

2019 Report

ILORI Educational Program – WWDF/BIENDEMUJER foundation

I. Project Summary

The ILORI Educational Program is located in Carpio, San José, Costa Rica and its purpose is to care for 200 boys and girls annually to favor their school, psycho-emotional, artistic and technological development, as well as promoting environmental awareness and balanced eating among them and their families; all this through playful methodologies, which invite creativity and placing a strong emphasis in gender equity and respect for diversity.

This year, we face the challenge of reinforcing the academic and social development of children facing a school lag; in particular, we had to devise how to deal with the wave of refugee and migrants who came from Nicaragua, following the social and political conflict that country has been experiencing since 2018. To respond to this short-term need (to help refugees and migrants coming into the community) we sought to train our team with the help of diverse organizations dealing with migrants (such as the Jesuit Migrant Service, UNHCR and others) we offered support to those organizations so that they could better meet the needs of refugees and migrants. All this without losing sight of our objectives and achieve them.

II. Key Problem

The ILORI Educational Program has faced a fundamental problem that we can describe as follows:

Every year, boys and girls who have a significant school lag are attended. Among the most outstanding causes, we find that these students are not accompanied in a timely and adequate manner, neither is the family group nor in the educational centers. Therefore, even though in ILORI a permanent accompaniment and reinforcement effort are made in the main subjects (Mathematics and Spanish) once the child returns home he/she does not find the environment or the conditions that give continuity to the work we do. As has been repeatedly stressed, there are three fundamental elements in the educational process of ILORI children: Home – School – ILORI.

Additionally, in some cases, children are promoted in their schools, without having the necessary tools and skills for them to continue satisfactorily with their educational process. In schools, they aren't implementing strategies or remedial plans that adequately level them, which means that there is a situation of situational drag. In other cases, they are not promoted, students repeat the grade but are treated in the same way as peers doing it for

the very first time. Unfortunately, their particular learning needs are not being addressed, nor are the causes of their underachievement considered.

The conflict in Nicaragua and the increase in the number of Nicaraguan refugees and migrants in the community had an impact on our program during this year, as we set out to contribute to the situation. We did receive children who came from refugee families and in many cases did not have the documents we regularly request for enrollment; besides we did help them offering them counselling in alliances with other organizations (such as UNHCR, RET and the Jesuit Migrant Service).

Summary table of the population served

	GRADE	AGE	GIRLS	BOYS	TOTAL
DIRECT IMPACT	FIRST	7 - 8	13	16	29
	SECOND	8 - 9	24	15	39
	THIRD	9 -10	11	18	29
	FOURTH	10 -11	16	23	39
	FIFTH	11 -12	22	13	35
	SIXTH	12 -13	15	14	29
TOTAL					200
OUTREACH	Parents and siblings of beneficiary kids.				475
TOTAL IMPACT					675

III. Strategies used to address the problem

To address the problem of school lag, and to promote a healthy growth and learning process that contributes to developing life skills, the following strategies are proposed:

The target population is 200 boys and girls from the Carpio community, elementary students, mainly from the community school, and to a lesser extent from other institutions close to the community such as Otto Hubbe Primary School, Antonio José de Sucre Primary School, Juan Rafael Mora Porras Primary School and the Pedagogical Unit José Fidel Tristán. The schedules and groups are organized considering the schedules of these schools and the groups are of around 15 children.

Six hours of support is provided per week to each kid, to reinforce the school curriculum in Mathematics and Spanish subjects, and for psycho-social development in the what we call "Circle of Love".

Both, in Mathematics and Spanish, there is a differentiated approach for the first cycle (first to third grade) and the second cycle (fourth to sixth grade). In Mathematics, in the first cycle, we focused on the numerical sense and basic operations. In the second cycle, other topics were addressed according to the contents covered in the school. In Spanish, for children in the first cycle, we focused on the development of skills and abilities for the reading-writing process (Phonological Method), and for the second cycle, in addition to attending the curricular needs, the taste for reading was encouraged, as well as the strengthening of writing and orality.

"Círculo de Amor" (Circle of Love) is the part of the Program for strengthening the autonomy and the process of psychosocial maturity. The artistic expression of children is enhanced, through crafts, art and art therapy, yoga, listening to stories, films, cooperative works, interpretation and extraction of morals, identification and experience of values, relaxation techniques and modelling positive attitudes through theatre, singing and creative movement. Here we place a special emphasis on gender equality and respect for diversity.

A transversal strategy that is used in the Program is the pedagogical mediation in each of the spaces; that is to say, it continuously seeks to adapt the issues addressed to the immediate reality of children.

Another strategy that is implemented is the constant communication with schools and families to support children who face academic and socialization difficulties.

In addition to this strategy, the number of personal attention hours was increased for some children who presented greater challenges in the development and acquisition of certain skills and abilities necessary for their school level.

Regarding the difficulties of socialization, psychological care and restorative circles were implemented as a strategy, individually, with groups of children and family members. We held meetings, gatherings and restorative circles with parents of those children who were in critical situations on academic issues, protection issues or behavioral situations and conflicts with peers.

To promote a more holistic approach, quarterly training workshops were held for parents, focused on enriching the relationships and commitments between the home and Casa ILORI. Among other fundamental issues, we worked on study habits, limit management, discipline and education with tenderness, among others.

By the above, spaces were opened for the mothers and fathers of the ILORI kids, where they learned about the learning process of their sons and daughters and were provided with didactic materials (hard and digital copies), to be used in the home as support for the learning experiences in the classroom.

To strengthen healthy coexistence, inclusion, respect for differences (gender, ethnicity, religion), recreational and artistic activities were carried out in Circle of Love, such as: reading stories about emotions and values and the project of personalized pillows for yoga classes, in which girls and boys lived the adventure of embroidering and personalizing their pillows to deconstruct gender stereotypes.

Ecological summer workshops were held, in which children created ecological blocks or eco-bricks made out of plastic waste.

This year, the Program provided special attention to refugee children who requested academic support for better integration into the Costa Rican school system and help their families with the transition process. With the help of other organizations, training and information on human rights and immigration issue, was offered.

Partnerships and cooperation were established with various governmental and non-governmental organizations (UCIMED, VMWARE, WORLD VISION, Jesuit Migrant Service, UNHCR, PANI, CEFEMINA, INAMU) to address issues that add value to the contribution provided by the ILORI program to the community.

Together with UCIMED University, training workshops on healthy lifestyles, orchards and urban composters were facilitated, thanks to which, a group of mothers, and first-cycle boys and girls had the opportunity to reflect on their eating habits, the importance of sport and how to grow in confined spaces.

In coordination with the PANI (the Costa Rican bureau in charge of children), 9 parenting workshops were held for parents of ILORI kids and others in the community. CEFEMINA, in cooperation with INAMU, helped us to develop workshops on gender violence and women's empowerment, at the facilities of Casa ILORI. VMWare carried out a Professional Volunteering process for school support in the area of English and Basic Programming, which benefited second cycle boys and girls.

As for volunteering, we also have the support of two guitarists, who offered personalized guitar lessons, which contributed to the development of children's musical expression. Also supporting this musical development, the Concordia Choral Academy, for the second consecutive year, granted full scholarships to ILORI six ILORI kids who are now part of that choir.

IV. Expected Results, Outcome and Balance

Academic performance	
EXPECTED RESULTS	95% of children advance to the next school level
OUTCOME	95% boys and girls had a school performance that allowed them to advance to the next school level.
BALANCE	Goal meet

Spanish	
EXPECTED RESULTS	95% of children have reading and writing according to their school level
OUTCOME	98% of the boys and girls in the I cycle developed reading and writing skills according to their school level. 98% of the boys and girls in the II Cycle developed skills in reading comprehension, grammatical structures, spelling and orality.
BALANCE	Goal exceeded

Mathematic	
EXPECTED RESULTS	95% of children master the 4 basic mathematic operations and have problem solving skills according to their school level

OUTCOME	82% of children master the 4 basic operations and have problem solving skills according to their school level
BALANCE	Goal unreached. 13% of the kids didn't have previous needed content knowledge according to their school level, so they only managed to develop skills in some basic operations.

Soft Skills	
EXPECTED RESULTS	95% of children have internalized concepts for a better coexistence and apply them when interacting with their peers, educators and family.
OUTCOME	85% of children developed competences and skills to understand, control and guide their emotions and are aware of the individual and group benefits of contributing to the common good.
BALANCE	Goal unreached. Circle of love classes help children to develop socialization skills for a better coexistence. However, in the case of children living in situations of abandonment, violence or similar environments, it is difficult for them to internalize concepts and change learned negative behaviors. For them, it will take more time to acquire such skills.

Art	
EXPECTED RESULTS	95% of children acquire knowledge and skills according to their age, in at least one of the following arts: plastic arts, crafts, musical arts, drama, creative movement
OUTCOME	100% boys and girls have developed artistic and creative skills
BALANCE	Goal exceeded

English	
EXPECTED RESULTS	95% of the children in the program master written and conversational English according to their school level
OUTCOME	100% of all children master basic English, according to their school level.
BALANCE	Goal Exceeded

IT	
EXPECTED RESULTS	95% of children know how to use the computer and operate computer programs according to their school level
OUTCOME	95% boys and girls acquired technological knowledge.
BALANCE	Goal meet

Nutrition	
EXPECTED RESULTS	95% of children enjoy a balanced meal each time they attend the Program.
OUTCOME	100% of the children enjoy nutritional meals while attending the Program and are aware of the benefits of good eating habits, hygiene and physical care.
BALANCE	Goal exceeded

Environmental awareness	
EXPECTED RESULTS	95% of the children participating in the program have knowledge and apply the main principles regarding the recycling and reuse of materials.
OUTCOME	95% boys and girls developed greater awareness and commitment to environmentally friendly practices.
BALANCE	Goal meet.

V. Conclusions

Throughout about 10 years of work, we have been adding lessons, experiences and lessons that allow us to understand the changing reality of the community, and that help us offer timely and relevant responses to the emerging needs of the population with which We relate.

The neo-humanist worldview of our work team is a tool that facilitates the academic, emotional and psycho-social development of boys and girls. This has prompted us to offer comprehensive support, which understands students as human beings in constant construction.

We have learned that education is an arduous task, which requires more and more intentional and connected efforts among all the actors, that is: students, family, school, community and the ILORI Program.

After this review and reflection of our work throughout the year, we recognize as growth opportunities:

- Continue with spaces for professional updating.
- Offer humanistic training workshops and conversations for teachers of the Carpio community school.
- Create spaces for training in pedagogical strategies and methodologies, for mothers, fathers and other interested persons.
- Strengthen and expand ties with different communal and social organizations.
- Implement a week of "Open House", where people from the community and outside of it, can approach to know the Educational Program and in turn exchange knowledge and experiences.

VI. Testimonies

Anecdotal story: The transforming power of a mother

By: Gabriel Flores Mendoza

This year has been a year of experiences, experiences and much sharing. The mothers of first-grade boys and girls have been involved in essential processes of accompanying their sons and daughters. Thomas Edison, one of the greatest scientists, after being sent home, because at school they considered he would never learn, said: "I am the result of what a great woman wanted to do from me" after being recognized for his achievements and being accompanied at home by his mother, Nancy, a woman who believed in his son and dedicated part of his life to teaching and learning with him. The story begins with a desperate, discouraged and even tired mom; He does not know where to turn, he does not understand how he can learn to understand his son, who is in a school stage of much learning, but also much support. Seeing in that mother an interest in being the source

of learning, she is guided and provides spaces to learn. These spaces begin to be built with small conversations at the exit and entrance of boys and girls. They are born of the interest reflected by those mothers, who express in their daily lives the desire to be a light in the path of their children.

Cristopher Lanza's Story

By: Freddy Ulate Agüero

Cristopher Lanza Aguirre (Cris) is an ILORI boy who this year is in sixth grade at the José Fidel Tristán Pedagogical Unit. Due to his school schedule (every day in the morning) he had to be placed in “extra” support groups where he had to share with boys of different levels. With me he had classes on Mondays and Tuesdays from 3 to 3:45 pm. This allowed me to have a lot of flexibility in terms of the topics we saw in class.

I consider Cris as a very lively and curious boy. Despite being a little shy, he showed very remarkable characteristics such as his humility, kindness and his commitment to what he does. He constantly asked me questions to go beyond the contents we were studying at the time. Many times, we end up talking about other topics such as Science, Social Studies, English, even Mandarin! (I plead guilty for teaching him how fabulous this language is).

This boy has a great love and taste for mathematics! I loved teaching him not only the usual contents of the sixth-grade curriculum but mathematical curiosities also, such as “magic with equations”, Pick's amazing theorem, the spherical geometric, we even approached the surface of Costa Rica with a map! I even had the opportunity to show him a few school contents such as whole numbers.

With an average grade of 85 in math Cris is a sample of the academic excellence that characterizes this sixth-grade generation. In terms of behavior and grades were excellent. In the statistical analysis carried out for the 2nd quarter of 2019, 73% of the 6th grade kids showed an academic performance rated as “good” (grades from 75 up), of which 50% could qualify as first grade students. Like other kids, such as Jafeth Ballesteros, Christy Calvo, Duván Rivas, etc. Cris proved to be the best that ILORI has to offer to the community.

I became very fond of Cristopher these two years in which he was my student. He managed to enter not only in what I knew academically but in my whole life. I remember once when he asked me. Did you study to be a mathematical scientist? I laughed a lot at his curious question. However, it was there that I emphasized to inspire him and advise him to study a university career that has to do with mathematics as some engineering or some exact science.

I hope with all my heart that school is going very well. I hope I learned with my example that you can get ahead even while living in a neighborhood like this! With God's help everything is possible. I think this relationship will not be here. The doors of ILORI will remain open! We hope more guys like him get up in the next generations. Successes in your life Cris! Many blessings!

Keyner Altamirano Story
By: Amanda Méndez Ramírez

It goes without saying that all the girls and boys who attend the program are important to me and surely to the other people who are part of ILORI. However, I want to emphasize the story of a child, who undoubtedly marked many friends and marked me as a professional, as an educator and as a person. Keyner entered the program when he was in fourth grade, and due to schedule reasons, he received classes with classmates and sixth classmates. He was a withdrawn child, quiet, even scary, I always found his personality interesting. I realized that I was suffering from a degenerative disease, I had to give it a special treatment, although not differentiated. Since I met him, I noticed his strength and an enthusiastic denial of his illness.

I remember it when we went to the Amusement Park, two years ago, he rode in many of the games, walked slowly, went back, but always arrived. At that time, he looked more tired, sicker, perhaps. In fifth grade he improved his appearance a lot, he grew, like all boys and girls.

Although it was this year when his presence captivated me the most. In sixth grade, the 2019 generation. Keyner brought joy, jokes, laughter to Circle classes. When he was in good health, his personality stood out, his presence, his jokes and occurrences were very nice, his suffering was almost imperceptible and it showed a lot when he was missing classes.

I have very nice memories with my dear student, which I hope to always carry in my memory. In short, his death changed my life and the girls and boys who had the joy of meeting him. I had never closely experienced the death of a child, it is shocking, sad, leaves a void in the stomach. Although I rescue that is encouraging, it strengthens. I learned from experience that girls and boys assimilate death differently. They live it with more tranquility and joy; Between cries, they play, laugh and remain full of hope.

I wanted to share his story, because first, I think it is important to keep it in the memory of the ILORI Educational Program, not to forget its trajectory, its presence and what has left us its absence. Reflect life and death. Recognize that time is relative, accept that there are shorter or longer lives. His story is representative of the program. I think it's special. Keyner taught me many things, I think more than I taught him; I am proud to have met him and I hope that his short life will positively warm my path and that of children, like Walner, who constantly remember him, who had him present in life, was aware of his health and friendship.

Embroidered on Walner's pillow, (one of the activities we had in Circle of Love was decorating a personal pillow) in a corner, there is the name of Keyner. I think he will never forget him. Actually, he was decisive in the construction of his masculinity, his charisma and sensitivity.

Valeska and Skarleth

By: Mario Arias Leitón

During this year, in the Circle of Love classes, we took the initiative to invite the children to replace the classes that for greater reasons were lost. So, if a girl or boy missed class with her group, she could come with another group to replace that class. Some children were sent by their mother or manager to replace some class they missed, but the cases that most caught my attention, was when the children came to replace some class because they wanted to. Nobody sent them, they came alone and alone, they asked me or Amanda when they could replenish, and they worried about remembering the lesson schedules, to see when they could come. Minutes before, they approached to warn that they were coming to replace, and they joined the group as if they had always been in that section.

Skarleth and Valeska are two girls who went even further. They took the initiative not only to come to replace classes, but when they participated in some other class, they made themselves available to the other classmates. At the end of the year, they do not accumulate any absence, and the works they have done in *Círculo de Amor* stand out not for being the best, but for being those that denote greater elaboration, dedication, desire... Both girls show empathy for their classmates, they have good grades in the School, and one of them, Valeska, says that when she grows up she wants to be a teacher.

The commitment of both girls with their active participation in the Circle of Love reminds us that small actions can lead to great results, that each river brings to the ocean, and that it depends on how each boy and girl experiences their relationship with their teachers. With your learning process and your classmates, this will be your vision in the future about the importance of education, whether formal or non-formal. As educators, we have the responsibility of generating friendly spaces for children, so that they learn feeling comfort and safety, and see the education system as an opportunity, not only to learn and get things from it, but also as an opportunity to contribute.

In the ILORI Educational Program we promote learning through tenderness, and sensitivity, inclusion, the desire to share, to guide lovingly and set an example, we not only promote teachers and teachers, but also children They teach us about tenderness, in their own way.