
Project Proposal

GERN/Costa Rica

Lina Mata



GERN (Grupo de Estudios para la Realidad Nacional, www.realidadcostarricense.org) is the Spanish acronym for Group of Studies of National Reality, a youth think tank and study organization composed of costarrican young professionals to discuss issues related to national politics.

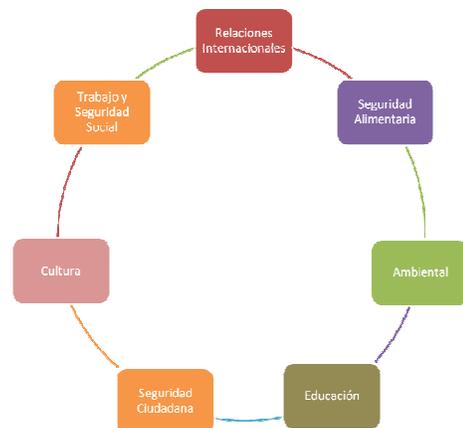


Debates and discussions have taken place at a National Museum, known as the National Centre of Culture, specially since the 7th of October, 2008. Well known political figures and authorities have gathered in this location to expose their ideas to a group of young professionals. One of the key principles of the GERN is the freedom of speech and the respectful treatment of tolerance and diversity of opinions.

However, the purpose of the GERN is not limited to academic or intellectual research only. The analysis of the group is intended in a deductive/inductive manner, combining theory with practice. For the past two years, the GERN has worked actively in the involvement of case studies in local communities, developing a series of models and ideas directly based in national conditions and reality.

The GERN is composed by a General Assembly of Associates, divided into a Board of Directors, and a number of honorary or young associates. The group is also organized into different commissions and research groups, depending on the project or topic:

- Foreign Relations
- Environmental Affairs
- Press and Information Technologies
- Cultural Affairs
- Education
- Social Security and Employment
- Criminal Policies



The aforementioned Commissions gather under one same project and final Assembly, named **“State Model”**, with one distinct aim: The development of joint a Model of Governance for Costa Rica, based under the ideas of equality, freedom and solidarity. For the year of 2009, one of the main projects of the GERN is to develop a seminar or a number of sessions with the presidential candidates, prior to the 2010 presidential elections in Costa Rica.

1. The issue/problem the project addresses

2010 Elections in Costa Rica

2. Its method for addressing the issue.

A Political Debate organized from young people to young people with nominees for presidents/representatives of main political parties (3). A new, innovate and creative debate to inform young people about political options for 2010 national elections.

3. The resources needed for implementation.

Call for young leaders

Debate Posters

Invitations for politicians

Place for the debate

Certificates for participants

Coffee Break

Small Memo for publication to distribute among young people

Digital recorder

4. Problems you anticipate facing

- Inviting nominees for presidents or their political party representatives.

**Project:
VoteSmart**



Mission

To promote a democratic culture for youth by youth towards the 2010 Elections in Costa Rica

Objectives

1. To stimulate active discussion and political debate among youth
2. To strengthen political knowledge among youth
3. To empower young people to become leaders and advocates for democracy
4. To set up a network and database of youth, NGO's and the local community

Inspiration

UDHR

Article 21: "Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. ... The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of the government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures."

APPROACH

The SMARRT Approach...

S = Sustainable

M = Measurable

A = Achievable

R = Realistic

R = Replicable

T = Time bound

Realizing SMARRT

Sustainability

- Certified youth participants -- Networking and Database
- Encourage and support youth from the Debate to become active in civic life
- Link leaders from different organizations with each other to create a network
- Use this network to create and maintain a database where young leaders and organizations can collaborate to promote political knowledge

Measurability

- Record participants political opinions made before/after the Debate
- Size of the database in terms of facilitators, participants, political organizations, media, trade unions, governmental institutions, NGO's and shared resources

Replicability

- This model can be easily adapted to work efficiently in different countries and diverse societies around the world.
- The database can also be created in other cities/regions

Time frame

- 2 months -- meetings and networking with facilitators and political parties, invitations for nominees for president/representatives
- 2 weeks: creation and consolidation of database (of different organizations)
- 2 weeks: selection process of participants
- 1 day: Political Debate: dialogue, consultations & conclusions
- 1 month: Small memo headline published

Planning and Preparation

1. Facilitator Team (10)
2. Invitations nominees for presidents (3-4)
3. Call and selection of young leaders (50 in total, 50% women's quota)
4. Define date and place for the Political Debate.

Scope of the Political Debate

Target audience: 50 young leaders from 18 – 30 (gender balance, political pluralism, geographic balance, variety of social backgrounds and representing different political positions)

Debate structure: one or two sessions, depending on number of

Participants: Estimate of 50

Facilitators: Estimate of 10

Partners

Friedrich Ebert Foundation www.fesamericacentral.org; Department of Political Science, University of Costa Rica www.ucr.ac.cr