all actors on the stage of the program: parents and mothers, school principals, regional offices, and officials of the Directorate of Student Life.

As part of this effort we have established alliances on various institutions and social organizations as ASART, artistic community-based organization whose actions strengthen safe streets in the most impoverished communities through the recovery of public spaces and the reorganization of community resources including waste. This points to the transformation of conflicts and building peace in the search for prevention of violence, organized crime and drug use and trafficking among others.

As director of Student Life Ministry of Education I consider perfect alliance with that organization to coordinate joint actions to strengthen programs such as CON VOS, through which we serve and we prevent violence in 40 schools at social risk (30% schools and 70% schools) throughout the national territory.

This alliance greatly would enlarge the impact of our efforts, having greater success in meeting the objectives set and providing great support in the appointment process execution.

Thanking you in advance collaboration that can provide this initiative, I say goodbye

Sincerely

Dra. Kattia Grosser

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