



Proyecto Acción Transformadora: Rootedness Approach



Program Overview

Proyecto Acción Transformadora is a five-year collaboration between USAID and IREX that aims to empower current and future youth leaders to participate actively in political spaces in their communities and at the national level, and positively impact decision-making processes to address the most pressing challenges facing Guatemala, including inequality, security, governance, and a strong focus on illegal migration prevention. To date 2,200 young leaders from all over the country have been beneficiaries of the project.

Migration and Youth

In May 2019, the highest number of detentions on the southern US border was recorded in a decade. In 2018, 51,376 Guatemalan deportees from the US was reported, of which 88.86% are men, 10.06% are women, 0.82% are boys and 0.26% are girl (BBC, 2019). Guatemala also receives the second largest amount of family remittances from the US, of which represent 10.8% of the Gross Domestic Product (ONU, 2019). The structural causes of migration are population growth increasing the number of employable youths seeking jobs, lack of formal job opportunities in country combined with the attraction of significant supply of employment in US, and low salary levels and poor working conditions (UN, 2019). In the Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador the violent climate also pushes people to seek migration for security and survival purposes (ONU, 2019). **Proyecto Acción Transformadora** has both short-term and long-term impact in creating increased “rootedness” for youth in Guatemala by increasing their sense of agency, commitment, and confidence in their ability to address issues that form the underlying drivers of migration.



“Rootedness” Approach

Throughout all activities IREX’s programs naturally integrate a “Rootedness” Approach to mitigate migration by creating transformative leaders to support communities and invest in local growth and positive change. Program Activities include:



- ❖ Youth Led community initiatives
- ❖ Foundational Political Training
- ❖ Short Courses and Certificate Courses on political issues, fiscal and economic issues, electoral process, leadership skills, and Political Innovations.
- ❖ Citizen Theater
- ❖ Political Dialogues and Dialogues with Disabled Youth
- ❖ Intercultural Camps
- ❖ Organizational Strengthening



Graduate's Testimony to the Initial Political Training Program: "A struggle filled with hope"



Katalin (far left) pictured above with other course Graduates

On September 7th, 2019, a group from Guatemala City successfully completed their training and received their certificate. Of the 46 trained leaders, Katalin Szászdi Calito gave a testimonial speech, "A struggle filled with hope" to the express her own, and the participants, gratitude, with USAID and IREX, for the opportunity, and inspire motivation to continue their training process, as people capable of generating positive changes in their communities and country.

In the **Foundational Political Training Program** participants with different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds participate in nine training courses to reflect and develop critical thinking around the themes of: transformative leadership, politics and power, national history and context, public institutions and functions of the state and municipalities, gender and inclusion, organization and participation, and the role of youth in today's society. So far, 1419 young men and women, ages 16-25, from 10 different departments in Guatemala have received this training.



Katalin pictured above with IREX Program Staff

"It was not until I arrived here that I was able to realize how much I need to keep growing, how much I need to learn about the country. And what shocked me the most was the way this course made my desire to struggle for Guatemala to become stronger."

-Katalin Szászdi Calito, Graduate student of the Initial Political Training Certificate Course



Youth participating in hands-on activity as part of the course

"With people like you, Guatemala is not lost; it still stands and will continue to do so for a long time, with the help of each one of us."

Katalin's speech reflected on how as humans we are born into situations that we may not be able to completely understand or control, but through our life struggles, which everyone faces differently, we can find the strength to overcome them and fight for a better future for all. She explains how the program taught her so much about her country and how to face these challenges. Katalin emphasizes the importance of the programs open dialogue and how she learned from other participants that she is not alone and together they can strive for a more prosperous Guatemala. She finishes her speech stating,

"Finally, completing this course makes me feel hopeful and sure about what I want, because I will continue struggling for my country; for this country that sometimes seems to give us nothing, yet giving us everything at the same time. Because Guatemala is worth it, and because the people in Guatemala are worth it."