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APPLICATION OF A MODEL FOR THE TRAINING OF MIGRANTS WHO ARRIVE IN THE CITY OF TIJUANA AND WHO ARE IN THE PROCESS OF SOCIAL INSERTION

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Abstract: The present work is the result of the research conducted through the course-workshop “Sustainable Gardening”, an educational didactic project aimed at the improvement of migrants in the process of social insertion who arrive in the city of Tijuana, Baja California. El Colegio de la Frontera Norte (El Colef) participated in collaboration with Casa del Migrante and its Centro Scalabrini de Formación de Migrantes (CESFOM) and the International Organization for Migrants (IOM), where Ecoparque was the ideal place to carry out the activities and the Environmental Education Program was responsible for the design and implementation of the project on 4 occasions. The project’s objective was to facilitate knowledge and encourage the development of skills and abilities in sustainable gardening activities and to provide new tools to migrants who have recently arrived in Tijuana and thus help them to achieve a multidimensional wellbeing. The methodology of the project is based on an Integral, Curricular, Instructional and Formative Design, where the importance of combining the work of the groups by objectives as well as by themes is highlighted, where feedback and evaluation are constant, together with environmental education, impacting the lives of these people. CESFOM has been in charge of training migrants, and El Colef, through its Environmental Education Program, has been the ideal actor to join this project to work together and consolidate a model of comprehensive care for the benefit of this vulnerable population.

Keywords: gardening, migrants, Environmental Education

BACKGROUND

The “Sustainable Gardening” course-workshop project arose as a request from the Casa del Migrante in Tijuana, where many nationals and migrants from different parts of the world are received every day. The same evolution of the Casa gave rise to the Scalabri-

1. Due to the difficulties they face in the United States or due to family reunification.

ni Migrant Training Center (CESFOM), which is an educational project that seeks to provide migrants with new tools to contribute to their social insertion and facilitate knowledge for the formation of new trades. The “Sustainable Gardening” project is a course that prepares them for a new trade and at the same time helps them in their existential reconstruction after deportation or forced change of residence.

El Colegio de la Frontera Norte (El Colef), an institution of academic excellence that concentrates its studies in the Mexico - United States border region, participated through the Environmental Education Program and took advantage of the facilities of the Ecoparque equipment to develop its activities, taking into account that this place is the ideal niche to implement courses of this nature. Among the positive factors for this project and identified in the Ecoparque are its facilities, the self-sustainable nature of the project, the experience in the management of endemic flora, wastewater treatment, composting, vermicomposting, the organic garden, the edible forest and having trained and above all committed professionals, in order to raise awareness about the interaction with the environment and work together both institutions for the benefit of the community and this population.

JUSTIFICATION

It is imperative to move from a response focused on the reception of migrants - either because they were removed from the United States or because of voluntary return¹ ; due to forced displacement or for economic reasons - in Tijuana to a response that deals with the process of autonomous insertion and readaptation.

Four main factors make it difficult for migrants to find employment once they receive asylum: **1) Differences in Mexico/U.S. practices.** There are several trades that are performed differently in Mexico and the U.S., including construction. While in the U.S. construction

is usually done with wood and light materials, in Mexico it is usually done with block and cement. This is just one example of how many migrants must adapt and gain new skills/knowledge upon deportation and asylum. **2) Cultural re-adaptation.** **3) Invalid certificates.** Many of the deportees studied in the U.S., however, at the time of deportation they do not have their certificates and need support to revalidate their studies, the same happens with those seeking asylum that if their certificates are not revalidated, which costs money, they are not valid. **4) Inadequate skills for the labor market.** People who over the decades had developed a professional career or trade, after deportation or asylum must start from scratch. In these cases, people need to obtain new skills to be able to do a job according to the receiving society and what the labor market will ask of them depending on their age, strength and capabilities (Yee & Ruiz: 2018).

Therefore, it is important to understand the difficulties that deportees or asylum seekers face upon their arrival in Tijuana or the United States. On the one hand, José Carlos Yee and Valeria Ruiz -both with the experience of working at the Casa del Migrante in Tijuana- point out in *Migrantes Magazine* that it is necessary to keep in mind that on an emotional level, deportation is a critical moment of life, of restructuring priorities and plans for which there was no preamble. The same is true for displaced persons. In other words, most of them did not expect to move from their usual place of residence.

Among the migrants and deportees who arrive in Tijuana and particularly at the Casa del Migrante in this city, there is a large number who have done manual labor for a large part of their lives. With them we refer to work such as harvesting, planting, other agricultural work, construction, maintenance, house cleaning, among others. Although not all of them have this work history, the target population of this Sustainable Gardening course does.

After a diagnostic survey conducted by the CESFOM team at Casa del Migrante in Tijuana A.C., it was possible to observe a common interest in learning the gardening trade among migrants. Most of those interested, who were questioned about aspects related to their work desires, learning new trades and life plans, shared that they were attracted to gardening.

The above trend is concentrated among those who do not have a formal or specialized technical occupation, such as the so-called “masters” of construction, welders, drivers, transporters, blacksmiths, etcetera. On the contrary, those who highlighted their interest in this course tended to have a work history dealing with unskilled or highly unstable activities, changing from one job to another in short periods of time.

In the context described above is framed the application of a training model through the Course-Workshop “Sustainable Gardening”, which seeks to provide knowledge to Mexican migrants or other nationalities recently deported and some in the process of asylum to integrate into the labor market in Tijuana or the United States according to their interests. This contributes to their social insertion and facilitates their integration not only as social agents but also as economically productive and proactive agents for the region.

PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

To provide practical knowledge and facilitate the development of skills in sustainable gardening to a group of recent migrants and deportees in the process of social insertion in the city of Tijuana.

INSTRUCTIONAL AND FORMATIVE GOAL

To achieve that a group of recent and deported migrants, in the process of social insertion in the city of Tijuana can acquire knowledge about Sustainable Gardening, so that later they can dedicate themselves to the

gardening profession in a sustainable and responsible way that at the same time serves to improve their economic situation and their quality of life.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

1-Facilitate knowledge and encourage the development of skills and abilities to put into practice Sustainable Gardening in a group of migrants and deportees recently arrived in the city of Tijuana.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1-To sensitize and motivate migrants about sustainable gardening issues and let them know the usefulness and repercussions it can have for them in the future.

2-Receive knowledge about the topics and activities related to sustainable gardening, such as native plants of Baja California and the importance of creating gardens in the city with this type of plants, including the arrangement of the same with reused materials and installations of different types of irrigation, in addition information will be provided on pests and diseases that frequently attack plants in gardens.

3- To seek the development of skills and abilities in deported migrants who can later carry out sustainable gardening activities and thus prepare themselves to provide their services and obtain better income for their work.

COMPETENCIES

Competencies link knowing with doing in totality. Cognitive knowledge and the relationship between practice and theory are needed for people to acquire skills, aptitudes, attitudes and abilities.

Competency-based education prepares learners to become more skilled and competent, using the knowledge acquired for a more efficient orientation in the performance of tasks and problems in their daily lives.

Under the practical and collective pedagogical approach, education should be oriented towards making adults learn how to learn, instead of promoting academic learning. Consequently, competency-based courses should be linked to all areas of a person's life and not refer to only one of them in particular.

On the other hand, competency-based education is an educational orientation that, in order to be applied to adults, requires certain considerations that take into account the age and the problems that affect the population. Knowledge, skills and values related to some discipline are some of the aspects to be taken into account. The appropriation of learning and knowledge will be based on adults' own experiences during the course of their lives, which will allow them to build new knowledge.

The program has been designed on the basis of four basic pillars: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be. This is related to the integration of conceptual, procedural and attitudinal knowledge levels, or, in other words, knowledge, skills, abilities, values and attitudes, but also the possibility of being able to think, to solve problems and to develop all those thinking skills that were not taken into account before.

METHODOLOGY

The Educational Didactic Project is basically aimed at conducting a course-workshop to provide knowledge to a group of recent deportees from the city of Tijuana in the field of Sustainable Gardening to support them in their social insertion process. The methodology of the project is based on an Instructional and Formative Curricular Design by its acronym is known by DICIF, (Uriegas, 2015), in this de-

sign highlights the importance of combining the work of the groups both by objectives and by topics also aimed at putting into practice competencies that give the practical skills for life, where the feedback is constant, to move forward with what is programmed in each session. In addition, the model requires an educational and formative purpose.

The methodology includes instructional objectives which take into account three fundamental aspects for the best development of learning: 1) the conditions in which the activities are carried out, 2) the observable behavior of both students and teachers and 3) the evaluation criteria, these are responsible for making it known if activities can be continued, or if it is necessary to return to the starting point, collected in an open and flexible program with all the characteristics of non-formal education consisting of 6 sessions of 4 hours each spread over the months of October and November with one session each week. Not to mention that the methodology also includes an Induction Course of 4 hours where very important topics that should be known to the deported migrants who have recently arrived in Tijuana are discussed.

The educational didactic project will aim to facilitate a course - workshop for youth and adults, called "Sustainable Gardening" and will be aimed at people belonging to the migrant community of the city of Tijuana that are served by CESFOM. The modality is face-to-face and will be 20% theoretical and 80% practical. The design of the course takes advantage of the possibilities offered by the environmental equipment of the Ecopark of El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, which makes it very experiential by taking the environment as the integrating context of learning and this in turn makes these projects highly motivating for this type of vulnerable population, since they return from each session with many vivid impressions, which keeps them more interes-

ted in developing their work and not falling into depression (Regader, 2016).

The methodology of the project is also based on applying Qualitative study methods such as interviews and informal conversations with recently deported migrants, participant observation, case studies and analysis of the information gathered through the research process. The informal conversations and the opinions of the deported migrants are collected in the Field Diary served to establish a complete picture of the situation of each person, (Hernández -Sampieri, Fernández and Baptista, 2014) Through these instruments it was possible to know the needs and challenges faced by each migrant.

The methodology also includes the application of a pre/post test to the migrants, which allows us to know the before and after knowledge of the gardening profession. This instrument consists of 7 questions, 6 of them open-ended and 1 multiple choice.

The methodology also includes an instrument for hetero-evaluation of the course where each migrant at the end can evaluate the knowledge, behavior, dynamics of the activities, previous coordination, the usefulness of the topic, the place where the activities were carried out and the work rhythm of the facilitators. They will also be able to express what they liked most and least about the course and how they plan to use the knowledge acquired.

The methodology also included three indicators that at the end of the course-workshop served as a basis for the CESFOM coordinators and the facilitators of the Environmental Education Program of El Colef to make decisions in this regard:

- 1-Terminal efficiency
- 2-Labor insertion
- 3-Life Impacts

SAMPLE SELECTION

The selection of the sample was made by the coordinators of the Casa del Migrante de Tijuana, who conducted a thorough diagnosis among the target population. It was made up of recently deported or returned Mexican migrants and some from other countries to be integrated into the Tijuana labor market according to their interests. This contributes to their social insertion and facilitates their integration not only as social agents but also as economically productive and proactive agents for the region.

Although the sample was not chosen randomly in any case, it was only taken into account that they were homogeneous samples of migrants and that they had similar characteristics, as described by Hernández-Sampiere, Fernández and Baptista (2014).

BENEFITED POPULATION

Table 1 shows that a total of 44 migrants, including 25 women and 19 men from 7 different countries, participated in the course-workshop.

The average terminal efficiency reaches 74.35%, which implies that 33 migrants have satisfactorily completed the course in the 4 courses facilitated.



Environmental equipment where the “Sustainable Gardening” courses are held.



Performing a practical exercise on pruning tree trimming (2019).



Facilitation of knowledge on the creation of gardens and the arrangement of planters.



Taking a tour of the Ecoparque Edible Forest. Receiving instruction on how to plant fruit trees (2024).

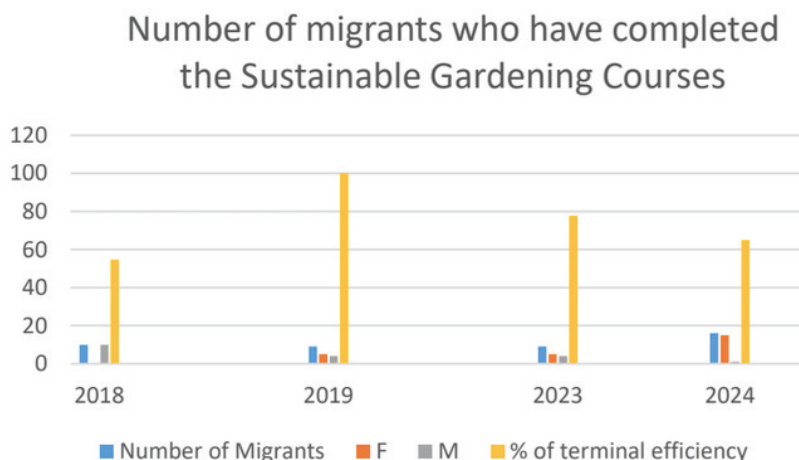


Carrying out the exercise of elaborating the farmer's compost.

Year	Number of Migrants	F	M	Nationality							% of terminal efficiency
2018	10	0	10	Mexican 3	Salvadoran 3	Guatemalan 3	Honduran 1	Dominican 0	Haitian 0	Colombian 0	54.6
2019	9	5	4	3	2	0	3	1	0	0	100
2023	9	5	4	7	0	0	0	0	1	1	77.8
2024	16	15	1	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	65

Table 1. General information on the course-workshop “Sustainable Gardening”.

Source: Authors’ own elaboration



Graph 1.

Source: Authors’ own elaboration

Session 1 Topics	Session 2 Topics	Session 3 Topics	Session 4 Topics	Session 5 Topics	Session 6 Topics
Diagnostic Evaluation: Application of a Pre-Test. 1-Presentation of the Program and its central themes. Topics Do you know what a garden is? 2-Introduction to gardening. 3-Definition of Garden and Garden Technique. 4-Types of gardens. 5-Tools used for gardening work. 6-Tour of the Ecoparque facilities. 7-Practical exercise (Sow your seed) 8-Testimony of experiences from the previous year.	Creation of planters and arrangement of gardens. 1-Selection of reused materials in sustainable gardening, (logs, stones, among others). 2-Fixing of gardens and planters. 3-Materials necessary for the installation of irrigation in gardens. 4-Installation of pipes and accessories for irrigation. 5-Watering as appropriate: Drip irrigation Sprinkler irrigation Hose irrigation Irrigation on slopes. Nose wrench installation. 6-Adequate watering and schedules.	Native Plant Gardens. 1-Characteristics of Baja California native plants. 2-Advantages and disadvantages of native plant gardens. 3-Reproduction of native plants. 4-Care. 5-Locations where native plants are located in Baja California. 6- What to do if I find a native plant in Tijuana? 7-Collection of seeds of native plants.	Plant pests and diseases. 1-Definition of pests. 2-Most frequent pests in gardens. 3-Biological control. 4-Home control. 5-Practical demonstrative exercise to recognize pests in different plants in gardens	Garden maintenance. 1-Tree and shrub pruning. 2-Sowing, germination, transplanting, afforestation and reforestation. 3-Sowing by cuttings. 4-Tree placement on slopes. 5-Pastures and their care. 6-Aporque, construction of flower beds and boxes. 7-Practical tree planting exercise.	Composting to improve garden soil. 1-Separation of origin. 2-Production of peasant compost. Practical exercise. 3-Biotechnology of vermicomposting. 4-Plant fertilization in gardens. 5-Closing of the course. Summative Evaluation: Application of a Post Test 6-Closing of the course. Presentation of awards and prizes to the outstanding participants.

Table 2. Structure of the Program of the Course-Workshop “Sustainable Gardening”.



Field tour in the session dedicated to plant pests and diseases.



Carrying out the seed collection and selection exercise in the native plant nursery.



Practical exercise where migrants learn the steps for the elaboration of vermicompost. In addition, they are provided with all the characteristics of the external and internal morphology of the *Eisenia foetida* or California Red Worm.



Practical exercise to turn the plant into a bonsai.



Practical exercise for the preparation of an air layering to reproduce fruit trees.

CONCLUSIONS

1-The CESFOM Project of the Casa del Migrante de Tijuana has found an ally in the Colef through the Ecoparque and the Environmental Education Program to develop strategies in the education and training of both migrants and immigrants to promote their social reintegration, consolidating a Model of integral attention to this vulnerable population.

2-Migration is a worldwide phenomenon and CESFOM has been responsible for seeking to train both migrants and immigrants, with which it seeks to teach attitudes and qualities useful for life, which will prepare them, giving them the means to cope in their new life abroad. El Colef through Ecoparque has been the ideal actor to join this project to work together for the benefit of the migrant community that arrives to Tijuana.

3-The course-workshop: "Sustainable Gardening" as part of the activities of CESFOM and its link with El Colef-Ecoparque showed that although not many immigrants and migrants participated in it, they have expressed the validity and usefulness of the training course that they will take both in reference to the time of looking for work, as well as the possibilities that this course opened for the future of their work activity.

4-The course-workshop: "Sustainable Gardening" in a certain way will help migrants and immigrants of the city of Tijuana to get a better job in the future, since the educational improvement becomes the most important and necessary value in the present moment since only the prepared migrants and immigrants will have more possibilities in the labor market that is more and more affected by the crisis and unemployment.

5- The course-workshop was a great step forward for the migrants. Finding themselves in a complex moment, seeing their dreams crushed by deportation, the inscrutable bureaucratic processes of accessing asylum in the United States or the non-existent political will to access recognition of refugee status in Mexico, the role of the Ecoparque created a respite, a space of peace and above all a space that reminded them that they can still rebuild their lives, learn something new and take action for their personal well-being and that of their family.

6-Having finally worked only with women in 2024 was a nice experience and it became innovative to have been able to be with their children in the same space, each doing different activities in contact with nature.

7-The Sustainable Gardening workshop course is an important part of El Colef's Environmental Education Program and among its purposes was to increase the awareness and knowledge of migrants through eco-didactic activities on environmental issues or problems and in doing so provided migrants with the necessary tools to make informed decisions and take responsible actions.

8-The development of the course in a place like Ecoparque surrounded by trees and with a peculiar beauty within a city considered geopolitically one of the most important in the world made the participants forget the continuous social and environmental stress in which they live and for a while no one felt anguish, depression or isolation, so they always looked forward to returning to the next class and their faces reflected a joy in each session.

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