



NEIGHBORHOOD EXPO: The treasures of



El Tlacuache

a world we cannot imagine

Towards the understanding of Nature-
humanity relations

Memories of the project carried out



Micelio
Urbano



Casa de
Vinculación
Social

Espacio alternativo en Querétaro

Research grant Antoni Benaiges, 2021,
MCEP, FIMEM y AEB
Training practices



This is very crazy. Hardly anyone does it anymore.

(Claudio Irrera)

CONTENTS

PRESENTATION	5
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	9
PREAMBLE	10
PART ONE: WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE ARE ABOUT	11
1.1. Who we are	11
1.2. Where we are	13
1.3. What it's all about and how it all started	15
1.3.1. What is the Anthropocene?	
1.3.2. Why "El Tlacuache"?	
1.4. Utopias and educational projects that inspire us	20
1.4.1. The utopia of "El Buen Vivir" and the <i>Cuarta Transformación</i>	
1.4.2. Emancipatory popular pedagogies	
1.4.3. Agroecology and other sources of educational inspiration	
PART TWO: WHAT WE DID AND HOW WE FARED	26
2.1. Activities linked to the El Tlacuache project	26
2.2. Training of non-teaching educators	26
2.3. Some of the challenges we faced	27
2.3.1. Organizational Challenges	
2.3.2. Educational Challenges	
2.3.3. Challenges related to visibility	
2.3.4. Challenges related to the treatment of produced material	
2.4. The sense of working with groups of minors	30
2.4.1. The six areas of training	
2.4.2. Generating questions	
2.4.3. Outline of activities offered, according to the areas of attention.	
2.5. The formation of an "eco-detective agency".	32
2.5.1. The planning of the investigative agency	
2.5.2. Call for applications, reception and induction of "applicants"	
2.5.3. The cooperative option	
2.5.4. Organizational structure of the investigative agency	
2.5.5. Physical and mental preparation and training of the team	
2.6. Metaphor of travel and journey and voyages in search of answers	41
2.6.1 Recognition of the ship	
2.6.2. Journey around the universe and the planet Earth	
2.6.3. Excursions to exemplary sites	
2.6.4. Projection of other possible worlds	
2.6.5. The visit of aliens	
2.6.6. Time tunnel travel	
2.6.7. Neighborhood tours and the art of mapping	
2.6.8. Meeting with garbage	
2.6.9. Interview with some tlacuache the learning of 5 R	

CONTENTS

2.7. Unexpected encounter with monsters	54
2.7.1. A parenthesis to address the issue of real monsters	
2.7.2. Another look at monsters and various ways of dealing with them	
2.8. Discovery of some invisible worlds	60
2.8.1. Some of Nature's invisibles	
2.8.2. Some social invisibles	
2.8.3. When human actions make Nature invisible	
2.9. Meeting and dialogue with Nature	62
2.9.1. "The herbarium".	
2.9.2 "Earth we are and earth we will become"	
2.9.3. "Sow your seed"	
2.9.4. "Rethinking"	
2.9.5. "Eco-fashion"	
2.9.6. Composting of organic household waste	
2.9.7. Urban solid waste management (USWM)	
2.10. Handcrafted cooperatives and solidarity economy	68
2.10.1 Handcrafted bakery	
2.10.2. Handcrafted chocolate making	
2.10.3. Basketry and newspaper reuse	
2.10.4. Handcrafted toys	
2.10.5. Making musical instruments and playing whit sounds	
2.11. Cooperative strategies for problem solving	72
2.11.1. Discussions in <i>Council</i> or in the <i>children and teenagers's parliament</i>	
2.11.2. Problem solving strategies and machines	
2.11.3. Assemblies to resolve certain disputes	
2.11.4. When problems cannot be solved: the bird's funerals	
2.12. Social communication for learning sharing	75
2.12.1. "Radio Tlacuache" (radio exercises and games)	
2.12.2. El Tlacuache's video-binnacle and other broadcast products	
2.13. Closing and evaluation of participants	76
PART THREE: THE NEIGHBORHOOD-EXPO "THE TREASURES OF EL TLACUACHE: A WORLD WE CANNOT IMAGINE".	79
3.1. Description of the 20 themes of the exhibition	80
3.2. Some of the visitors' evaluations of the exhibition	89
CONCLUSIONS	96
APPENDIXES	
ONE: Lis of participants	99
TWO: The song of "El ropavejero" or "El Tlacuache" by Cri-Crí	102
THREE: Scheme of activities articulated to the project	103

PRESENTATION

*Last minute information:
We have just received news from all over the planet,
saying that the world is splitting in two.
People panic and flee in horror
as they watch their houses collapse.
Many children and teenagers have died and it is not known how to stop this.
Back to sports with Yudi...¹*
(Fragment from a news item written by
by a couple of child eco-detectives
of the “El Tlacuache” project).

5

ONE

The story presented here² gathers many voices and seeks to record the enriching experience we had, as members of the group "Micelio Urbano" (MU), in carrying out the project: “El Tlacuache”: neighborhood expo of subway waste”, the result of a process that lasted about two years and was developed in the *Casa de la Vinculación Social (CVS)*, in the town of Felipe Carrillo Puerto, in Querétaro.

The purpose of this project was to promote a **process of ecological education and outreach of science** with children and teenagers (between 5 and 17 years of age) in popular urban neighborhoods, and its purpose was to stimulate interest in searching the causes and consequences of the current **local and global climate crisis**.

To begin with, it is necessary to clarify that we had to change the title of this project, since the original title: "Neighborhood-expo of subway waste " was incomprehensible to those who do not know the context in which it arose. After discussing several options, it was left as: "**The treasures of El Tlacuache, a world we did not imagine**". The idea of *treasures* is closer and more attractive to the target population, because it contains a certain irony and puts its finger on the sore point about the contradictions of our time.

In addition, it allows us to suggest that which is sold and bought in the store and which seems very valuable, but later becomes *trash*; simultaneously, we can also name *treasures* to certain results of modernity, such as industry or urbanization, which save so much effort and provide so many

¹ The above-mentioned fragment resulted from an activity proposed to the participants, based on the well-known anecdote by Orson Wells, about a radio novel that generated great commotion among the audience.

² For years, there has been a debate on what type of language to use in academic texts and the impersonal language (supposedly "aseptic") of scientific writing has been questioned. On this subject, we follow Jordi Antolí Martínez, from the University of Alicante, Spain, who pointed out that "In the dissolution of the figure of the subject, a rhetorical strategy has been identified that seeks to create an appearance (not reality) of objectivity. Webb (1992, p. 749) considered that the non-personalization of academic discourse hides an important part of the scientific process: the social elements of the research process, that is, the involvement of the researcher/writer in the process of knowledge construction. Thus, according to this, personalized use gives rise to an ethical writing practice."
<https://cuedespyd.hypotheses.org/6505> So, when talking about *us* here, we refer to the members of the team that promoted this project.

goods and comforts, but which have turned against nature³ and humanity itself, to the point that several scientists warn about the danger of extinction that we are currently running as a species.

On the other hand, we can also call that which nature provides and which big capital turns into an object of exploitation, dispossession, accumulation and business, as expressed in the cry of the *Network in Defense of Water and Life* (to which CVS and Micelio Urbano belong) *Water is a treasure worth more than gold! It is not drought, it is plundering!*⁴.

TWO

In terms of education, the “El Tlacuache” project was guided by several *generative questions*: *what has caused the climate crisis we have today, what can we do to mitigate its effects, where do the things we use come from, where do they go when we throw them away, where do they end up when we throw them away?*

Despite the complexity involved, we were able to establish strategies that facilitated simple and, we believe, also very interesting and attractive syntheses for those who participated. The main one was to set up an "eco-detective agency" to find out what is going on.



This strategy involved the articulation of experiences and proposals such as the "Education through Work and Play" and various techniques of Celestin Freinet; the "Pedagogy of Communication" of Francisco Gutiérrez and the “Plan de Actividades Culturales de Apoyo a la educación primaria” (PACAEP) of the Ministry of Public Education (SEP) and the National Council for Culture and the Arts (CONACULTA) of the Federal Government of Mexico. Although these approaches have been in the history of education for many years, they are still valid, as they are part of the *hard core* of modern alternative pedagogy.⁵

A fundamental characteristic of these educational proposals is that they are based on the principle that *learning is social and situated in specific contexts*. For this reason, we allow ourselves to broadly expose the context in which we work, as it is key to understand the reasons for what we do.

³ Throughout this document there is reference to nature, with a lowercase initial (that which surrounds us and is not a human product), and Nature, with a capital initial (as that principle that governs the entire universe and is the generator of life). Although this differentiation is not always consistent.

⁴ REDAVI (by its Spanish acronym): *Network in defense of water and life*, promoter, with "Bajo Tierra Museo del Agua" and many other organizations, of the *Festivals of running water*, in which we participated simultaneously to the realization of the El Tlacuache project.

⁵ By "alternative" we mean here, critical and in resistance to the dominant (capitalist) market society.

Ten to twelve young people participated in this process, as a *core team* (most of them in their twenties) as promoters, guides and instructors of the workshops, and around sixty children and teenagers and adolescents between 5 and 16 years of age, as well as a wide network of collaborators (around fifty) in different areas.

With them we were able to create some micro learning communities that, although ephemeral, had an impact both on the young participants and on those who took on the responsibility of coordinating activities at some points in the process.

The culmination of the El Tlacuache's project consisted in setting up the aforementioned *neighborhood expo*, aimed at the population to show the impact of the transition from the countryside to the city -especially the impact of an industry on an ecosystem- on the health of living beings and on the social network. This implied showing how the market society has imposed on us a harmful lifestyle that constantly generates serious problems for humanity and for nature. This exhibition emphasizes the poor management of urban solid waste (USW), derived from the market culture, as well as the industrial production of food.

The expo shows not only problems, but also some options that can be practiced in the context of *agroecology, organic agriculture* and the Latin American proposal of "El Buen Vivir".

Despite the difficulties involved in its implementation, we believe that the project was a success, as it brought valuable lessons for those who participated in it, according to the evaluations shared in the last section of this document.

THREE



We recognize that giving an account, in writing, of something so complex forces us to greatly simplify what happened, sometimes to the detriment of clarity or precision. Nevertheless, we appreciate the invitation to share what we did, as it allows us to become more aware of what we are looking for.

However, we cannot fail to recognize that in these times very few people are willing to read writings like this one, not only because of its length, but also because of the unpopular topic it deals with: *garbage* and its effects on global



warming. We therefore propose to follow Daniel Pennac's proposal⁶ on *the right to skip pages, to read from back to front, or only what interests each one of us*.

To spread what we did among other audiences, we shared a blog on Instagram and Facebook⁷, and we are developing a series of booklets with a more colloquial language in a more visual format, which we hope to circulate soon. We also invite you to review the synthesis with photographs to thank all our collaborators⁸.

Now we record and share our memories, not only because of the demands of those who supported us in the realization of this project⁹, but also because we agree with Franz Fanon when he says that: *To speak is to exist absolutely for the other*¹⁰.

This text gives an account of many things we experience "behind the scenes". Looking into these spaces offers good clues to understand how social processes are woven. The mere fact of putting it in writing gives those of us who participated in its construction the opportunity to recognize ourselves, to have a more comprehensive view of what we did as a team and not only as individuals, as well as to give new meanings to our work.

This document is the result of a collective construction of several members of the El Tlacuache team and articulates the writings of minors and adults who participated in the process. The responsibility for the integration corresponds (in alphabetical order of surnames) to: Constanza and Gonzalo Guajardo, Rebeca Mendoza, Karla Venegas and María del Carmen Vicencio.



⁶ Daniel Pennacchioni, French writer of children and teenagers's literature, born in Morocco.

⁷ Instagram: @Lasaventurasdeeltacuache; FB: Las aventurasdeEITlacuache.

⁸ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eER68G2vrvvHWLSDLe_yqT3sQLV6qKjFA/view?usp=drivesdk

⁹ This report responds to the requirement of the Benaiges Foundation, whose grant we received in April 2022.

¹⁰ Fanon Frantz (1963): "Los condenados de la tierra". Editorial Fondo de Cultura Económica.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are very grateful to the children and teenagers who agreed to join us in this learning adventure and who actively engaged with our proposals.

We also recognize those who so generously collaborated with the cause, assuming commissions of organization, design, coordination of workshops... We also recognize those who shared their knowledge and passion for what they do; especially the group "Canal Carrillo" and their "Storyteller Circle", who joined the team of El Tlacuache; those who provided their social service from some universities in the area; those who participated in volunteer work; friends who collaborated in different ways, including musical entertainment on Saturdays; mothers, grandmothers, aunts, uncles and parents, who not only allowed their children and teenagers to run the adventure, but also accompanied us in making decisions in the face of difficult unforeseen events. Due to lack of time, it is not possible to give precise credit to each one of them. The list of participants is presented in APPENDIX ONE.

Our thanks also go to those who collaborated with the revision, graphic editing and translations into English and French of this document.

We are grateful to the *Benaiges Foundation* for their confidence in our project; also to the *Movimiento Cooperativo de Educación Popular* of Spain and the *International Federación Internacional de la escuela moderna* (FIMEM) for their support; we are also grateful to the *Movimiento por una Educación Alternativa*, from which we have received support and accompaniment. It is important to point out that those who participate in these national and international movements have been an invaluable source of inspiration for our team.

We also express our gratitude and solidarity to those who work in food production, in an ecological perspective, as well as to those who dedicate themselves by trade to cleaning. These are people who, despite sustaining our lives, receive little social recognition.

Last but not least, we express our admiration and gratitude to the environmental groups of the *Red en defensa del agua y de la vida* (REDAVI), promoters of the *Festival agua que corre*, which brings together a large number of environmental defenders in Querétaro, especially the *Bajo Tierra Museo del Agua*. All of them fight fundamentally and arduously to document, denounce arbitrariness, stop and redirect public policies, mismanagement and inequitable distribution of water in Querétaro. It is an extensive resistance movement against decisions that neoliberal governments have taken in favor of a few wealthy families and against nature and the well-being of the majority of the population, especially those who have suffered threats and repression for it. This movement was also a root of inspiration and collaboration in the development of our educational and technical activities.

Micelio Urbano,

Carrillo Puerto, Querétaro, Mexico, February 2023.

PREAMBLE

Before beginning this report, we express our admiration to those who dedicate themselves to the fundamental tasks of basic education and permanently live their commitment to **emancipatory popular education**; especially to those who work in public schools in popular areas, for the tremendous challenge they face in these times of crisis. Not only because of the pandemic, but also because of the confusion and chaos that the neoliberal system has caused in the understanding of pedagogical theories and educational practice. Under the pretext of "be at the forefront" and seek at all costs "innovation" (but only in its technological facet), neoliberalism has wiped the slate clean of the broad history of alternative popular education in Mexico, Latin America and the world, to give way to that reductionist logic that sees education, predominantly, as an administration of time and movements, and loads on the backs of teachers a myriad of tasks that not only do not concern them, but prevent them from their fundamental work: to generate the necessary conditions for the educational community to think critically about reality and collaborate with its transformation, giving a voice to the "voiceless", promoting the emancipation of people in the mutual care of human beings and Nature.

The neoliberal logic has not stopped there; it strives to denigrate the teaching work in basic education and its origin, the teacher training, arguing that "any professional can teach children and teenagers, since everything is on the Internet", an assumption that generates serious damage in Mexican basic education, especially in certain sectors of the population and in the so-called neoliberal governments, until E. Peña Nieto, which preceded the current one, of the "la Cuarta Transformación" (4T).

We recognize that most of the members of the El Tlacuache team do not belong to the Mexican teaching profession. Our group includes young (and not so young) people from other professions, in addition to basic education teachers¹¹. However, we are in permanent contact with teachers of all levels and we are witnesses of their commitment. We ourselves are convinced of the central importance of popular, non-formal education, which we consider a fundamental axis for social awareness and, therefore, of enormous relevance in the formation of human beings. We regret the little focus it receives from governments and their agencies, as well as from society.

The historical moment we are living is crucial, it challenges us, because, both outside the country and in our political and neighborhood spaces, unprecedented transformations are taking place. This moves us to assume responsibilities in the micro-space in which we move, to promote, with new impetus, formal, non-formal and informal education, capable of opening up to all possible ways of *communication of men*¹² among themselves and with the world, as Paulo Freire understood it.

¹¹ Among others are: pedagogy, horticulture, environmental engineering, social psychology, socio-territorial studies, history, philosophy and plastic arts.

¹² The noun "men" does not refer only to males, but is an epicene, synonymous with humanity.

PART ONE: WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE ARE ABOUT

*No one educates anyone, no one educates himself;
we educate in community*
(Paulo Freire)

1.1. Who we are

Micelio Urbano

Micelio Urbano (MU) is a multidisciplinary group that integrates people passionate about Nature and the arts. It combines experience and youth, ancestral knowledge, philosophical knowledge, natural and social sciences. It was founded a just over two years ago. Currently, it is linked to various experts in sustainability and ecology, pedagogy, socio-cultural promotion and solidarity economy. This is how the "Comunidad Micelio Urbano"¹³ has been formed, in which several people interested in agroecological issues interact directly or from a distance.

Mycelium designates the relationships of interaction and mutual sustenance that fungi have with each other and with other living beings, in ecosystems, through a network (more complex than the Internet) or a tissue of filaments that acts as a bridge, connects and nourishes life on the planet.

We chose the name "Micelio Urbano" to metaphorically signify our interest in recognizing and contributing to strengthen the *Sentipensante* –wich means "feeling-thinking" in spanish-interconnection¹⁴ between Nature and humanity, between the inhabitants of the city and the countryside, as well as the neighbors of a neighborhood to develop common projects.

We try to collaborate with the development of ecological awareness in micro-spaces that bring together people seeking a better quality of life. Specifically, we are interested in inquire, studying, practicing and disseminating eco-technologies that mitigate the damage caused by human action on the earth's crust (*anthroposphere*).

Canal Carrillo

Micelio Urbano was joined by the group "Canal Carrillo" (CC), made up of young people interested in reviewing the radical transformation suffered by the place where we work: Felipe Carrillo Puerto, a town that had to change its agricultural and livestock work for manufacturing and commerce, when one of the most important industrial zones of Querétaro, "Benito Juárez", was established.

Members of this group participated as promoters and conductors of workshops and courses that we conducted in 2021 and 2022. Canal Carrillo collaborated with the neighborhood-expo project,

¹³ It is difficult to determine the exact number of members of this community, since we are neither an institution nor a company and we move in many different ways, responding to different calls, at different times, depending on the needs of the project.

¹⁴ *Sentipensante* is an expression attributed to sociologist O. Fals Borda, who in turn borrowed it from the fishermen of San Benito Abad, Colombia.

guiding children and teenagers and teenagers in tours of the area, offering workshops on how to make logs, take photographs and make maps, establish links with the town's elders, through its "Círculo de Narradores de Historias" (storytellers circle), learn how this town was transformed, in its transition from rural to urban-industrial zone. Some of the people who participated in this circle gave important clues for the neighborhood-expo that we have already mentioned.

Casa de la Vinculación Social

The "Casa de la Vinculación Social, espacio alternativo en Querétaro" (CVS) is a kind of *people's house, a space for the exchange of popular and scientific knowledge, located in the town of Felipe Carrillo Puerto, Querétaro*. In it converge different groups, which promote and share projects in several areas: *physical and mental health, *art and culture, *popular organization and *environmental care or ecology.

It was founded in October 2013, by agreement between the *Dirección de Vinculación Social* of the Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro (UAQ) and a popular organization called "Asamblea General del Pueblo, A.C.", from Carrillo Puerto, Qro. It operated as a university extension program during the administration of Gilberto Herrera Ruiz and Gonzalo Guajardo González, who conceived it as a link of the *university committed to the society that gives it life*. Since 2018, due to the change in relations with the UAQ -given the change in administration and understanding of university-society relations-, CVS has been working independently.

The team of promoters and collaborators

In order to vitalize different vectors, we invited students, artists and professionals from various disciplines, since we agreed on certain concerns, both about the climate crisis and the civilization crisis we are currently experiencing: people interested in promoting reflection among the population about what is happening to us and what we can do concretely to reduce the problem. From the middle of 2021 and throughout 2022, other people, willing to collaborate with this project, joined us at different times. This allowed us to form very valuable and committed teams.

Children and teenagers and youth participants

Since its foundation, CVS has opened its doors to minors. The interest in working with them, even though we are not a school, is because we believe that what is done at CVS is valuable, interesting and can open a wide range of possibilities for children and teenagers to look at the world, in ways different from the traditional school or the street. In return, we learn a lot from their looks, questions, witticisms, curiosity and will to live.

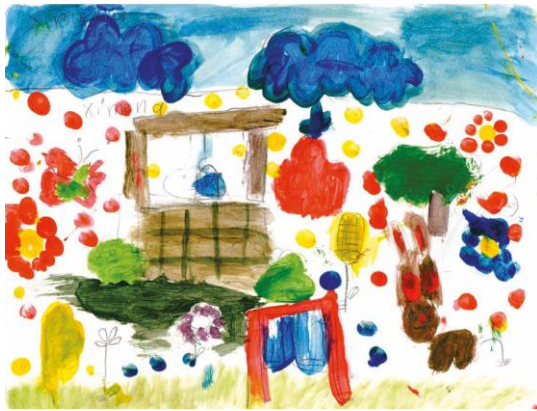
Those who participated in the project referred to here belong to the middle or lower middle class; they are the children and teenagers of shopkeepers, cooks, workers, technicians or domestic employees, many single mothers who were unable to continue studying after high school. But also (approximately 10%) were descendants of academics or professionals, who came from other areas.

1.2. Where we are

As mentioned at the beginning, the Casa de la Vinculación Social is located in the city of Querétaro, capital of the state of Querétaro. This city is recognized as one of the most developed, most economically developed and safest cities in Mexico¹⁵. In the western part of the capital, is the (former?) town of Felipe Carrillo Puerto, land of indigenous transit, some settlements of Otomí and Chichimeca origin, ancestral, patriarchal ties, rural and artisan understanding of the world; a place almost as old as the capital (about 500 years); recognized for its viceregal chapels and patron saint festivities, neighborhood assemblies, *faenas*¹⁶ and other traditions, as well as for having been the cradle of Queretaro musicians who, during the XIX and XX centuries, founded or integrated musical groups from other areas of the country¹⁷.



13



Before the irruption of the Benito Juárez industrial zone in Querétaro, Carrillo was an agricultural and cattle-raising zone, with large extensions of fertile land rich in waterwheels, orchards and cornfields and flowers, as the older residents nostalgically recall¹⁸. The arrival, first, of large factories (national and foreign) and, later, of the large (transnational) market, devastated its natural spaces and its social fabric. It radically transformed its life structure, causing the emigration of many peasants to other places, the immigration of many foreigners and the conversion of

those who remained into workers, traders and unemployed.

In the process, the town grew rapidly, unequal and disorderly and filled with companies dedicated (euphemistically) to "recycling" industrial scrap (carcasses of accident vehicles, old iron, accumulators, batteries, etc.) and to recovering waste from domestic and artisanal activities (*pet*, cardboard, glass, cans, *tetrapak*, etc.), a task to which the elderly and many *homeless* migrants¹⁹ dedicate themselves, above all. Some warn, with alarm, that this place has become the "garbage

¹⁵ However, it should be noted that, despite the fact that this state is historically considered the cradle of very relevant social movements (the Independence from Spain -1810-21-, the Reform, which separates the church from the State and promotes secularism -1958-1972-, and the Mexican Revolution, against dictatorship and in favor of freedom, social equality and the rights of the working class? 1917-1921), currently represents one of the strongest bastions of the neoliberal right, due to the families with high economic power, the settlement of transnational capital and the dominance of political parties (such as the PRI and the PAN) that have been governing it for almost a century.

¹⁶ In Mexico, "*faena*" refers to work in general, but this noun is also used to refer to collective, unpaid work done for the benefit of the community or in solidarity with a neighborhood or family (construction of a road, school, temple, harvest, etc.). It is still a deeply rooted custom of several Mexican native peoples.

¹⁷ Youtube: Casa de la Vinculación: comunidad en acción: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kN0w6P-q6_w

¹⁸ <https://inagro.com.mx/index.php/2020/07/30/felipe-carrillo-puerto-delegacion-de-origen-agricola/>

¹⁹ These activities have also recently given rise to continuous fires, caused by homeless people who make burning waste the only way to keep warm.

dump of the capital"; reports from the "Centro de Monitoreo de la Calidad del Aire del Estado de Querétaro" (CEMAQ) point out, recurrently, as "the most polluted area in the State".



Local grassroots organizations, such as the Asamblea General del Pueblo, A.C., have denounced that part of this problem is due to the fact that the industrial zone is located on common lands, of which the town was dispossessed. In addition, several of the plots of land that used to be seeds have become wastelands because the shareholders of common lands were forced to emigrate in order to find work. The installation of factories on the farmland has turned it into a dumping ground for the waste produced by the industry, as well as nearby gated housing estates that do not have municipal sanitation services. Inhabitants of the town

have reported that several times they have been caught by pickup trucks arriving to dump large quantities of bags full of household waste.

Regarding the adolescent and youth population of Carrillo, some of them say that they experience serious difficulties in continuing their studies after high school, so that they end up being exploited for labor or recruited by delinquency or are subjected to various addictions.



In short, this place synthesizes the great contradictions of market society, industrialization and urbanization in the neoliberal logic. For this reason, it is much sought after by researchers in the natural and social sciences²⁰.



Despite this problem, one of the advantages of the place (unlike other popular areas) is that a large part of the population still maintains a community identity and awareness of its history of popular organization, in its struggle to achieve better living conditions. The "History, transformation and resistance of the people of Felipe Carrillo Puerto" is presented in one of the first rooms of the neighborhood-expo that was set up as a conclusion of the project presented here (See here: Third part, 3.1: V).²¹

²⁰ In recent years, these town have also suffered *forced emigration due to environmental impacts* in Querétaro. According to research by Bajo tierra Museo, 2022. <https://bajotierra.com.mx/bt/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Historias-Que-Andan.pdf>

²¹ The persons appearing in the photographs in this document GIVE AUTHORIZATION for their publication. In the case of minors, we received written authorization from their mothers, fathers or guardians.

1.3. What it is all about and how it all started



The conditions of Carrillo Puerto and the movements of its neighborhood organizations had a strong impact on the tasks of CVS. CVS assumed central participation in the rescue and construction of the "Parque Libertad" (previously used by municipal authorities as an open-air industrial garbage dump), with strong support from the Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro (UAQ), in the construction of another park-garden (previously also a garbage dump), called by the elders "Amili, tierra feliz y florida". He also collaborated in placing artistic murals in some nearby streets, in a corridor that links

both parks, thanks to the creativity and generosity of the "Board Dripper" team.

Maintaining these spaces gave rise to the "Vida y naturaleza para urbanitas" project, which was intended to promote a neighborhood movement in the neighborhood surrounding the CVS aimed at encouraging families to organize themselves to:

- to maintain reclaimed spaces and convert them into green areas;
- to build an orchard in the CVS, showing everyone how to do the same in their homes, according to their possibilities;
- to place planters with certain shrubs on facades and patios, not only to improve the urban image, but also to reduce pollution and global warming.



Various conditions -among others, the pandemic- limited the scope and actions: they devoted themselves almost exclusively to the construction of the orchard. Thus began the arduous work of transforming the back part of the CVS, which soon gave rise to what we now present. Simultaneously, MU offered workshops and talks on *horticulture* to the population in a series called "Come and share". With this, the "Comunidad Micelio Urbano" took shape, in which several people interested in

agroecological issues interact directly or from a distance. The idea of setting up the *neighborhood-expo* came from an unexpected and relatively traumatic experience we had when trying to build the community garden. When preparing the land for cultivation, instead of the fertile soil that the elders of Carrillo talked about, there was a huge garbage dump, full of plastics, glass, old clothes, rusty cans and a large number of very toxic electric batteries, which had contaminated the soil for several meters around. If vegetables were put there, they would be poisoned.

When we started with the recovery of this space, we had only removed a few plants and were just beginning to glimpse the soil that had been hidden for so long. We already had some other plants ready for their new home and a project with Gonzalo Guajardo, called "Vida y naturaleza para urbanitas"(life and nature for urbanites), which was still under construction²².

At this point, we invited our dear colleague Charli to participate in the construction of a community food garden. But, to our surprise, under the ground, after so much time, there was an impressive amount and variety of garbage, a consequence of the industrial dump and poor management of urban waste.

It was when, together and with the support of Charli, we set about the task of cleaning, extracting the contaminating garbage and giving the soil from which we wanted to obtain food the proper management. This is where the crazy idea of setting up a garbage museum was born. And so..., here we are today. We continue to find when we get to the garden this "garbage" that seems to rain, to travel, to be lost. That's why we want to invite you to join us to give a good management to your municipal solid waste (MSW).



16

(From the diary of Karla Venegas)

The idea then arose to take advantage of this experience to mount an exhibition that would encourage the community to reflect on the impact of human actions on nature, and specifically to understand why Carrillo Puerto was so radically transformed. For this reason, the first name of the project was "Expo-barrial de residuos subterráneos" (subway waste neighborhood expo).

In the search for options to solve the problem, one of the founders of MU introduced us to the concept of "Anthropocene", which allowed us to understand that the conditions of that terrain were not an isolated event, but a global phenomenon. This generated in the team the need to study the subject in more depth.

1.3.1. What is the "Anthropocene"?²³

The word "Anthropocene" comes from the Greek "anthropos": human. It refers to the last stage in the life of planet Earth, when humans appeared (approximately three hundred thousand years ago). This term (which is still under discussion in the scientific community) was coined in 2000 by the Dutch chemist (and Nobel Prize winner) Paul Crutzen, who specifically refers to the most drastic transformations caused by mankind in the Earth's crust.

In 2016, another scientist, Jason Moore, environmental historian and economist, following up on Crutzen research, proposed to speak rather of "Capitalocene", since large-scale environmental degradation is not only a geological process, but a sociohistorical one, above all. It is not enough to

²² The relatively long texts that are presented *in italics* in this document and correspond to expressions of the participants in various activities, received some grammatical and spelling corrections, only to facilitate their understanding, trying to respect their style as much as possible.

²³ <https://www.climaterra.org/post/la-gran-aceleraci%C3%B3n-del-antropoceno-el-planeta-al-l%C3%ADmite>

study the early stages of human intervention to understand why the current climate crisis has occurred, but the relations between power and accumulation of wealth of the capitalist mode of production. Moore stresses that the conquest of America and Africa and the appropriation of what he calls "cheap nature" laid the foundations of accumulation for the birth of capitalism.

To better understand this concept, it is necessary to review social processes throughout history. From it, it is possible to identify certain milestones that can explain the current conditions of ecological imbalance and social inequality²⁴.

At the dawn of human life, changes occurred very slowly; little by little they accelerated, especially since the Industrial Revolution. In the last two hundred years, such changes have been so abrupt that they have affected the ecological balance and the extinction of several plant and animal species and even put mankind in danger of extinction (See here: Part Three, 3.1: IV "The Anthropocene: the human period").

To review this in more detail, three stages of the Anthropocene are proposed:

Early Anthropocene: period in which humankind established in territories that allowed it to settle, depending on the availability of resources for survival: water, climate, land for cultivation and the possibility of domesticating animal species.

Middle Anthropocene: period in which established societies build technologies to obtain and transform resources. With the Industrial Revolution, forms of exploitation, production and transformation appeared and expanded, requiring new sources of energy (such as fossil fuels) and the *industrial city* model emerged. The devastation of nature accelerated with the exploitation of large volumes of natural resources and the creation of machines to produce,



generate energy, distribute and exchange goods. In addition, industry makes it easier, faster and cheaper to produce billions of objects, which result in enormous amounts of toxic waste. For the first time in history, human production is accumulating in such a way that "new" continents are appearing, made up only of garbage. According to scientists, one of them weighs about 80,000 tons²⁵.



²⁴Klein, Naomi (2015). "This changes everything: capitalism versus climate". Ed. Paidós. ISBN-10. 6078406620

²⁵ Gravity Wave (2022) "Plastic islands, a global problem". <https://www.thegravitywave.com/islas-de-plastico/> (Accessed 12 March 2021). The photo above corresponds to an open-air industrial dump, which was located in the residential area of Carrillo Puerto. This dump generated a long social movement that achieved its relocation, after thirty years of struggle (!) and with it, the construction of the "Parque Libertad" for family life..

Anthropocene of the XX-XXI century: stage in which processes such as the *Great Acceleration*, from the Second World War, the generation of *nuclear energy*²⁶ and the construction of the atomic bomb appear. From the 1940s onwards, radiation pollution worsens and expands globally, especially in the last 50 years, with the extraction of heavy or rare metals to produce billions of increasingly sophisticated machines, which generated unprecedented changes. As a reaction, new social subjects emerge in resistance, forcing a rethinking of the system to stop the disaster and reorient the course²⁷.

In summary, some conditions of imbalance resulting from the Capitalocene are pointed out²⁸:

- extractivist activities (that damage Nature);
- exploitation and consumption of fossil fuels (to move all types of machines);
- environmental colonialism (which imposes on large social masses modes of understanding that naturalize or justify predation);
- global warming (consequence of the imbalance);
- extinction and generation of new species through genetic engineering;
- unsustainable cities (where small *clusters* of privileged people monopolize elements of nature, such as gardens, golf courses, swimming pools, wells or private lakes, condemning the majority to live in very precarious conditions.

1.3.2. Why "El Tlacuache"?

The *tlacuache*²⁹ is a marsupial that lives in temperate and tropical zones of Mexico, with a great capacity for adaptation, as it is omnivorous. Its characteristics have given rise to several legends; one presents it as a *pre-Hispanic Prometheus*, since it risked stealing fire from the "Lady Fire" to give it to mankind. This explains why he has a tail that looks scorched. Because it is identified in these legends as "the one that gives light in the darkness", the tlacuache has become the pet or reference of some organizations, including the Facultad de Filosofía of the Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro.



The tlacuache is also recognized in Mexico by the song "El ropavejero", composed by Francisco Gabilondo Soler, "Cri-Crí", author of children and teenagers's songs, where he refers to this animal, as if he were carrying *junk* in his marsupio. In this song, Cri-Cri not only refers to the buying and selling or bartering of used things that people throw away, but also to social expressions such

²⁶ Greenpeace (August 29, 2021) "Why nuclear power is not clean"

[Ghttps://www.greenpeace.org/mexico/blog/10822/por-que-la-energia-nuclear-no-es-limpia/](https://www.greenpeace.org/mexico/blog/10822/por-que-la-energia-nuclear-no-es-limpia/) (Accessed 12 November 2021).

²⁷ On this subject we propose to review the text 'Marxismo y socialismo en el SXXI' ("Marxism and socialism in the 21st century"), by Gonzalo Guajardo, a member of our team.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zWEwINAcT4rOoAzoXdsmh7Vog3CYeiV6/view?usp=drivesdk>

²⁸ On the case of Querétaro, review documentaries on Youtube: "Los feudales del agua: Querétaro a la venta" ("Water feudals: Querétaro for sale") and "Los dueños del negocio de la vivienda en Querétaro" ("The owners of the housing business in Querétaro"). (Labip-UAQ-Bajo Tierra Museo). The privatization of water, cleaning and mobility services and others generates serious problems for the population, as it is understood as a business and not as a *right*.

²⁹ Also known as opossum.

as gossip, fears or rudeness, which allows us to recognize this character as a "cleaner" and "liberator", not only of garbage, but also of certain attitudes that generate discomfort in the community. (See the lyrics of the song in APPENDIX TWO).

We chose the name "El Tlacuache" for this project, in honorable recognition of the many *pepenadores* (recyclers) who live and work in the town of Felipe Carrillo Puerto and who became *tlacuaches* to adapt to the new conditions. From very early in the morning, they swarm, carrying from one place to another, on foot, by bicycle or tricycle, huge sacks with *pet*, cardboard, glass or aluminum.



From a personal perspective, El Tlacuache's project, which stems from a larger one called "Vida y naturaleza para urbanitas" ("Life and nature for urbanites"), aims to go beyond what is usually taught in school about the environment and what is confluent around the subject.

In other words, it seeks to consider other perspectives that allow us to understand these issues and to ground them in the closest space, because it is there where a deteriorated territory with an uncertain course can be observed more directly.

Only those who are in the proximity, those urban beings who were stripped and separated from what at some point was "just a hill", but a "hill of their own, intimate", can understand the story. However, due to the immensity of the city, which is in their path

and which becomes a new, unfavorable and sick environment, they end up detaching themselves and no longer recognize it. So they only look back with a nostalgic gaze to the past. This is what happened to the town of Carrillo.

This project tries to unravel little by little the tangle that learning about Nature has become. It takes advantage of creative ways and ideas that start from a re-evolution of learning.

El Tlacuache, the central being of the project, takes by the hand the urbanite who wants to get to know the wonderful world of Nature. It invites to be able to be curious and to venture into places that are not seen every day, because they are within the confines of the city and also to learn from these processes of transformation that the world has gone through in its dynamics of change.

(From the diary of Estephania Olalde)

It has been a long road since I came to the El Tlacuache project; personally I have had ups and downs in my life, but this project and, in general, the Casa de la Vinculación Social, have been a reason for me to keep going.

It seems to me a project that has great potential, that can reach many people to learn from what we have lived in the Casa de la Vinculación, telling the good and bad experiences we have had over time. It is important to know that beyond there is a story, there are experiences, there are realities that we did not see before and now we are living, or perhaps a reality that we can recognize, but we decide to normalize or ignore it.

I thank the team for allowing me to be part of this project, which has made me open my eyes to things I was completely unaware of; thank you for so many unforgettable moments and lessons learned. They are truly admirable people with whom we never stop learning.

(From the diary of Karla Flores)

1.4. Utopias and educational projects that inspire us

*Oh! Utopia, incorruptible!
who does not have enough of what is possible.
Oh! Utopia that raises hurricanes of rebellion.*
(J.M. Serrat)

The educational question about what kind of human beings we want to (and can) form is closely related to the question about what kind of society we want to (and can) build. These questions have to do with *Utopia*, with the search for or construction of the meaning of life: why do we do what we do, what are we looking for?

Utopia becomes present, especially when we face difficult realities. This is not a daydream, but a *direction* and a *call to* undertake the path, strengthened with the confidence that other worlds better than the one we have now are possible, that we humans can build them and that it is up to all of us to contribute with what we can to give them shape and life in the micro-spaces in which we develop³⁰. We propose to understand that *Utopia* looks to the future not only to identify what is possible, but also to project what we want and what we are committed to.

1.4.1. The utopia of *El Buen Vivir*³¹ and the *Cuarta Transformación*

The south also exists
(Mario Benedetti)

Several practices we have in CVS are inspired by "El Buen Vivir" or *Sumak kawsay* (in Quechua language) or *Suma qamaña* (in Aymara language)³². This is an unfinished political and cultural proposal of South American indigenous organizations, with ancestral bases, which achieved great recognition in the 1990s and was later constitutionally adopted by the governments of Ecuador and Bolivia.

It seeks an equitable distribution of wealth, recognizing, respecting and valuing *multiculturalism* or diversity of ways of being and being in the world. It also promotes a lifestyle based on the understanding that happiness does not consist in obtaining money to buy all kinds of goods and luxuries, but in having a dignified life (loving, thinking freely, knowing, collaborating, playing...), in the enjoyment of life in community, in the unfolding of creativity, in the friendly encounter and mutual care with all the beings of Nature.

Buen Vivir aims to be an alternative project, not only to capitalism, but also to European-style socialism, which seeks to change the rules of the game in order to stop the civilizational and climatic crisis we are suffering. Because of the change of perspective it implies and the interests it touches, it continues to generate serious debates about its relevance and viability, and there is much to be done to make it concrete, even in micro-spaces.

³⁰ Zemelman, Hugo (2011). "Conocimiento y sujetos sociales, contribución al estudio del presente" ("Knowledge and social subjects, contribution to the study of the present") IICAB. ISBN: 978-99954-735-7-0.

³¹ <https://rebellion.org/la-utopia-del-buen-vivir/#:~:text=El%20Buen%20Vivir%20es%20una,en%20armon%C3%ADa%20con%20la%20naturaleza>

³² This does not necessarily mean that they can always become effective.

In Mexico, the national project, called the *Cuarta Transformación (Fourth Transformation) (4T)*³³, points in a similar direction, also seeking the welfare and the right to expression of individuals and groups, in a *preferential option for the poor*. The 4T gives rise to the incipient *Nueva Escuela Mexicana (New Mexican School) (NEM)*, which recovers some aspects of the *Epistemology of the South*³⁴, by Boaventura de Souza Santos, and which is also under wide discussion throughout the country, since in its construction it has been criticized for various confusions and contradictions it contains. Nevertheless, it is a proposal of pedagogical knowledge and educational practice that seeks to open other possibilities of approaching reality, different from those imposed by the *colonialist North* or the *capitalist West*.

Although the work of CVS is independent of what is defined in the official system, it cannot be abstracted from the discussions on public issues, especially now that we are seeking to promote a broad interaction between the school and its closest community. We consider it important to take advantage of this juncture to make visible the experience that *alternative popular education* (school and non-school) can bring to the issue.

1.4.2. Emancipatory popular pedagogies

Several practices that we have in CVS are inspired, first of all, in the *Escuela Rural Mexicana* (Mexican Rural School), which promoted the Revolution of 1917-21 through the teacher Rafael Ramirez Castañeda³⁵ (between 1920 and 1959). It is necessary to emphasize that the school is considered a *Casa del Pueblo (House of the People)*, closely linked to the community and its needs, with a democratic organization, in which people of all ages participate and children and teenagers learn reading and writing, mathematics and natural and social sciences, while they are initiated in practical work: agriculture, animal care, crafts, etc.



CVS is also inspired by Celestin Freinet's system of *Education through work and play*: a cooperative and democratic, secular, scientific, ecological and emancipatory way of educating. In the activities we organize with the children and teenagers, we take advantage of several of the Freinet techniques (as we will see below). These are especially useful for novice educators, as they allow the work to be distributed throughout the group and make it easier for any participant to engage in meaningful tasks.

³³ An anti-neoliberal national project, based on the great turns in Mexico's history (*Independence, Reform and Revolution*) to generate another "that guarantees the well-being of all". This project is currently facing, according to several UNAM analysts (such as economist Magdalena Galindo L. and others), attempts of a "soft coup d'état" by big capital.

³⁴ *The South* is understood here, not as a physical concept, but as a perspective of thought critical of the dominant one, which opens itself to cultural plurality and seeks to make visible the *absent subjects* of history, in order to *make them present subjects*. It also questions *anthropocentrism*, giving Nature preponderant attention.

³⁵ Rafael Ramirez, from Mexico, and Antoni Benaiges, from Spain, were rural teachers who lived in the same era and had great similarities in terms of life experiences, educational conceptions and political stances.

Another of our references is the *Pedagogía de la comunicación o Metodología latinoamericana del lenguaje total (Pedagogy of Communication or Latin American Methodology of Total Language)*³⁶, by Francisco Gutiérrez, a Spanish teacher based in Costa Rica, who followed the same line of Paulo Freire and focused on a process of *participatory action-research and analysis of reality*, from different perspectives (subjective, intersubjective, objective, structural...), which takes advantage of multiple languages (literature, music, painting, dance, mathematics...) to give an account of it. This proposal starts with a *theme* and *generating questions* for the analysis of a specific topic and, at the end of the process, the participants organize themselves to build a *synthesizing creativity*, aimed at sharing with the community, not only the products of the activities carried out, but also the process followed.

In Mexico, SEP-CONACULTA promoted (1984-2000) a program very similar to Gutiérrez's, called *Plan de Actividades Culturales de Apoyo a la Educación Primaria (PACAEP)*, which provided our team with important clues to undertake the main strategy in the courses we taught. The "creatividad sintetizadora" ("synthesizing creativity") of the El Tlacuache project consisted of the *neighborhood-expo*.

We believe that these proposals are not only still valid, but that they are especially appropriate to address the educational problems of our time, in difficult popular contexts. This includes the use and, at the same time, the critical analysis of certain information technologies that today constitute indispensable tools to achieve a better interaction.

Often "educational innovation", as proposed by the dominant spheres, is reduced to a "new discourse" sprinkled with terms such as "cooperation", "creativity" or "development of critical thinking", demanding the purchase and use (or dependence) of certain computer programs with techniques such as *gamification* or others, without recognizing that many of them have been practiced by popular alternative education for several decades (although with other tools). New technology can be useful, both for a *domesticating* and an *emancipating* education, when it facilitates the acquisition of knowledge. However, it is imperative to remain vigilant about what contents are transmitted unconsciously, from the *hidden curriculum*³⁷ with the use of these tools.



In this line, it is worth prioritizing the *questions about the meaning of education*, especially in these times of so much confusion. When it points towards *emancipation, respect for the dignity and communication of all people*, educational innovation should transcend the tools, in favor of the search for conditions that allow the fundamental in any space.

³⁶Gutiérrez P., Francisco (1986). "Una propuesta educativa latinoamericana: Metodología del lenguaje total". Ed. Humanitas.

³⁷Philip W. Jackson (1991) "La vida en las aulas". Ed. Morata; Torres, Santomé Jurjo (1991). Ed. Morata; Han, Byung Chul (2016). 'Psychopolitics, neoliberalism and new techniques of power'. Ed. Herder.

1.4.3. Agroecology and other sources of educational inspiration

Ancestral stories from all over the world metaphorically link education with agriculture: the child's mind is like a seed, which holds within itself all the potentialities to become an adult plant. It only needs good soil, capable of nourishing it, clean water, air, sun, the collaboration of certain plant and animal species and certain microorganisms to maintain the necessary balance and the care of someone sensitive who knows, respects and strengthens or channels the process³⁸.



23

The dialogue between MU and CVS opened a wide range of practices and reflections on the links between education, agroecology and organic agriculture.

In Mesoamerica, millennia ago, a form of agriculture called *milpa* emerged: it combines different plants, which support and enrich each other, while nourishing the soil that sustains them. Farmers call the combination of corn, beans and squash “Las tres comadres”, and agronomists know them as *polycultures* (because they are often accompanied by other plants, such as chili, chard, garlic, etc.). Diversity often serves as protection, since some plants support others with nutrients or expel factors that damage the others, so the *milpa* favors the crops.



This form of agriculture is related to an educational conception that promotes recognition and respect for diversity and the importance of interaction and collaboration.

In recent years, both *agroecology* and *organic agriculture*³⁹ have emerged as scientific branches, which are linked to *a social movement and a life practice*. Both have as a fundamental principle agrobiodiversity and the search for ecological and social resilience of productive systems. Both take advantage of the ancestral knowledge of peasant and indigenous communities and study agroecosystems with their socio-cultural, economic, technical and ecological components; both seek to optimize the interactions between plants, animals, humans and the environment, as well as systematize and consolidate best practices, seeking *sustainable* production, healthy food free of toxins, within the framework of a solidarity economy and the strengthening of the *food sovereignty of countries and communities*.

³⁸Friedrich Fröebel, German pedagogue (1782-1852), for example, is recognized as the coiner of the concept *Kindergarten*, for preschool education.

³⁹ Restrepo R., Jairo. "Organic agriculture: movement, time and rupture" and "The ideal state of being...". <https://lamierdadevaca.com/agricultura-organica-movimiento-tiempo-y-ruptura/> (Accessed 31 January 2021).

Both offer an alternative to capitalist agribusiness, whose primary interest is economic accumulation and works preferably with *monocultures*: a single type of plant that is planted over large areas. For lack of diversity, pests can devastate large areas of crops, or the land is impoverished. To solve this, the dominant agroindustry uses enormous quantities of fertilizers and chemical insecticides, which can damage the soil, kill microorganisms that contribute to the balance, and also cause genetic modifications to make seeds or fruits more resistant; this has been generating serious problems, such as plant degradation, impoverishment of the land and even the dignified life of peasant communities.



The people of Carrillo Puerto were victims of several agro-industrial and manufacturing interventions that took place on their land, grabbing the water and returning it to the population, highly polluted. Those involved in the CVS are particularly sensitive to these issues.

The same capitalist attack is often seen in educational work:

some of those who decide methodological lines and educational practices pretend to impose their ideology as "absolute truth", excluding and belittling those "different"; often, education is denied as a *right* and handled as *merchandise*; it is frequent to find that, instead of promoting *the question and critical reflection* on the meaning of what we do, meritocratic discourses are promoted that present "competitiveness" and "innovation" as maximum values and unavoidable objectives of education; educational action is transformed into mere training in the use of information technologies; there is a subterranean pressure to force users to buy their (increasingly sophisticated) technological programs and depend on them, excluding those who cannot afford them and widening the gap between social classes.



In summary, the participation of the Micelio Urbano group in the CVS allowed us to recognize that the utopia of El Buen Vivir not only impacts educational conceptions and practices, but also other areas of human life. For this reason, it was relatively easy to articulate ourselves to design the pedagogical strategies that we put into practice.

To illustrate the link between El Buen Vivir, education and agroecology in the workshops we worked with the children and teenagers, we refer to the visit of a colleague, dedicated to agroecology, who gave a talk about what she does in "Xata", her company.

To start, Moni proposed us to get in touch with those things that we are passionate about and also with some social problems that concern us. She then led us to relate the two things, to think about what we would like to work on when we grow up. She said we would do well, when we could choose a job that relates to that which we are passionate about and that also gives a service to society or helps solve one of the problems we have. It's not so much about making a business and making money, it's about improving the world.

She then began to talk about her company, how she is passionate about it and how she seeks to improve people's nutrition. That is why she is dedicated to producing vegetables that are very healthy.

(Collective logbook/ Maric reports).

August 3. Let's get started:

They explained to us how to make a value proposition and what the "Xata" campaign is about, which is a space where they grow 100% natural food, without using chemical fertilizers or insecticides. Afterwards, they taught us how to create a good soil with two types of soil and leaves with natural fertilizer.

Then we designed a kind of sketch to see how we were going to plant the plants: radish, sunflower, etc.

In the end, I think it turned out very nice.

THANK YOU!

(Collective log/ Moi reports)



PART TWO: WHAT WE DID AND HOW WE FARED

2.1. Activities linked to the El Tlacuache project

As mentioned above, the El Tlacuache project was developed in 2 years (2021 and 2022), with mixed groups in which people of different ages participate, so it is not always easy to separate the activities that were carried out only with minors, nor to clearly distinguish those that took place before and after the *Benaiges Grant*, since the experience gained in the former was fundamental for the preparation of those who worked with children and teenagers and adolescents and to improve the practices in 2022.

APPENDIX 3 of this document shows the general outline of activities, articulated with the project, only in 2022. In this second section, only those related to the education of *children and teenagers and adolescents* are presented.

It should be noted that not all participants had the same experiences as described below, and that the *rally* and the summer courses were the spaces that offered the greatest possibilities for undertaking a more comprehensive strategy. It must also be said that not everything we undertook was planned. Some activities appeared as "necessary" or "pertinent" in the process.

2.2. Training of non-teaching educators

A fundamental task in undertaking an educational process, aimed at children and teenagers and adolescents, with *non-teaching workshop participants*, consisted in making pedagogical training experiences available to the latter.

Considering that CVS is not a school, the formative or training processes of those who participate as *guides* in the workshops we offer, are very diverse, "fluid" and according to the times of those who are integrated. However, those who usually approach CVS are people who coincide with it in terms of their conceptions, relationship styles and practices.

A basic reading document, for most of those involved in the El Tlacuache project, was the presentation of the CVS "Everything you should know about the Casa de la Vinculación Social, but haven't thought to ask"⁴⁰, which synthesizes basic principles of popular education and proposes a minimal glossary about it. Also the document " El Tlacuache's educational plan" which summarizes the Pedagogy of Communication, by Francisco Gutiérrez, which we have already mentioned.



⁴⁰<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zyJYGe1loqeHIG3AptznSPUzPHB9XP5e/view?usp=drivesdk> and https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-4T-P05bTuc8-9BZEDi_XIfBj6MhOFy1/view?usp=drivesdk

On the other hand, the way CVS is organized, the monthly meetings with the different groups that participate in it and offer workshops, the specific circles of reflection and planning with the team that promoted this project are another source of introduction to the emancipatory popular perspective.

Some meetings of the *Red de Educación Alternativa* (sister organization of MEPA: *Movimiento por una educación popular alternativa*), in which CVS has been participating since its foundation, reading, building and reflecting collectively on the papers that are exchanged, also offer good contributions.

Finally, as noted in the outline of activities, an *intensive preparatory camp* was organized before the second summer course for children and teenagers and adolescents, which promoted the exchange of perspectives among those who would act as guides: utopias, social and educational understandings, doubts or proposals on how to educate.

In summary, we can say that during the whole process an interesting *professional learning community* was formed, in which there was not only an exchange of ideas about Nature, society and education, but we all felt the need to study in order to have a deeper understanding of the educational processes we wished to generate.

2.3. Some of the challenges we face

2.3.1. Organizational Challenges



The fact that CVS is not a school and works in non-school education offers certain advantages and at the same time several complications:

Most of those who participate in it do so, *in the time they have free, if possible...*,⁴¹ so when we propose to do something, we know that we have several friends willing to share their knowledge, but in brief moments, according to their possibilities. This often involves situations similar to putting together puzzles or knitting *patchwork* blankets.

The key to achieving a good commitment to a project, when several people are involved in it, is that most of them know, or rather, participate in the construction of the *integral image* of what is to be done, even if each person performs some independent activity or particular commission. This makes it possible to better solve unforeseen logistical problems that usually arise and, if not dealt with in a timely manner, generate imbalances. Although this is not always possible.

⁴¹From the song by José Ángel Espinoza, Ferrusquilla.

Recognizing the fragmentation and instability that characterizes our current society, we always try to have a *plan B*, in case someone does not arrive when expected, or we do not finish preparing some material or some machine fails.

Another challenge transcends what happens inside the CVS and has to do with a series of extraordinary events that occurred in Querétaro and Carrillo, parallel to the pandemic and the realization of our project. We will deal with this topic in more detail later on.

Fortunately, in general, there was a good response and sense of commitment from those who lived this adventure, and the team's spirit did not waver, thanks also to the mothers and fathers of the families who showed their solidarity and did not suspend any activity when conditions seemed adverse.

2.3.2. Educational Challenges

In the development of this project, there were also some educational challenges. The main one was to find or design *meaningful activities* for children and teenagers and adolescents, related to the topics of the project. The methodological and technical proposals mentioned in the section on alternative pedagogies were very useful to achieve this. Another challenge consisted in translating *into a simple language* various contents related to the Anthropocene concept. We discussed whether it was preferable to avoid technical terms or whether part of the training consists of learning them and, rather, what corresponds is to provoke curiosity and self-confidence, to ask questions, as well as the need to take note of the definitions.

Rare words are like windows that allow us to see things. Without them it would not have occurred to us that certain phenomena exist.

We warned the kids that from time to time some strange words (such as *ecosystem, infodemia, substrate...*) would jump out in our speeches and that it was important to interrupt to ask for the definition soon.

In providing certain reading materials, it was necessary to elaborate very simple syntheses without losing their high content. Our era is characterized by the common difficulty in reading relatively long texts and generally the new generations are looking for something different from school classes when they attend "free time" activities.

One more challenge had to do with the question of how to promote reflection on certain *difficult topics* that could not be avoided (such as garbage, violence or even death) without generating discouragement, repudiation or a feeling of impotence. This issue is addressed in detail in the section on the *metaphor of monsters*.

2.3.3. Challenges related to visibility



It must also be recognized that in these times we faced great difficulty in achieving a response from minors in the neighborhood to our calls for participation in some of the project's activities (despite the fact that they were free or had symbolic prices). At times it even seemed disproportionate the effort of dissemination in contrast with the results.

This led to several hypotheses about the causes (which we partially corroborated): most of the adolescents in the neighborhood do not have free time, since they work; many boys or girls do not have free time either, since they spend it doing exhausting after-school assignments "to catch up" or helping their single mothers (or even a single father) in their jobs or taking care of their siblings or grandparents. In other cases, moms prefer to keep them locked up, fearing for their safety. Regardless of this, the question remains open as to how to make meaningful for children and teenagers and youth certain issues of concern to adults.

Fortunately at CVS we work with whoever arrives: two, five, fifteen or thirty. Sometimes minors arrive who do not want to leave. Fortunately also, in the main project activities, more than enough signed up and we were able to work as expected.

2.3.4. Challenges related to the treatment of produced material

Organizing the large amount of information produced in the process and producing synthetic reports for different audiences has been a challenge. We recognize the imbalance in our writing. When several people participate simultaneously, sometimes it is only after some material has been published that errors or inconsistencies are discovered.

On the other hand, we discovered that not all the collected writings have a date and the author's name (as it is usually done in schools), which does not always allow us to recognize the age or gender of the writer. This learning will lead us to be more careful next time.

To conclude this section, we note that many materials (texts, photos, drawings, videos) remain unfinished and have generated great interest in working on them at a later date. We hope to be able to do so.

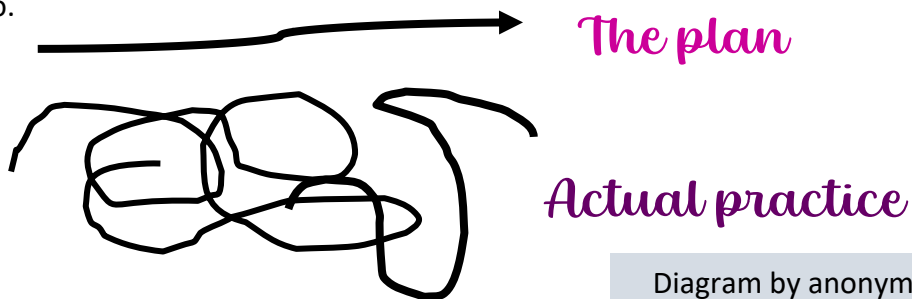


Diagram by anonymous author.
Circulating in the networks

2.4. The sense of working with groups of minors

During the most difficult moments of the pandemic, the *work in the interior* allowed us to prepare a good plan to offer several activities related to ecology and science popularization for children and teenagers and teenagers, which would be closed with the assembly of the *neighborhood expo* we have been talking about.

2.4.1. The six training areas

The activities we offered to the children and teenagers are located in six areas, which were not treated as subjects, but as perspectives (see table below):

- knowledge of the current world or reflection on the era called the Anthropocene;
- understanding of the self and one's place in the world;
- projection towards another possible world (utopia of *El Buen Vivir*);
- study and practice of agroecology and eco-techniques;
- study and practice of solidarity economy, and
- work of social communication or popularization of science.

2.4.2. Generating questions

We also ensured that all the activities we proposed were linked to some questions to guide the research:

- where do the things we use come from and where do they end up when we throw them away?
- What happens to people and nature when the countryside becomes a city?
- Who are these workers who sustain us and how do they live, but who go unnoticed by the majority, or are even considered "inferior"?
- what is causing the current ecological crisis? and
- How can we contribute (from wherever we are) to diminish the problem and change the course of our history?

In spite of the complexity that all this implies, the proposed ways of working facilitated simple, playful syntheses that were at the same time very interesting and attractive.

The main strategy we followed, which was refined and consolidated during the last summer course (July-August 2022), as mentioned above, was the creation of an *agency of eco-detectives*, whose mission would be to answer the questions posed above.



2.4.3. OUTLINE OF THE ACTIVITIES OFFERED, ACCORDING TO THE TRAINING FIELDS	
FIELD	ACTIVITIES
The self, the us, the self-consciousness in relationships with my close ones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical activation activities and games, tuning of the five senses. Obstacle races and "cooperative competitions". Physical and mental or socio-emotional preparation to be capable <i>eco-detectives</i> Closing mini-assemblies Discussions in town hall The funerals of the bird
Exploration of today's world, its history, values and problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Detectives in the tunnel of time and space." Logbook binding workshop (to record what we observe) Photography workshop (to learn in a different way) Monster metaphor Encounter with 'The Garbage Monster'. Visit to the Cadereyta Planetarium Neighborhood tours and mapping workshop (to recognize and locate points of interest). <i>Rally</i> or game of clues Working with the timeline and meeting some "invisibles".
Projection of other possible worlds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imagination activation and creative production workshops: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "The place of my dreams" (painting, <i>collage</i>). "Let's fly kites." "Imaginary geography of the four elements." "Visit from extraterrestrials". Workshops to confront, understand or deactivate monsters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Club of monsters and alebrijes". "The stories of El Tlacuache". Construction of "problem solving machines"
Encounter with nature: horticulture and ecotechnologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Videos on various ecosystems of the Earth Excursion to Cadereyta Botanical Garden Excursion to the Ingenio Well in San Miguel Allende Horticulture workshops Daily practice of the 5Rs
Solidarity economy (Craft workshops)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basketry Chocolateria Bakery Toy Manufacturing Manufacture of musical instruments
Social communication or diffusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elaboration of <i>fanzines</i> Radio production games and rehearsals Production of <i>video clips</i>

Before continuing, it should be noted that **the report presented** after this outline **does not have a chronological structure, but rather a thematic one**. It was easier to do it this way, considering that the same topics, questions and areas are addressed in different activities from different perspectives. The thematic exposition allows us to recognize more clearly the **meaning of the training** we intend to promote.

2.5. The formation of an "eco-detective agency".⁴²

2.5.1 Planning the investigative agency

Before undertaking any activity, the members of El Tlacuache's core team tried to meet to propose, discuss, design, elaborate materials for calls and workshops, as well as to manage the participation of various collaborators with experience in the tasks we were interested in proposing to the children and teenagers.

Various experiences acquired in the activities carried out in 2021 allowed us to refining the strategy described in the following sections.

2.5.2. Call for applications, reception and induction of "candidates"

We invited children and teenagers and teenagers from the area to join our eco-detective agency, inviting them to investigate why the planet Earth changed so much, from rural life (in the countryside) to urban life (in the city), to the extent that the alarming climate crisis has been unleashed; also to discuss what we can do to stop the problem.



32

Reception, testing and welcome



To be accepted into the agency, any "candidate" had to face several challenges. One was to go through a *huge sea of garbage* (a long tunnel of plastic waste) that was placed in the entrance corridor to the CVS, to raise awareness about what marine species go through when they have to deal with so much waste.

On the first day of activities, a box with "a great treasure" and a message inviting people to open it, but without showing its contents "so as not to lose the charm" (inside was a mirror, which without words said *the treasure is you*) was circulated among the attendees.

After the welcome and the framing of the course, the participants received, in pairs, a *text in code*: "Wanted" (mixing letters and numbers in different styles), to encourage them to discover the keys to decipher it. This text indicated

⁴² The activities carried out in this strategy led to the writing of several *types of texts*: instructional, to share elaboration techniques, step by step; *narrative* to give an account of how we did; *descriptive* to characterize the objects observed, *dialogic* for the radio scripts, etc.

the characteristics that those who wanted to join the eco-detective agency should have: *be curious, courageous, persevering, supportive...* (When asked if they would give up because of the difficulty of the task, the unanimous and categorical answer was: "I don't give up!")

Once the "candidates" passed the test they received an *designation* as *eco-detectives*. To celebrate the opening of the agency, there was a parade with fanfare to show the acceptance document.

2.5.3. The cooperative option

The eco-detectives liked the proposal to engage cooperative work and the treatment of *colleagues* (instead of teachers and trainees or bosses and dependents), in which everyone has an impact on the different stages of the process and assumes some responsibility, according to the needs of the project and the group. The intention was also that each participant would feel more confident to make suggestions and assume a commitment with greater awareness of his or her responsibility. Thus, it was proposed to break with the logic that invites to compete to be "Number One", based on the anecdote of the "Ubuntu" children and teenagers:



The story goes that, somewhere in Africa, a foreigner improvised a game among the children and teenagers. He placed a basket of fruit fifty meters away and invited them to compete:

- *"Whoever gets there first gets to keep the fruits. On your marks, get set, go!"*

To their surprise, the children and teenagers held hands and began to run together. Arriving at the same time, they sat down and shared the fruit with great fanfare.

- *"How am I going to enjoy myself, if all my classmates lose," replied one girl.*

This is called UBUNTU, which means: "I am because we are", and is an example of the cooperative spirit of this community and many others.



Another of the games sought to break with the idea that, in a race, "whoever gets there first is better", and proposed the opposite: *whoever moves as slowly as possible wins.*

Today, Monday, we started with the warm-up. Then we were given the commissions to have control in the course; for example: cleaning lady, or security. We were each given one. Then we had a team activity or game. After that activity we reflected and understood that we have to be supportive, and if someone wins, everyone wins, since we are a team....

(Continued on another topic).

(Collective logbook/ reports Carlos Venegas, 14 years old)

On the other hand, we believe it is important to maintain the motivation to strive, as individuals and as teams, to overcome obstacles and solve puzzles.

2.5.4. Organizational structure of the investigative agency

We considered that an important key to not losing the compass was to have a structure and certain routines that reminded us what each person had to do.

The coexistence guide

To begin with, we talked about the importance of having a good relationship and discussed some basic ideas, which we summarized in the following *coexistence guide*, which we remembered at the beginning of each session, as part of the start-up routines.

1	WE TAKE CARE OF OURSELVES	We take care of ourselves and all things and beings in nature.
2	WE COMMUNICATE	We listen to each other, we talk to each other, we express our doubts and concerns, we try to understand each other.
3	WE ARE RESPONSIBLE	We take responsibility for what we do and its consequences. We persevere and are patient.
4	WE COLLABORATE	We need others and others need us; we accommodate each other.
5	THANK YOU	We express our gratitude for everything we receive.

34

Distribution of responsibilities

We wanted all the eco-detectives to take on a *commission*, which was distinguished by a color. These commissions varied each week, so that everyone would become aware of the importance of each person's tasks. The commissions we proposed were the following:

COMMISSION TABLE	
ANT-HOST: Prepares furniture, workspaces, equipment, distributes materials, promotes that everything is in order at the end.	
CHIMP-ANIMATOR: Greets, welcomes, encourages, integrates those who have difficulty to coexist, cheers, says goodbye.	
WOLF-CARETAKER: Informs about safety protocols, prevents, warns about situations that may represent danger.	
TLACUACHE-ECOLOGY AND HEALTH: Informs about COVID and health protocol; takes care of the first aid kit, invites to wash hands and put waste in its place.	
EAGLE REPORTER: Keeps a record or log of the activities, takes photos and videos, interviews participants for their opinions.	
LION- GUIDE AND COORDINATION: Leads workshops, manages conflicts, promotes evaluations, supervises that commissions are fulfilled.	

Login and logout routines

To ensure some basic order, we had some start and end routines. In addition to following COVID protocols and handing out materials at the reception desk, we gathered in a circle to greet each other, do a twirl or physical activation exercise, sing a *jitanjáfora*⁴³ and remember the coexistence guide and each person's assignments. At the end of the sessions we met to say goodbye, make a brief evaluation of the day and review the messages placed in the opinion mailbox: At the end of the day, we would give each other a cheer: "Very good, we did very well!"

Registration tools

Collective logbook and personal diary: To share with everyone the adventures we were having, we proposed the creation of a *life diary*, where we wrote down each one's discoveries; also, a *common logbook*, which rotated day by day, so that each commissioner could record the most relevant aspects of the session.



For this we had a first workshop that consisted of learning how to bookbind recycled sheets and cardboard and not having to buy new notebooks. The difference between *diary* and *logbook* is that the former is more personal and subjective and the latter is only a record of events; although in reality those who kept them did not make such a distinction and wrote down personal comments in the common logbook or list of actions carried out in their diary. A good part of what we present here reflects what was noted in those logs.



The book of new words: As mentioned above, each trip would involve learning new words, so participants were given a *booklet* to record new terms and clarify their meanings at some point during the session. Eventually, a space was opened to share the terms written down (although this is very important, it did not always allow time to work on them in detail).



Keys and tools to attract attention

The whistle: This is the most important sound, as it is the one that warns that a potentially dangerous condition is occurring and deserves immediate attention.

The horn: It functioned as a *marker of time* and change of shift or activity. It was used as a call to congregate somewhere, to give important information or new indications.

The rain stick: It was used to *ask for silence and attention* when something important was going to be said in a plenary or assembly and there was a lot of noise.

⁴³ *Jitanjáforas* are word games that do not necessarily have a meaning, but are the raw material of children and teenagers's or literary games, much appreciated for their sonority or musicality: *Amo a to matarilerile ró; Yo quiero un bum, chiquirracá, chiquirracá chicabum.*

The opinion mailbox

To prevent and manage the conflicts that often arise, it is important to have a communication mechanism. So we placed an *opinion box in the main hall, within everyone's reach*. These were read aloud at the end of the sessions, in a mini-assembly, to find out if everything was going well or if something needed to be changed.

I CONGRATULATE	I THANK YOU
I AM ANNOYED AND I SUGGEST	GIVE ME A HAND!
I PROPOSE	I SHARE



It was surprising that this simple tool was very well received, especially in the second summer course. All the children and teenagers showed great interest in sending a message to their classmates or to the guides and were very attentive to what they were saying. Congratulations and thanks prevailed. Rarely were annoying remarks made (the latter were predominantly directed at an adolescent who tended to isolate himself with his cell phone).

Apapachos⁴⁴ for when someone is absent

When someone was eventually absent or deserted (because they were sick or suffered a small accident, etc.), the rest of the group would gather in the main court to send a chorus of affection: "*Come back Brenda, we miss you!*" Sometimes the absent person would also receive an envelope with written messages.



Welcoming new colleagues has given me a quick glimpse of the energy and enthusiasm with which we can begin to create. I think it is very important that this act of accepting the challenge and committing ourselves by word of mouth is carried out. I believe it gives us strength and self-confidence and allows us to believe again in the responsibility that comes with accepting or not accepting a challenge.... The way we respond is key.

I loved the proposals of the inauguration script. I'm left with the choice of couples, the naming and the jitanjáforas.

⁴⁴ In Mexico the word *apapacho* designates a gesture of solidarity, affection or comfort, when someone feels vulnerable.



I found the activities to integrate the group very enjoyable and at the same time effective. Definitely, I propose to continue using this type of resources before starting the workshops or any activity. Breaking the barrier of "not me" and generating a space of trust will allow us to be closer to the genuineness of the children and teenagers's perceptions, their ideas, opinions and proposals. Furthermore, it seems to me that closure is also fundamental and that it needs to be built from the individual to the collective and viceversa. It is a moment to know what each one takes away from this experience and, in addition, it generates a group conclusion and creates a space to

learn to listen in a committed way, which seems to me essential to strengthen any relationship. As for the execution of logistics, there is still much room for improvement, especially with regard to the technical team, and we must ensure that, when the exhibition is held, these details can be minimized. However, it is also important to keep in mind that we may find ourselves in similar situations, in order to circumvent them without eliminating or frustrating the activity being developed. In addition, I believe that, even if we are not all in everything, we should be aware of the work and progress of the activities and workshops. Sharing these reflections and committing ourselves to grow from them also adds up.

I know that the way we express ourselves or how we intervene is always different; the team is very diverse and therefore even more valuable. Personally, I still find it difficult when we distance ourselves from participation, but I think it is necessary to understand the forms of intervention and not expect everyone to respond in the same way or at the same level.

I am aware that activity closings are often rushed or even chaotic, but I would propose that, at least as a small team, we could give ourselves a moment to thank each other for the work we have done and for what we have given and received, that is, to have an internal closing of activities. Finally, I would add that it is necessary to keep the work and materials in a concentrated way (as much as possible), so that they are not lost, but are exposed or can be easily used. I am very happy and grateful to be able to share with you and build this project with such a large group. I am sure we will learn a lot.

(From the diary of Karla Venegas, June 8, 2022)

2.5.5. Physical and mental preparation and team training

Already organized in our eco-detective agency, we realized that the **search for answers to questions about the climate crisis** required some preparation. To achieve this, several activities were proposed to sharpen the senses in order to better observe the places, develop the skills to overcome certain challenges and strengthen the soul to master the fear of the unknown. So several activities were offered for this purpose:



Relaxation and nature activities

Taking advantage of the fact that a ladies' group called *Salud y Naturaleza* was participating in the CVS, we invited our young eco-detectives to enjoy a delicious bed of fragrant herbs and relaxation exercises to calm the soul and learn to concentrate.



Fine-tuning the five senses

Several of the proposed activities were aimed at improving perception and learning to recognize and distinguish what surrounds us, canceling or emphasizing some sense organ; for example: taking walks with our eyes closed, or distinguishing objects only with touch, hearing or smell, etc. or smell, etc.

The art of seeing with different eyes

The photography workshop accompanied several tours we took through the neighborhoods and allowed us to see things from many different perspectives.

Today was a great day. We arrived and went to the courtyard (as usual) and there we did the exercises. Then Fanny, who is our guide, taught us what "close-up photography" is,

"in very close-up" and "medium close-up", etc., etc., etc., etc. As close as you can take a picture.

For example, if I am a beetle, I see things from below and from this angle we had to take the pictures. After that block, which was really cool, we went to lunch. Then we changed activities...

(From the collective blog /reports Valeria Soto- 10 years)



Treasures hunting and urban solid waste management (USWM)

The sharpener of the senses also had to do with learning to recognize that many things we throw away are still useful. One of our trainings was directed to explore our own closest spaces and to recognize in them objects that could be treasures, but have been thrown away, as if they were garbage. With this would begin the assembly of the *neighborhood expo*, as each object discovered would have to be described in its characteristics and possible uses.

Here are some descriptions:

-Sharp Stone: *I chose my stone because it is important to me, because it is shiny, it is very sharp and it is like a very rare glass and I found it in the Casa de Vinculación, at 10:20am and for me it is very rare.*

-Hollow rock: *I found it interesting because it has a hollow at the bottom; besides, it has a different shape than a normal rock. It is white and with red and yellow parts; it has details at short sight. It is very pretty.*

-Rubber piece of a mat: *I chose this treasure because it was among the garbage bags and obscure things, and the blue color it has and its distinct shape caught my eye.*

-Branch: *I found it on July 22, at 10:15. It is important, because it reflects that we humans have done damage to nature. Nature does not need humans; humans need Nature. I found the branch in the back of the ship, where there were thousands of them.*

These first descriptions correspond to what Francisco Gutiérrez calls: *connotative reading*, in which the observing subject is totally involved and describes the object from his or her affections or interests. In scientific training, at another time, learners are also expected to carry out *denotative reading*, more aimed at describing the characteristics of the observed object, and then to undertake another one, *structural reading*, which would allow hypothesizing about causes and effects of certain phenomena. These moments were not followed systematically in all the activities; however, the requirement to distinguish between *what is*, *what seems to you* and *why it happens* or *what causes it* was present.

The decision to endeavor to overcome obstacles and "cooperative competencies".



As we have already pointed out, the *cooperative option* had its counterpart: overcoming obstacles in races and games of "cooperative competitions", which did not seek to determine "who is the best", but to offer mutual resistance in order to become stronger and more skillful. Otherwise, when everything is too easy and comfortable, fragility and laziness predominate.

The obstacle course was proposed and led by little Lucy (10 years old). When she saw that her brother (12 years old) was collaborating in the summer course, she also wanted to do it and we didn't have to think too much about what we could do.

Lucy is an extremely active child, who is not afraid of anything; when we visited "Amili"⁴⁵, she was jumping and running all the time. That's how we came up with the idea of an obstacle course.

Without hesitation we set to work to plan each obstacle, gather materials and organize the team.

Working with Lucy was very nice. She is a very participative and creative child; so much so that, in a short time, we already had a list of obstacles to install.

Although there were many unforeseen events in the execution, in terms of time and space, everything turned out very well in the end.

The workshop had several objectives, as we continued with the idea of involving the children and teenagers. We wanted them to feel part of the course. In addition, we wanted to strengthen teamwork, although the most important thing was that the children and teenagers had a good time, and I believe that this was achieved.

(From the diary of Fernanda García-guía)

How to manage errors

Another important topic for the preparation of eco-detectives is the way in which errors are dealt with. The dominant neoliberal trend, based on competition, generates individualism, among other things, lack of solidarity, anxiety and insecurity in recognizing one's own limitations. Fear of making mistakes can lead to keeping a low profile. When children and teenagers are in an environment that accepts (and even encourages the expression of mistakes), reflection on them can promote other ways of understanding reality⁴⁶, facilitates tolerance, patience and awareness that good results do not happen automatically, since they follow trial and error processes, and there are many ways to get there, not just one.

Challenges to lose your mind (in board games)

The group of eco-detectives also had some time to get involved in board games. The intention of this space was not precisely to entertain, but to *induce strategic thinking* and *promote the rescue of certain games* that have been played for many years in the neighborhood, such as "la pitarra", which, according to the storytellers, was designed many years ago by locals.

These games generated, in the team of guides, the desire to design others, according to the local context and current issues, to contribute to *decolonize the entertainment* imposed by the market (in games such as "Monopoly", for example).



⁴⁵ "Amili" is a wasteland so called by the elders of the neighborhood; it is very close to the CVS; after having been an agricultural plot, it became a garbage dump when the industry arrived. It was rescued for 9 years by the neighbors, with the collaboration of the CVS and the UAQ, and transformed into a green space for recreation and family coexistence, although it is now abandoned again.

⁴⁶ Like serendipities, e. g.

2.6. Metaphor of travel and journeys in search of answers

We are all migrants
(Alejandro Solalinde)

Already organized, the eco-detectives were warned that the research to understand the causes of the climate crisis involved several trips (imaginary, multimedia and real); so we would become crew members of a ship and make different stops:

Being an eco-detective implies undertaking a journey full of unforeseen events, in which you do not know if you are going to get to where you wanted to go, or what you are going to face, or if you are going to return; so you have to be well prepared. Travel helps you understand things differently and learn how they do in other places to face problems similar to ours.

In a way, we are all travelers: we are always moving from one place to another, from what we are now to what we would like to be or from where we are now to where we would like to be.

We can travel in imagination or in reality, in search of a place we like, to move there and never return, or we can travel to other places, just to get to know and then return home to improve it.

We can travel in a slightly old ship and take advantage of the teachings of our grandparents... or in a very modern ship, with all the advantages of the future. Or we could even make a hybrid trip: travel in an old ship with a telescope directed towards utopia, or in a new ship, which takes a look at history.*

(Collective logbook. Text of presentation of the metaphor)

The trips with the eco-detective team (in search of answers to the question of why our planet has been so disrupted) were of many kinds and contributed to raising awareness of where we stand.

2.6.1. Recognition of the ship



A game of exploration took the team of eco-detectives to go all over the CVS (which would be the ship); the first thing we did was to identify what was in it, where was its engine room, its kitchen, the bathrooms, and what the signs or warnings of Civil Protection and COVID protocols, the fire extinguisher, the smoke detectors, and so on, meant.

2.6.2. Travel around the Universe and the Earth

In several workshops, the team of researchers undertook some *interplanetary trips*. The most exciting was in the Cadereyta Planetarium, because its entire vault shows the billions of stars in the universe, as well as, one by one, all the planets of the solar system. At the exit, the following dialogue was heard:

- It was very exciting to learn about all the planets in our solar system up close!
- I would love to be an astronaut, or at least an astronomer.
- It was very scary for me, when it seemed that the planets were coming at us and were going to crush us. I didn't like that at all!

There were also several tours (videos) around the Earth, to recognize its diverse ecosystems and the serious problems generated by garbage: quantities of plastic, larger than our imagination allows us, reach the sea; there they suffocate and poison fauna and flora. The images of the electronic waste dumps on the coast of Ghana, Africa, are horrifying (video shown in one of the rooms of our *expo-barrial*).

Letter to my favorite person

To give an account of these journeys, it was proposed to write a *letter to someone special or very dear to us*. Only a few are presented in the following lines (few signed):

My experience with that day was something amazing, because thanks to it I was able to know that there is a huge and very beautiful universe.

(Luis Ángel, 15 years old).

Mom:

They have taught me the importance of the environment and the impact we have on it, we have toured the facilities and in that we learned what a temazcal was and a snail of life, it is a planter in the shape of a snail and has medicinal plants. They have taught us to imagine the place of our dreams; we have learned words we did not know, such as: "temazcal", "mycelium", "permaculture", "alpinism", "ponder"; and today we learned about our universe and planet, how it was created, the different ecosystems and how they help each other.

Mommy:

I am doing very well on the trip, we learned many things about the planet and also about the universe.

I miss you very much, but this adventure I am living is very kúl (sic). We also recognized the different plants and which ones to take out and which ones not to take out. This is very interesting and educational, soon I will tell you more about my trip.

Always yours.

Dear Mom:

I tell you that I am seeing, hearing very interesting things about nature; for example, that if we do not take good care of it, we could end it or the different ecologies (ecosystems) that exist on the planet.

I miss you very much and hope you write me soon, chaou (sic).



Dear Grandparents:

I am writing you this letter. I don't know if it can reach you where you are, but it doesn't matter. I am writing this letter to tell you everything I have done on my journey.

Well, I have toured the ship in which I travel, I have also done some work and I have also made some friends, only two and, well, I say goodbye hoping that you will read the letter. Farewell.

What I have been doing is more activities, like weeding, making friends and, above all: learning about plants and socializing with people more often. XD (sic) Well, there are a lot of really interesting things, for example, did you know that the sun is not yellow but white? I didn't really hear why, but it was a very interesting fact. There are many ecosystems. I didn't really know what they were, but when I saw the videos, I understood. I don't think you know what they are, haha. Well, I was telling you, the solar system and space is also a mystery, although very interesting, I really want to go explore it with you :).

Well, there are also many beautiful waterfalls and rivers. You know the igloos? Well, only a quarter of them stand out, because they can be very very big, haha. Well there are many more things, but I would like you to see them yourself :).

Dear friend:

Today I went on an incredible journey. I never thought the universe was sooooo big. It makes me realize how small I am, but you know, it also makes me feel sad and amazed at the same time. I traveled several planets around the sun and the earth and on all of them there was space junk, machines created by humans in the eagerness to discover and conquer.

When I was in that vast emptiness, I just wanted to come back, get off the ship and run to you to talk and eat ice cream. When we came back from space, we explored the Earth through time. I am disturbed and surprised that from dust and rocks life was conceived. That today I can meet you. I explored ecosystems, different from each other, but all connected. The ice of the mountain with the forests, the forests with the rivers and rain, the river with rocky areas and the rocks with the desert Did you know that there is a desert where it rains once every fifteen years? I also saw flowers, insects, seeds, roots, microbes, tiny organisms, much more than me in the universe, but incredibly fundamental to life.

The only thing I didn't see was you. I hope you will join me next time.

From: Charls to: Emilia22 /07 /21

Hello: Emilia, how are you? Well, I hope you are well. I want to tell you that ... I already went to space HAHAHAAAA I went to Mars... Yes (as the song says) HAHAHAAAAHAHAHA. You hear: I also went to Earth, but 45000 billion years... before, and I saw what the Earth was like:| and it was really hot. Just to tell you that everything was on fire, it looked like our kitchen, when we cooked. haha! Well, I think that's it... Nooo!!!! I forgot to tell you about the ecosystems. Aaaaah! Can I tell you that? :D I mean, I know you'll probably just say "a" but X, it doesn't matter... Well it would be cool if you were here. Anyway, I'll say goodbye. Bye! Sincerely yours: Venechi HAHAAAAHA.

(Yes, yes, yes, I probably spelled it wrong). HAHAAAAHA I said it wrong.

Hello, I want to tell you what I have seen on my trip, I know you are a very curious and adventurous person, I know you would like this.

Did you know that the sun is not red, orange, or yellow as we thought if it is not white, how crazy (sic). Well, I also made compost, planted, weeded, took pictures of animals and flowers, and even planted medicinal herbs. I also made friends, which you told me to do, there are many things I would like you to see for yourself. I miss you very much.

Atte: Evelyn. Ay love yu (sic).

Letter to my hero

...I have learned to imagine and draw the place of my dreams...; we watched a video about how the planet does not need humans, but humans need the Earth. We learned that there are people who give their lives for the flora and fauna, like a lady who takes care of the whales and a man who talks or communicates with the birds and, finally, they gave us a tour of the ship and explained Buen Vivir, although I didn't understand much.

Atte: anonymous. To: anonymous.

Some reflections on these trips in plenary sessions

After the video forums, spaces for collective reflection were opened. The conclusion, in summary, was the following:

The universe is so huge, that we can't help but think that there may be life on other planets as well, and it would be great to meet those who live there. Maybe they know more about how to solve problems similar to ours. Or we could also move there, to save ourselves from the disasters on Earth. Only there are some difficulties: Visiting those planets is not easy, they are too far away. It would take us many light years to reach them. Humans do not live long enough to undertake such a long journey. We would die long before we get there.

Another possibility is to build a habitable city on a closer planet, which does not yet have the conditions, but that is also very difficult. We would need all the money in the world to achieve it, and we don't have it. Or, even if we had it, who knows if we would have enough science to generate air, water, electric energy or land to produce food. So we had better take care of what we have and let science help us to achieve it. What is clear is that some "mega-rich" are spending billions of dollars in the space race.



2.6.3. Excursions to exemplary sites



We had two field trip classes, especially illustrative. One was to the "Jardín Botánico Regional de Cadereyta Ing. Manuel González de Cosío" (in charge of CONCYTEC.

(<http://www.concyteq.edu.mx/JP/inicio.html>) and dedicated to the study, conservation and use of Mexican flora, particularly that of the Queretaro semi-desert. Another was to the "Charco del Ingenio" in San Miguel Allende, which is a natural reserve with a large collection of cacti and native flora, including endangered plants. Both are very beautiful guardians of nature.

The first day I was very nervous. I did very fun things, like when we went to Cadereyta and the Botanical Garden and climbed with Claudia. All the activities, the games. These three weeks that we were in the course were a lot of fun, but the most fun was making the cakes. I missed two days and missed some fun activities for sure, but every day I was there, I had a lot of fun. I

made friends, but the only thing I didn't like was when we went to the planetarium in Cadereyta. It was when they projected that video (in which the planets come very close and seem to crush the public) in which Sam and I held hands, because of fear. I cried a little bit, but I had fun.

(Angela Sofia)

Well, I got over the planetarium scare when we went to the Botanical Garden. It was impressive to be among so many different cacti. I never imagined that there was something so varied in the semi-desert. And when we went to the Charco del Ingenio, I was very impressed to learn about the importance of the bats. Who would have thought that, without them, many plants would have difficulty reproducing.

(Liz)

2.6.4. Projection of other possible worlds

Journey to Utopia or to the place of our dreams

On some occasions, before touring the neighborhoods or making excursions to more distant places, we proposed to *travel to the place of our dreams* (with our eyes closed) to, after imagining what that place would be like, capture what we had imagined in full-color drawings.



Something that can be observed in the majority of these drawings is that nature occupies a priority place: flowers, rainbows, trees, rivers, birds and some marine animals. Rarely do humans appear! On the other hand, the plants drawn correspond to places far from the Queretaro environment: beaches with dolphins, forests with squirrels, jungles with leafy trees and very wide leaves... Nobody placed plants or animals typical of the semi-desert, which is the one that dominates here: mesquites, huizaches, magueys, biznagas, nopales or other cacti. How are these images and ideas introduced in the thinking of children and teenagers?



Imaginary geography from the four elements

In one of these imaginary trips, a colleague proposed building other worlds through an activity called "Imaginary Geography of the 4 Elements" which, in addition to activating the imagination, had the purpose of recognizing how the children and teenagers think of their ideal world and how they negotiate among themselves to overcome the differences that arise in the attempt to build it. Each team of explorers imagined that they lived on a planet made up of only one element: water, air, earth or water. What would this world be like, what would its inhabitants be like?

Back on Earth, after all that we had learned on our first trips, we started to review what is happening with the four elements: water, air, earth and fire, which, according to our ancestors, are the ones that make up everything that exists in the world. In this way we were able to recognize, with sadness, how they have all become contaminated. We formed teams to work on one of these four elements each. We talked a little about

how different they are and what we can associate them with; for example: fire, to strength and home, air to lightness and freedom.

We put our hands, heads and hearts to work to come up with an island where the element their team was assigned to dominate, and they imagined what the creatures living in that element would be like, for example: the wind team imagined creatures living in the clouds; the fire team created an island around a volcano. We also imagined what problem each place and element would have with pollution.

In the volcano there would be rivers of soft drinks that would create obsidian pollutants when in contact with the lava, or in the clouds. Where the wind people live, there would be polluted air that would bring pollution problems. All this left us thinking: How can we have a better world, how can we prevent things from becoming polluted like this?

(From the diary of Luis Osorno-guide)

Come fly kites

Another workshop that has to do with activating dreams was that of building and flying kites (a favorite game of the children and teenagers of Carrillo), proposed and led by two brothers, 12 and 10 years old.

This workshop was introduced with a video in which Francisco Toledo, the great Oaxacan painter, also designs and flies them, pointing out that making them fly also serves "so that people can see many things that happen somewhere and go unnoticed" (here he was referring, specifically, to the 43 students of Ayotzinapa)⁴⁷.



This workshop came about in the most spontaneous way possible:

It turns out that Santi and Luci, a pair of little brothers (12 and 10 years old, respectively), who collaborate very actively in CVS (along with Rebeca and me), were just coming from flying kites in Amili (talking about how to make kites and about the workshops we would give in CVS, in the next summer course), when suddenly the idea came up that Santi could give a workshop in the summer course. This caused great excitement and, without much thought, we began to work on how the workshop would be. Everything was so fast and effusive, that that same day we already had the name of the workshop, "Vente a volar papalotes" (Come fly kites). The name was perfect, because it reflected the objective of the workshop.

In the summer course we were looking for workshops with such a dynamic name and structure that the children and teenagers could feel involved. So we thought a good way to do that was to allow another child (who had the interest to do it) to share with them some of what they knew.

Something very special about this workshop was that it sought to recover the traditions of the town of Carrillo, because in the book "Mezquites y Papalotes" it is mentioned how the children and teenagers of Carrillo loved to fly kites. But, over time and the invasion of industry, they forgot about it.

As a result of the workshop we had a space to fly, in Amili, the kites that the children and teenagers of the summer course had made. It was very exciting to see the enthusiasm with which the kids flew their kites, and how they tried again and again, until they succeeded.

(From the diary of Fernanda García-guía)

⁴⁷ Students from the "Raúl Isidro Burgos" rural teacher training college, who disappeared in the early hours of September 27, 2014, after being attacked in Iguala by various government forces in collusion with organized crime.

2.6.5. The visit of extraterrestrials



On another occasion we proposed to the group of researchers a game in which we would not be the ones traveling, but some extraterrestrials would come to visit Earth and it would be up to us to organize a sightseeing tour for them:

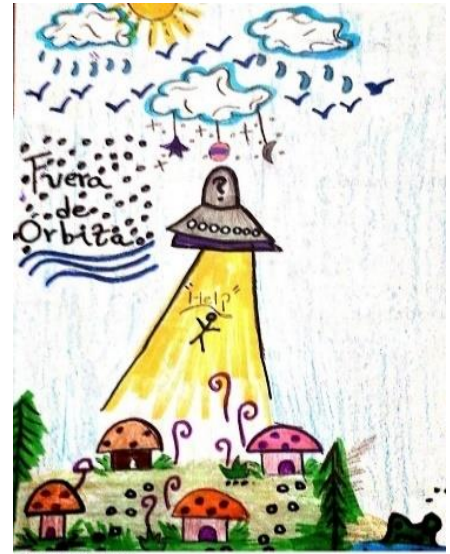
And if beings from another planet came to visit us on Earth, what would we show them about our world? What things do we like and are we proud of, and what things worry us and should we warn them to be careful?

Thus, two lists were formed with drawings to contrast *what we like* and *dislike about the place where we live*:

What we like: To talk about *this*, several drawings were made, in which Mexican food predominated: chiles, enchiladas, gorditas... The Mexican flag, balls and soccer fields also appeared several times. Someone drew a bonfire: "Fire is fascinating".

What we don't like: On this topic, rather than drawing concrete objects, the representations were symbolic and had to do with social relations. This space also made it possible to become aware of some problems that afflict children and teenagers and about which they are not always able to speak. Thus they noted:

- *animal abuse;*
- *bullying or aggression and discrimination at school;*
- *violence in families;*
- *drug addiction and alcoholism;*
- *the blindness of not wanting to recognize that they have a problem;*
- *mistreatment of nature.*



On another occasion, we proposed the creation of a *collage* to talk about the elements of our culture that most attract our attention and that would be worthwhile for our visitors to learn about. Not all the transformations that humanity has caused in the world are destruction. So there are also many human actions that amaze us⁴⁸.

⁴⁸ We once wondered whether we could call "good Anthropocene" those human-driven actions that are marvelous, such as philosophy, arts or sciences; however, the term *Anthropocene* was devised by to refer exclusively to human actions that have caused drastic transformations in the earth's crust and have generated serious imbalances on the planet.

2.6.6. Time tunnel travel

The questions: *where do the things we use come from and where do the things we throw away go?* led to the development of some *timelines*.

The work proposal consisted of hypothesizing about what happened before, for example, a car arrived at the store: how it was built, who built it, where did the raw material come from to make each of its parts, etc. Drawings were used to answer: *what happened before and before and before...?* Thus, going into the past, until discovering that everything starts with the raw materials provided by nature; that in the process of building each object, a lot of water is lost and polluted and a lot of energy is wasted.

Then, in the trip to the future, we had to answer, also with drawings: *what happens after we throw the thing away, and then and then...*, until we related its destiny to the garbage dumps that we saw in the videos or in the neighborhood tours.

This activity also revealed two things: on the one hand, that our vision of the future is not *structurally* very different from the present: for example, the children and teenagers envision better cars for individual use in the future, without envisioning changes in the mobility systems that would reduce the ecological problem, favoring, for example, collective transportation. On the other hand, the efforts of **invisible workers** (including their families) who participate in the whole process could be recognized (we will return to this subject later).

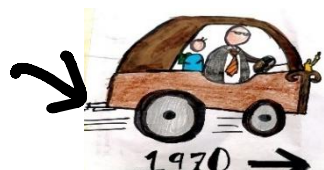
The El Tlacuache project has been a journey of discovery that has left me with great experiences (even though, when I got involved in the project, several things had already been done). I have to say that it simply captivated me.

Meeting so many committed people, each one supporting from his or her own perspective, gave me a lot of motivation and energy to be in the project; energy that I used in each step we took; steps that were materialized in each workshop and in each child who participated and demonstrated the impact of the project in each of their creations.

I look back and I don't think it's been months since I joined the project. It has been so exciting for me that I just don't feel the time passing.

Personally, El Tlacuache has been a great challenge. There have been moments of great happiness, but also of frustration. I have known the best of working in a team, but also how complex it can be.

However, I must thank the project for allowing me to understand a reality that I did not know and that, ironically, I am living. Belonging to Tlacuache has brought me face to face with my own reality; an extremely changing reality, where people take problems for granted, to the point of normalizing and believing that they are something that is inevitable, that everything is going to happen and nothing more can be done, for example: the garbage problem.



(From the diary of Fernanda García-guía)

2.6.7. Neighborhood tours and the art of mapping

Neighborhood formation and ancestral practices

The purpose of one of the tours through the neighborhoods of Carrillo was for the eco-detectives to observe various practices that have been carried out in the territory they have inhabited since ancestral times, as well as to analyze their environment in order to propose hypotheses, seeking to understand what was the process of change that led the town to its current condition.

We found that, in Carrillo, for example, there are still several families who still cook with firewood and some farmers who still take their herds out to graze in the surrounding vacant lots, in the middle of the cars; you can still see the Casa Ejidal, the *Casa de las palomitas*, where the farmers of yesteryear used to meet, and there are also several very old chapels, where the community used to meet for various purposes, some religious, others to organize traditional celebrations and so on.



49



This tour involved interviewing some neighbors, reading passages from the book "Voces de ancianos en las manos de los niños"⁴⁹, drawing time lines, making drawings of the places visited, as well as playing "la pitarra", the game we have already mentioned.

An important part of several workshops for eco-detectives were the tours of nearby neighborhoods. What Celestin Freinet called **walking classes** is a common practice in CVS and is considered fundamental to analyze and learn from reality.

Several of these tours were preceded by a short *social mapping* workshop, which offered some photography and mapping techniques to *observe the environment* from different perspectives.

Upon returning from the walks, the photos were contrasted with each other, and each person justified his or her choice.

This makes it possible to recognize objects or scenes that were previously ignored and to be surprised by what seemed "obvious" before. Some of these photos were printed and placed on a sketch of the area, to locate significant spaces or buildings and trouble spots.

⁴⁹ Book elaborated in 2015, from a project of the group "Mezquites y Papalotes", participant in the CVS, in which children and teenagers and elders meet to talk about how Carrillo Puerto used to be.

Another thing we learned with these practices is that maps are not only physical, but can also be *emotional*: when we write down in the sketches words about the feelings that passing through certain places generates in us: curiosity, fear, sadness, bewilderment, etc.



Something very interesting in these tours was to recognize the differences in the modes of perception between children and teenagers and adults. While adults pay attention to problematic scenes (garbage, vandalism, improvised dens of "the homeless", lack of street maintenance, absence of green areas, invasion of industry or the market, etc.), the children and teenagers pay attention to details "invisible to us": little birds that perch on light wires, or tennis shoes and dolls that hang from them; little dogs that try to peek out from the roofs of houses; a few little weeds that try to peek out between the sidewalk and a brick wall or some little trees that have strangely red stems.



(From the diary of Maria del Carmen-guide)

The rally, a very special route

One of the most complete neighborhood tours was the one that took place within the framework of a game of clues, or *rally*, in which participants were asked to make several stops along the way, to observe certain places more closely, recognize their history, and solve certain riddles, interview neighbors and even discover hidden objects.

I have rarely participated in this type of activity (rally), so it was something new to me and I felt a little concerned that I was in charge of the activity. However, I felt that the logistics and the order of the activities were quite clear and worked efficiently. Even though I did not participate in the design or the agenda, it was quite easy for me to find my role and assume the responsibilities that corresponded to me, as well as to locate others in which I could be supportive.

At the start of the day, Karlita and I moved some tasks forward: setting up chairs, the projector, preparing fruits, etc. It seemed to me that we were able to enjoy and contribute a lot in terms of administration. Like making the water, the kits for the commissions, organizing ourselves as a team, among other things.

The teams we put together were very strong. I really enjoy working with you, Tlacuache team. The tour was quite enjoyable. At no time did I perceive that there was any desire to compete with the others. The times seemed to be right, except for one activity, which was mine, in Parque Libertad. In order to carry out the activity that corresponded to me, a change was made in the script, which consisted of waiting for both teams, to do the activity together (and not separately since the time initially marked was not enough).





When we arrive at the park, we start with the children and teenagers's previous knowledge or ideas about what was there before, and the efforts of those who made it possible for the park to exist today. Then we tell the history of the place. And we start the game of the search for the Monsters and the Tlacuache (we also add a couple of tlacuaches made by Alba with felt).

It was the activity that seemed to be the most fun, as the search was a bit tricky, but the teams were so committed that they did not want to give up.

I enjoyed the tour very much; however, it seemed too long, because by noon (12:00 hrs) the sun was already quite intense. By the time we arrived at the kiosk, several of us were already feeling tired and hungry, and the aromas of the garnachas and snacks in the surroundings did not help our restlessness.

Arriving at the CVS was very gratifying, as it is a cool space, and knowing that food and water were waiting for us was even more rewarding. I loved the music and that the kids were supportive by sharing the fruit. The food was delicious and I think we all really appreciated it. Putting everything back in its place was also very pleasing, as we all participated and the task was not loaded on one person, or a few. Working in a team like this is one of the things I am most grateful for and very proud of.

I hope that, if there is another event, the musical artists will be invited again (they will surely expand their repertoire). Wink, wink.

(From the diary of Karla Venegas-guide)

First of all I want to thank that it was incredible to be able to share with such special people, attentive and dedicated to this rally. The organization was excellent, and the participation of the children and teenagers was also excellent. We thought there was not going to be much interest, but several kids came! Regarding the material, it was also good; very good support material to be able to explain. I think the only thing that could be changed a little for the following activities or the next rally, is to have a time limit at the stations, or at least to have an idea of times, since in the last activities we were very late and we did not have the opportunity to give explanations, or propose the challenge of the station.

In terms of food, music and everything, it was super super super good! I had a great time and a lot of fun. I saw that the kids really liked the activity of looking for the tlacuaches in the Parque Libertad⁵⁰ and there was interest, when we talked about competition and cooperation.

(From the diary of Karla Flores-guide)



⁵⁰ In this set were hidden some portraits of monsters and some felt tlacuaches in the shape of tlacuaches.

2.6.7. Encounter with garbage

The observations and reflections we made during these tours allowed us to recognize a social phenomenon known as *normalization*⁵¹: a process by which certain behaviors, anomalies or **harmful** ideas end up being perceived as "normal", due to habit, repetition, the force of an ideology, the impact of propaganda or other media, to such an extent that they are taken for granted, making it difficult to question them. Such "naturalization" deactivates *historical awareness* of the consequences of one's own actions.

Jean Piaget, founder of genetic epistemology, studied another phenomenon, known as *object impermanence*, which takes place in the first months of development, when infants still fail to understand that the things they manipulate continue to exist, even though they have disappeared from their sight. At the end of the *sensorimotor stage*, infants are able to understand that objects have existence independent⁵².

On the other hand⁵³, from psychoanalysis, the phenomenon of normalization or invisibilization can be understood as that unconscious *defense mechanism*, called *denial*: when a subject experiences a very painful or unpleasant situation, this protective mechanism is activated; faced with the feeling of helplessness in the face of a problematic reality, it is better to assume it and conform.



If this is so, the question arises as to what conditions lead certain people to such normalization, regression or denial, which prevents them from seeing the dunghill they find in the streets or which they themselves cause.

If there was something shocking in the tours we made through the neighborhoods, it was to find too much garbage thrown everywhere, even under those signs that say "NO TRASH PLEASE!".

(Comment from Sara, 12 years old)

Hello, my friend:

I want to tell you why I liked to choose the pictures I chose. Because it's about taking care of the world, how to take care of trees, pick up trash, take care of animals, take care of plants, recycle bottles, take care of good nature. I thought about taking care of the world because it's fun and it's nice to take care of the world and take care of all of us and live healthy and safe. And at the rally, when we accompanied each other on the street, we saw that people threw a lot of garbage. I didn't like it, and I liked that some people picked up trash and I recycled trash and I also liked that they planted plants and trees.

(From Lucía Cruz Aguilar, 9 years old, June 29, 2022)



⁵¹ Foucault, M (2002) "Vigilar y castigar". SXXI Editores, Argentina. ISBN 987-98701-4-X

⁵² Piaget, Jean (1989) "Construcción de lo real en el niño, la". Ed. Critica. ISBN 978-84-7423-265-3

⁵³ Freud, Anna (1980). *El yo y los mecanismos de defensa*. Barcelona: Editorial Paidós Ibérica. ISBN 978-84-7509-024-5



2.6.7. Interview with *tlacuaches* and learning the 5 Rs.

During one of the tours through the neighborhoods of Carrillo, as part of the *rally*, the eco-detectives were asked to interview some of the recycling workers: the so-called "Tlacuaches de Carrillo" (Carrillo's "Tlacuaches").

We visited Don Toño at his home to see how he does his work as a chacharero (selling trinkets, knick-knacks or objects of little value, usually in an itinerant manner and at

the top of their voices) His entire house is converted into a huge warehouse, where he stacks large quantities of cardboard neatly arranged and tied up.

He explained to us at length that there are different types of collectors: some collect only paper and cardboard, others only glass or cans or pet. Others collect or buy and sell everything; he also told us:

-I became a chacharero because, no matter how hard I looked for work, I couldn't find anything. I was a farmer when I was young, also a builder, and then a worker, but then they didn't give me work. That ended here and then I got old.

In Carrillo there are also many scrap yards that receive scrap metal, because there are many workshops in the surrounding area.

(Collective logbook, June 25, 2022)

...Another place we visited was Doña Lupita's bazaar, where we learned that people tend to throw away an endless number of things that are still useful; they can be repaired and reused because they are still in very good condition.

(Collective log, June 25, 2022)

The meeting with these people gave rise to a direct discussion of the 5Rs, which seeks to promote better practices for the management of urban solid waste (USW):

REJECT, REDUCE, REPAIR, REUSE, RECYCLE.

To conclude this tour, the team of detectives organized at the delegation's kiosk with various materials to design and promote a *clean-up campaign*.

At this point, it is worth mentioning a magnificent character, who was a recurrent visitor to CVS at that time. He was a neighbor dedicated to music and with a high level of education and understanding of today's world. We do not know why he became a *homeless tlacuache*. He lived in an improvised shack cardboard on the "Amili" lot next to CVS. While he was looking for scraps to sell, he was collecting and keeping in his sack a lot of stories of the people of the neighborhood. He accompanied the team of detectives at the closing of the second summer camp to sing Cri-Crí's "El ropavejero" with the whole crowd. Because he was a migrant, we never saw him again.



2.7. Unexpected encounter with monsters

We felt that the metaphor of the journey should be accompanied by a narrative about the various dangers that the team of eco-detectives may encounter along the way and the need to be prepared to face them. This is why the metaphor of *monsters* was born: those *phenomena that we do not understand and that generate a certain fear in us*. This notion was very useful to represent the different social problems we have been dealing with.

Before continuing with this report, we consider it pertinent to make a parenthesis to give an account of the social conditions that accompanied our process.

2.7.1. Parentheses to address the issue of real monsters

As noted above, the El Tlacuache project was developed a particularly difficult time. Beyond the pandemic, in the last two years we were directly affected by phenomena not seen in a long time.

We were constantly bombarded by more or less alarming news⁵⁴ . related to the serious water crisis affecting our state, the high levels of environmental and social pollution in Carrillo Puerto, several fires in nearby streets, the violence that broke out everywhere (including in privileged families and areas), and which was especially palpable in the neighborhood. There were also cases of

extreme violence in neighboring states, to the point that we were on the verge of suspending one of the excursions we had scheduled to go to Charco del Ingenio, in San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, due to the risks involved. Fortunately, after an investigation into the conditions of

that place and a meeting with parents, we received not only their acceptance and trust, but also their willingness to accompany us, which meant greater safety.

At the same time, the Queretaro government undertook a radical intervention of the main roads, arguing that this would "improve the urban infrastructure". This not only made the mobility of the citizens (including our own) considerably more difficult⁵⁵, but also implied the destruction of the *habitat* of fauna and flora in the area⁵⁶.



in

⁵⁴ The editorial of the newspaper 'La Jornada' of Thursday, September 23, 2021, presents a bleak picture of the present and future of humanity, in the voice of Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations: "we are on the edge of the abyss and acting in the wrong direction; the world has never been so threatened or so divided" (...); "we face the greatest cascade of crises in our lives".

⁵⁵ It must be considered that the neoliberal urban model favors the use of the private (individual) automobile and the construction of infrastructure that favors it, with clear neglect and to the disadvantage of collective-public transportation, which is leading Querétaro to a collapse.

⁵⁶Smith, Neil (2012). "The new urban frontier: revanchist city and gentrification. Ed. Dreammonger

This also generated serious effects on the issue of mobility and social disruption, which was expressed in lost time, continuous accidents in avenues, people run over or killed on the roads. This situation can illustrate how neoliberal policies push rural and urban societies to the limit and to a rapid degradation⁵⁷

In planning the report presented here, we wondered how to render account on this context without diverting too much attention from the issue at hand. Or is it better not to mention it at all?

Faced with these events, which several children and teenagers in the neighborhood with whom we worked commented and expressed that they felt very affected, other questions arose: how are they living these conditions; how to open spaces for communication and reflection on the current reality, without unleashing anxiety, despair or helplessness? The questions also implied: how are we assuming this situation?

Fortunately, at the same time as these conditions, we participated in some movements that took place in Querétaro, which brought together diverse groups with ecological concerns and aimed at strengthening the communal sense of life, as opposed to the individualistic one.

The fact that CVS has been the venue, as we have already mentioned, of the *Festival Agua que corre*, and the fact that we have also participated in one of the first *open parliaments* on this topic (promoted by a member of the Senate of the Republic, against the privatization of water in Queretaro), allowed us to recognize that *we are not alone*; that everywhere many people are working in the construction of other possible worlds.

Francisco Landa, a friend and one of the promoters of this movement, gave us the following words during one of his visits (summary):

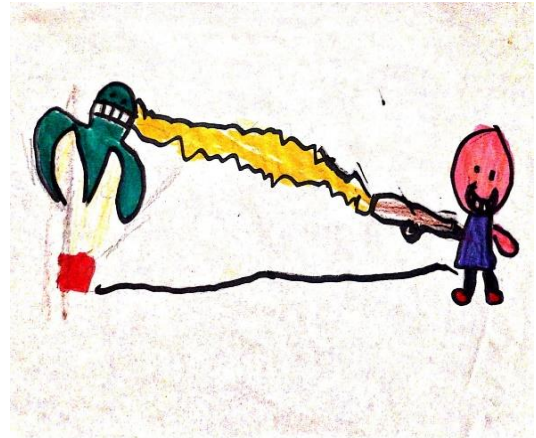
Community means trust, shared joy and the ability to solve problems and realize dreams together.

Building community requires the existence of a simple but indispensable ethical root: compassion. Compassion means two things:

**that we want all beings to be included, because no one deserves to be left out, below or behind the whole, and*

**that, to the best of our ability, we are willing to put our bodies to prevent the suffering of anyone.*

In other words, for a community to be possible, it is necessary to eliminate any discriminatory prejudice (...); we will have to open our eyes to violence in all its forms, and act to stop it, as well as to have a living memory of historical catastrophes and their current effects.



May the suffering that we can avoid not be repeated. At least not the extreme, the one related to cruelty (...) The community rule is that no one be reduced to indignity or abandoned without hope.



Although we live in mass societies segmented into groups, and tending to atomization, the community spirit exists in the daily life of many of us (sic). We activate it intuitively, when our histories have allowed us to be agents of care: we prevent accidents, we take care of children and teenagers, we claim something unjust, we help others (...).

To the gangs of power, concentrating money and more power, we need to be divided, alone and disarticulated. Preferably, also sad and afraid. It is in their interest to eliminate any vestige of solidarity, but above all of self-determination.

If you notice, the ideology of individual success, even the defense of "individual rights" (when considered without putting social rights first) is the kryptonite that works against the feeling of community in everyone.

Another destroyer of community is the reduction to impotence. Clearly, instilling fear is the most direct way to isolate us, as distrust of our neighbors becomes the predominant form of anti-relationship. The other is to make us feel small, helpless, isolated. Incapable of generating knowledge, of validating the dignity of our place in the community.

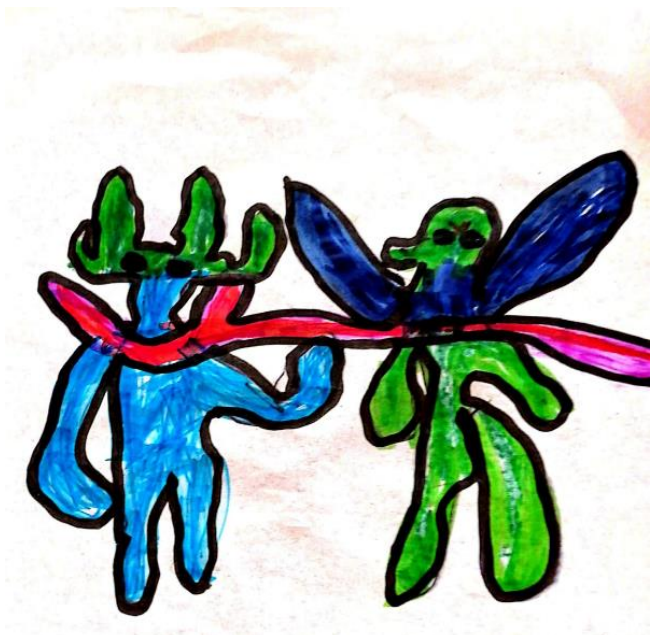
There are different ways to deal with all this: One is to organize around the basic idea of compassion and seek commonality.

What is common: joy, territory, conversation, dreams; to organize ourselves for the realization of community projects...; to take the power to decide. This means reformulating our position: it is not a matter of placing ourselves "in front of the State", but of recognizing ourselves as "we are the State".

It is a matter of demanding, not complaining; of demanding full compliance with social rights and advancing them (...)

2.7.2. Another look at monsters and various ways of dealing with them

It must be recognized that the perceptions of the problems we face are very diverse and the pessimistic view that adults tend to have, is balanced by the taste for life (or innocence) of children and teenagers, as well as the spirit, strength and desire to change reality that young people have. That is why promoting spaces for *intergenerational encounters*, in which science, arts and popular knowledge are articulated, and in which we can learn from each other, is highly encouraging.



Psychoanalysis and taxonomy of monsters

Simultaneously to our search on how to approach the topic of monsters, we turned to Bruno Bethelheim⁵⁸, child psychologist, recognized for his book "Psychoanalysis of Fairy Tales", in which he analyzes how children and teenagers's literature not only offers minors great aesthetic pleasure, but also contributes to their emotional liberation, generating feelings of love, strength, courage, fidelity or bravery, by identifying with small but cunning characters, who face evil monsters or serious problems and dangers, which they manage to overcome.

The topic of monsters was not only useful to play with, but also to reflect on ecological and social problems. Thus arose, without having previously proposed it, a *taxonomy of monsters*, which can lead to multiple discussions on what are the best criteria for classification, which are cause and which are consequence...

One task of the detectives is to prepare ourselves to recognize the monsters that we meet along the way; to know which ones are harmful to nature or to health (like war or pollution); which ones can be frightening because of their appearance, but are harmless (like lizards), which ones are very important for life, but can become dangerous if they become unhinged (like bees), which ones can deceive us, covering themselves with a very attractive mask (like junk food) or which ones can even be very useful to improve the earth (like pollinators or garbage-eating animals).

We have to be very careful when it comes to pointing them out. We ourselves could be considered "monsters" by the aliens, should they come to visit us, or become monsters to others, when we lose our self-control and get out of control.

(Introductory text to an activity)

A richness of the MU team is that it has links with several friends who promote recreational or artistic activities and eventually share their knowledge in the CVS; thus they were invited to collaborate with our project. Some of these activities are framed in literatura and radio, others in



visual arts: drawing, painting, sculpture, among others. Here are some of them:

Catching monsters in the arts, in order to have more control over them.

Alebrijes, portraits and monigotes:

The eco-detectives participated in several workshops to build alebrijes, with wire, paper, plastic bottles and acrylic paint. Before building them, they had to be drawn. Several *talking portraits* were made that could

be hung on the wall. We just have to be careful *not to normalize them*, because we can get used to them and lower our guard against monsters that can be very harmful. Some children and

⁵⁸ On this topic we propose the reading of "Psychoanalysis of fairy tales" by Bruno Bettelheim (2015). Ed. Booket Paidós.

teenagers became so fond of them that a personalized gallery could be set up with their entire production. Several representations of the “Garbage Monster” (made with waste collected during the neighborhood tours) were also built, which turned out to be very creative.

For the expo-barrial, a giant “Eco-alebrije” was also built with a garbage container that invites children and teenagers and adults to decorate it and feed it (with written messages) everything that can no longer be recycled and that everyone wants to remove from their lives because it bothers them or hurts them.

Among the notes found, the following messages read:

- My illnesses, because of my bad habits
- Environmental pollution, insecurity
- The abandonment of my parents
- Envy
- Corruption
- Lack of water
- Violence unleashed everywhere...

Catching monsters in fairy tales

In addition to the monigotes, each team created their own story or biography of the monster they had built and some of these stories were then used to make short radio capsules.



58

"Queretia: a good monster": *It all started when humans littered. The world became infested with cans, bottles, plastics, paper, cardboard, cigarettes, etc.*

One day all the garbage collapsed and the seas, instead of having water, were infested with garbage. Only a few survived, but those that did became garbage monsters, for lack of food.

Of all the humans who survived, there was one who unfortunately also became a monster. But she turned out differently.



She was called Queretia and once, realizing all that was happening, from being bad she became good and with all the garbage she found, she made a time machine to warn humans not to throw garbage, because that would be the end of humanity. END

(Team-built story)

Another monster to mention is "Escor", a huge monster, built by the MU team with the garbage found in the orchard and which gave rise to the El Tlacuache project.

"Escor" *is a creature created by garbage, surrounded by insects and every day he created himself with new garbage that was once thrown away by humans. Once he found a ball that was among the garbage and he picked it up and every day he played with it, until he saw that in the home where he lived there was no other creature and he began to*

feel lonely and so he decided to clean, to see if he could find a new friend. He spent months and years cleaning, but had no luck and that's when he realized that he would always be alone, but he didn't give up and kept on cleaning.

10 years later, "Éscor" was exhausted and began to fall apart and fell to the ground and was in agony, but he got up and looked around and there was no more garbage in the world. "Éscor", thankfully, began to crumble to the point of death. The wind blew and among the remains of "Éscor" grew the first plant, where before there was only garbage, for many years.

Unmasking deceitful monsters masquerading as "good guys"

Some monsters that we have naturalized are industry and the market. To talk about them and to answer the questions: *where do the things we use come from and where does what we throw away end up*, we had the visit of two promoters of the **solidarity economy**, who invited us to contrast the wonders that industry and the market offer and that make life easier and more comfortable, with the serious problems they cause when they become garbage⁵⁹.

An eco-detective (age 12) notes the following in the collective logbook:

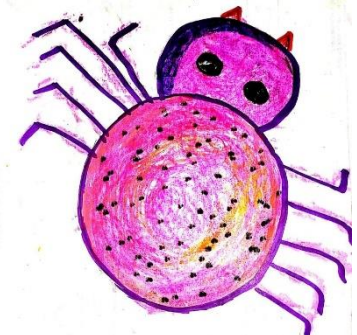
"...after lunch some old people came to talk to us about economic consumption (sic) which is a very interesting topic that everyone should listen to; it is about how companies have more power than the government itself. Without thinking, we consume anything from any kind of advertisement that TV shows us and we want to buy just to be fashionable, without receiving criticism from society, when what we have at home is in good condition and can give us a little more performance to use. Have you ever wondered why the price of your products is so cheap, or why we pollute with these products? ..."

On another occasion, the topic discussed was the "Deception Monster" and how to unmask it. The material that generated the discussion was that of "The Magic Cat: a trick that leads one to think that a cat can read one's mind, based on a card game. After the surprise that the "magical" experience provokes, the discovery of the key to recognize the trick causes great surprise and amusement: *How is it possible that we can be fooled so easily*, exclaims a 10-year-old girl.

Recognize "monsters" that are harmless or beneficial to the environmental balance.



From another perspective, we must learn to distinguish those beings that, although they generate fear "because of their creepy appearance", may be harmless, or even indispensable to maintain the ecological balance, such as bees and other insects, certain worms or bats... Exterminating them, just because their appearance is unpleasant, can have serious consequences.



⁵⁹ The talk was accompanied by the documentary 'The Story of Stuff' by Annie Leonard: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrz8FH4PQPU>



Eventually anyone can look like a freak, if they look somewhat "different" from the so-called "normal". Many *disabled people* are often rejected by society because of this; also those who are discriminated against because of their ethnic origin, skin color or extreme poverty⁶⁰.

All these people have rights and deserve to be respected and valued in their dignity. Reflection on this issue is especially important in the Queretaro capital, where the state recurrently assaults members of *indigenous communities*, as well as homeless *indigents*, who have become very present throughout the capital, especially in the neighborhoods of Carrillo Puerto.



And when it turns out that the monster is me

Sometimes it is also important to be vigilant about our relationships with other people or other natural beings. Several studies have pointed out that during the pandemic, domestic violence, especially that directed at women and children and teenagers, has worsened considerably. It is important to recognize that anyone can eventually lose control and attack those who are close to them. We will return to this topic later, in the section on *conflict management*.

2.8. Discovery of some invisible worlds

One of the purposes of *alternative popular education* is to **make the invisible visible**. This is the work of science (and also of philosophy). That is why one of the main proposals made to the explorers was to learn to see in a different way what surrounds us and that, by force of habit, goes unnoticed.

2.8.1. Some of nature's invisibles



In Nature we also encounter thousands of beings invisible to the naked eye, which generate many questions. With the invention of the microscope and the telescope our possibilities of understanding Nature increased considerably and we were able to explain many things, for example: why things spoil, why people get sick, among others.

Many of the Micelio Urbano workshops use the microscope to take a closer look at what soil looks like, what role certain microorganisms play in the decomposition of organic matter, and so on.

⁶⁰ Cortina, Adela. *Aporophobia, the rejection of the poor*. Ed. Paidós. Barcelona.

In nature there are billions of microorganisms that can only be seen with a microscope.

They seem to have always existed, since they have been on Earth for almost 4 billion years (4,000,000,000 = a 4 with 9 zeros!) and will continue to exist long after mankind disappears.

There is not a single corner of the planet free of them. It is estimated that there are more than 6 million trillion of them, many more than all the cells in your body and more than all the stars in the Milky Way!

They come in a myriad of varieties, colors, sizes and shapes. Some look creepy and others very funny. Some can withstand extremely high temperatures, close to fire and others as low as ice; others can live at the bottom of the sea, or under the earth or even in outer space.

Can you imagine what we would do, if one day all those little monsters organized to destroy us? Our mission, as researchers, is to find out why, if these invisible beings have always existed, they suddenly got out of control, became monsters and attacked us, as happened with COVID 19.

2.8.2. Some social invisibles

In the timelines we proposed to make, *to know what happens before an object reaches our hands and what happens after we discard it*, we emphasized the effort of the workers who participate in the process and that we seldom recognize. In other words, the idea is to raise awareness about the multiple ties we have with those people who support us with their work, but become invisible, because we rarely value them. Thus, we consider it pertinent to bring up the text by Bertolt Brecht: *Questions of a worker who reads* and to pay homage to those who dedicate themselves to all kinds of manual labor: to agriculture, to the production of handicrafts, to construction, to those who spend a good part of their lives in factories, to those who dedicate themselves to cleaning...



Who built Thebes, the Thebes of the seven gates?

The names of the kings appear in the books.

Did they carry the stones?

*... The great Rome is full of triumphal arches, who erected them? ...*⁶¹

This question is also valid to motivate collaborative work. Some family or social conflicts have to do with the *lack of an equitable distribution* of maintenance tasks or have to do, equally, with the unequal valuation of human occupations. Such inequality leads to consider "inferior" those who perform them and "superior" those who avoid them and pay others to perform them.

If we want to organize any activity, who opens, who closes, who gets or arranges the furniture, the machines, the materials we need to work, who washes them and puts them in their place after use, who separates the waste, who repairs what breaks down, who stays until the end to collect the waste when they are all gone?

In coexistence, *learning to see* also implies recognizing that sometimes we do something that bothers others and we do not realize it, or that some very shy people go unnoticed and require our solidarity to integrate into the group.

⁶¹ Brecht. "Questions of a worker who reads." Full text at: <https://magazinepunch.com/2016/12/08/preguntas-de-un-obrero-que-lee-bertolt-brecht/>

2.8.3. When human actions render nature invisible

A striking phenomenon that we discovered during the *Festival Agua que corre* is the so-called **water footprint**. This is an indicator of the total volume of freshwater that a company uses to produce goods and services, or that a community or any individual consumes, without knowing it. In the process, large quantities of water are not only used, but also wasted and polluted. For example, to obtain one gram of gold, one thousand liters of water (!) are used⁶².

2.9. Meeting and dialogue with Nature



As we noted earlier, one of the areas of the training of detectives was *the projection of other possible worlds*. Unlike the dominant regime that, since ancient times (Book of Genesis 1:28), tends to consider nature as an "object of exploitation", in the utopia of El Buen Vivir, Nature is considered the *organizing principle of the universe and the source of life*.

It is fundamental to confront monsters by turning our gaze towards Nature. It is immense, complex, mysterious, it provokes attention and desire, it is immensely more attractive than the person someone falls in love with.

At CVS, Micelio Urbano has taken on the task of promoting the encounter with nature in popular urban spaces, through workshops, video forums, practical activities and colloquiums on plants.

Organic (ecological) horticulture, which inspires MU, involves *scientific work* and an *artistic* approach (growing, enjoying fruits, vegetables, flowers and ornamental plants), thanks to ancestral knowledge and practices to conserve, regenerate and improve soils, control pests and preserve plant diversity. This discipline is highly formative for children and teenagers and adolescents from urban neighborhoods, as it allows them to come into contact with nature and observe in detail the diversity of the land, vegetables, animals and various organisms involved in agricultural production, as well as the relationships that exist between them.

To contrast the various views on nature, we proposed to the eco-detectives the reading of the famous "Letter from the Seattle Redskin to the President of the United States in 1854":⁶³

Chief of the Pale Faces:

How can you buy the sky or the warmth of the earth?

For us, that is an extravagant idea.

If no one can possess the freshness of the wind, nor the radiance of water, how is it possible that you propose to buy them?

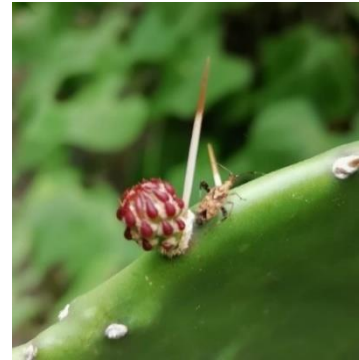
My people consider every element of this territory to be sacred....

⁶² WWF ORG (September 13, 2020). "Water and Mining: are those golden jewels worth it?"

<https://www.wwf.org.mx/?364730/Agua-y-mineria-esas-joyas-de-oro-valen-la-pena> (Accessed 14 May 2021).

⁶³<https://sitios.itesm.mx/va/dide/documentos/inf-doc/carta.PDF>

MU thus offered various workshops to better understand the importance of the plant world in our lives. It should be noted that several of them promoted the writing of *instructional texts*, aimed at sharing with other classmates, what materials and tools are required and what is the procedure (how things are done, step by step), as well as *descriptive texts* that give an account of the characteristics of a plant, animal or any object found in the garden and place it in the closing exhibition.



2.9.1. "The herbarium" (*exploration of the plants around us*)

This workshop was proposed as the initial one in June and July (2022) since it allowed us to learn more about the CVS garden and the plants in it. The intention was to bring the members closer to observe and investigate *native plants with the support of adults*, through an exercise of exploration and description, starting with simple questions to recognize our previous knowledge and common knowledge. The tools we used were made in a homemade and artistic way, recovering recyclable materials.



We note in the *Book of new words*: "Herbarium" *adj. of or relating to plants. Nm. A collection of dried and classified plants used as material for the study of botany.*

To begin with, we prepared ourselves with badges, the *Book of new words*, pen, commissions, and workshop materials.

We gathered in a circle in the covered patio and started a crazy dance to activate the body. We noticed that the participation in this exercise was good as there was no participant who did not move.

Afterwards we probed previous knowledge through some simple and direct questions: do you know how to describe, do you know what a native plant is, do you know what a native plant is? From here we did some small description exercises to then make pairs, give directions and go out to explore.

During the exploration the children and teenagers together with an adult went out in search of plants of three different strata: grass, shrub and tree. Each one with the particular characteristic of being native. Each pair had a descriptive sheet containing data such as: *place of collection, *date, *plant name, *scientific name, *family, *description, *who collected, *who identified..., among other data.

At the end, a sample of the plant was collected to be taken to a botanical press that was previously made with reuse materials (cardboard, popsicle sticks, newspaper...) so that once dry, we could add our sample to the collective logbook. The registration commissioner was in charge of the writing, as the activities of the session were recounted. At the end each member put their name as attendance and had the opportunity to take home material to make their own home press and go out in search of new plants to record.

(From Karla Venegas' blog, Friday, June 17, 2022)

We were explorers in search of native plants. There were trees, shrubs and herbs, among them, mesquite, sena, muiltle, lavender, marigold, chacalote. We observed and described and collected, researched and recorded them.

We keep our plants in the botanical press to dry so that we can paste them in the logbook and let others know about them.

(The White Tiger team reports in the MU log)

2.9.2. "Earth we are and earth we Will become" (*recognizing mineral diversity*)



This workshop consisted of bringing participants closer to the recognition of diversity through the soil. Knowing that there are varieties of substrates and recognizing their colors and textures opens up a world of possibilities to look at the soil from other perspectives. This dynamic allows participants to recover the value of the senses, as it was initially carried out blindfolded and later observed in detail with magnifying glasses and microscopes. The aim is to look at life in the minuscule, to ask who animates the minerals and how all beings are interconnected; it allows us to generate empathy and recognition with "the other"; to learn to differentiate between two clods of earth.

To start with the activities we had previously acquired badges, Books of new words, pens, commissions and workshop materials. This day was all about experimenting through our senses (especially touch and sight).

All workshop members, minors, were blindfolded. Lining up with their hands on the shoulders of the front partner, they were led by a female commissioner as group guide.

We went from the main room to the roofed patio and then one by one we directed them to the containers with samples of different substrates (silt, clay and minerals) that were found in the mesquite surround in the orchard.

Through touch and some questions from the senior guide, each participant described what they felt in each container. At the end of the six containers, the participant's eyes were uncovered to see if the description was correct or if it resembled what they had imagined.

Once this first part was finished, each girl and boy made a drawing of how they had imagined the contents of the tubs and another of what it was really like.

In the Book of new words we note: Substrate. Nm. The thing that is at the base or origin of something. Biol. The medium in which a plant or a fixed animal develops.

When all participants were finished, we shared the names of the substrates and what type they were. Some were able to explore the garden with a magnifying glass to identify in the area some of the substrates seen. We also talked



about some of the main characteristics of each substrate and their origin and use. In addition, through a simple experiment we addressed the issue of "sedimentation" which is one of the properties they have.

And we moved on to microscopes. This was, after the texture test with the substrates, my favorite part of the session. With them we observed a sample of tezontle, a reddish mineral substrate, with which we also let our imagination run wild. There were comments like it looked like it had crystals or that it was like Mars.

To conclude this experience, we gathered again in the main room and our registration commissioner filled out the collective logbook, after the activities were counted by all participants.

(From the MU blog/ reports Karla Venegas)

2.9.3. "Sow your seed" (*learning patience*)

This sowing workshop in germination trays consisted of teaching participants how to germinate seeds of different plants, combining different substrates. This workshop allows us to recognize that one of the fundamental values promoted by this activity is *patience*. On the other hand, the promise of knowing that a new plant will grow from a seed, if we take care of it, also generates a certain *awareness of responsibility*. The joy of seeing it grow is priceless.



Here we carried out the guide with the children and teenagers so that they could carry out an effective sowing of different seeds of interest (fruit trees, vegetables).

The children and teenagers who participated were already involved with these activities, either because of school or because they were doing them in their family; however, we realized that sometimes the internet can show immediate solutions and results that disconnect us and sometimes even discourage us to continue, because the waiting and the times of nature are not as fast as expected.

Urban gardens allow us to naturalize cities and place in small spaces a possibility for life, to reduce the carbon footprint, to ask ourselves the "obvious": how did water get to the planet, how long does it take for a tomato to grow, where does what I eat come from; it allows us a space for culture and knowledge for the care of the planet.

What excites me most about sharing these sessions and experiences is the joy and passion that our colleagues show at each meeting. It seems to me that this planting activity was the one that the Pasión Botánica kids liked the most. They asked many questions: How long does it take for the plant to grow? Will this seed grow into a tree? Can I plant all of them? Will I have fruit later?

We did a couple of simple exercises for planting; the first one consisted of planting in containers or pots.

This activity allowed us to connect with the rhythm of life, to take care of 'someone else' and to marvel at seeing our plants grow from tiny seeds. When the children and teenagers learned that it will take many years for a tree to bear fruit, they made a reflection that they shared with us and that seemed very important to me, and that is that no matter how much time is missing to taste its fruits, the best time to plant will be now; that is why we should not stop doing it just because there is a lot of time left, because if we do not do it today, tomorrow there will be more time to do it.

(Karla Venegas' Diary, Friday, June 24, 2022)

2.9.4. "Re-plante-arte" (Reconsider) (*not everything you throw away is trash*)

The purpose of this activity was to show how we can reuse some things that some people consider "garbage": with aluminum cans or glass bottles we accompanied the process of transforming an empty container into another that provides containment for life: a flowerpot or a terrarium. This opens a new perspective, as we give a new opportunity to a discarded object and offer a living space to small plants, which accompany us at home.

2.9.5. "Eco fashion" (*where do the colors with which we paint the world come from?*)

This workshop led to experiment how to extract plant dyes from various natural pigments to dye disused T-shirts. This shows that it is not always necessary to buy new ones and that we can give a different look to those that have "gone out of fashion" but are still useful.



66



2.9.6. Composting of organic household waste

On another occasion, the eco-detectives (armed with gloves, masks and eye covers) were given an activity to sharpen their senses of smell and touch, aimed at identifying, separating and classifying various useful objects from a container, in which they were mixed with organic and inorganic waste. This activity allows them to recognize how certain useful objects (e.g., a clean sheet of paper), when thrown away carelessly, are wasted when mixed with organic waste.

2.9.7. Urban solid waste management (USWM)⁶⁴

Article 10 of the General Law for the Prevention and Integral Management of Waste (LGPGIR) (for its acronym in Spanish) establishes that municipalities are responsible for the integral management of urban solid waste (USW), which consists of collection, transfer, treatment, and final disposal. USW is *generated in households as a result of the disposal of materials used in their activities, the products they consume and their containers, packaging and wrapping.*

One of the main actions in our training is recycling. The USWM corresponds to us, both at a personal level and at a municipal level. I also believe that recycling is a task that industry should always practice, as the main generator of waste that it is.

⁶⁴ To accurately share this guide we took the Seminar-Workshop: Basic Aspects of Urban Solid Waste (USW) and Special Management Waste (MSW) Management by SGI Asesores Especializados S.A de C.V.

Something we do every day at CVS (and in our homes) is the separation of our waste, and this is exactly what sometimes seems to be the most difficult to do. That is why El Tlacuache and Micelio Urbano thought of this activity within the workshop "Tierra somos y tierra nos volveremos" (We are earth and we will become earth). As we had already approached the subject of USWM with our colleague Gera, during the rally, this time it was just a matter of taking up again what we had learned.

Where does so much garbage come from? We accompanied this question with an activity that consisted of separating various types of waste.

To carry it out, we located ourselves in the orchard (at the back of the CVS). We chose this space because it is very significant, since it is where our adventure as Micelio Urbano began and where the El Tlacuache project was born. For the activity, we placed various containers to separate the waste, according to the following classifications: *non-recyclable trash, *clean cardboard and paper, *PET and plastic, *organic waste, *glass, *aluminum or metals.

After gathering all the garbage we found in the garden, a colleague placed it as she thought appropriate in each of the containers (...); we reflected on whether this place really belonged to her or if it could be sorted in another container. Afterwards, she shared with us an audio message that seems very important to us: the community is asked to stop throwing garbage, because it pollutes and harms nature.

The exercise was very easy and we are sure that, if we reinforce these experiences, the daily exercise of separating our waste will always have a positive result.

(Diary of Karla Venegas)



Karla V.'s assertion that it is "very easy" to learn how to separate waste was later disproved. We had to recognize that separating and putting garbage in its place is one of the most difficult habits to achieve, especially when the *junk culture* prevails, which facilitates and justifies waste and which is spread not only through the mass media, but also through the *structure of daily life*, especially in cities. In these cities, neither the City Council, nor the schools, nor the families and, even less, the businesses are effectively taking charge.

In Querétaro, this is aggravated when the State opts for the *privatization of the cleaning service* and, in addition, does not provide a *reliable waste separation system*, nor does it truly demand the responsibility of companies to prevent and counteract pollution resulting from their production schemes or from the disposable objects they generate.

2.10. Handcrafted cooperatives and solidarity economy

One of the purposes of Canal Carrillo, MU and CVS has been to promote reflection on the need to relate in a comprehensive and harmonious way with other people and nature. Therefore, the courses and workshops we offer aim to explore alternatives to the logic of the postmodern, meritocratic and bureaucratic industry that



has been imposed in part of the planet; not only in the labor field, but also in the social and educational fields.

The dominant discourses abound with invitations to "update", "innovate", "adapt to the new conditions of globalization", to "become more flexible" and to acquire the technological skills to do so. According to the dominant discourses, modern society requires operators "tolerant of uncertainty", willing to change recurrently in space and time, according to the interests and demands of capital and the market.



In the face of these trends, however, the questions remain: *where do the things we consume come from, the things we wear, the things we feed ourselves with...; who produces them, how and at the expense of what?* The answer implies *historical and technological awareness*, difficult to promote when we work with increasingly sophisticated digital devices (4G and 5G technologies), whose operations reach high speeds and whose mechanisms (chips) are unfathomable to the common people.



We therefore considered it pertinent to offer those who participated in our project several artisanal workshops that allow us to answer these questions more accurately and to *observe step by step* the transformation process, which starts with the procurement of raw materials and follows the tasks that a producer needs to perform in order to sell his work.

These workshops addressed the issue of *solidarity economy in the face of consumerism*: workshops aimed at valuing the "invisible" or undervalued manual workers, which we have already mentioned in another section.

2.10.1. Handcrafted bakery

The *artisan bakery* workshop, led by the coordinator of the *Comparte y disfruta* club, which participates in the CVS, began by showing everything that goes into the production these branded breads, which are purchased in *supermarkets*.

The introduction of the workshop made it possible to reveal the way in which the dominant agribusiness operates, which is based on monocultures, uses industrial fertilizers and insecticides, generates transgenic seeds and also made it possible to identify that the raw material that arrives at the factories is transformed into bread, thanks to enormous machines, which produce huge quantities in series, allowing the use of yeast, colorings and artificial flavorings, at the cost of the lack of employment of the active labor force of society. This manufacturing process was compared with the artisanal one. It led to the need to observe how different seeds give rise to different types of flours. It was also shown what happens at each stage of the process, from harvesting, drying, roasting, milling, etc., warning that the more refined the flour or sugar added, the more harmful to health the product can be.

The workshop included a comparison of various devices used for grinding and their evolution over time: the metate, the molcajete, the manual home mill, the electric mill or the blender, etc. Bread is still handmade, although more modern equipment is used, which facilitates the task. The difference with factory production is that the latter is mass-produced, while artisanal production is manual and in small quantities.



of

69



Something interesting about this workshop, is that it was shown that stale bread can also be recycled, shredding it to make various dishes or transforming it into a delicious cake, or dulce de capirotada⁶⁵. This is a sample of what the domestic economy generates, so as not to waste resources and possibilities, and that it can face, precisely, the industrial production and the economy of "use and throw away". (Just be careful not to eat it if it is moldy, as it can be poisonous).

2.10.2. Handcrafted chocolate making

Another artisan workshop that generated a lot of enthusiasm was the *chocolate* workshop, which also showed the transformation process, from the cocoa bean, obtained from its pod, freshly cut, to its wrapping; it showed the roasting process so that it acquires that delicious bitter flavor we all know, then grinding the beans (using

⁶⁵ Mexican dessert, made with hard bread, fried and soaked in piloncillo broth, cinnamon, banana, peanuts and other ingredients; it is consumed in family festivities.

the mill that had been used in the previous workshop), to produce a dark brown paste, mixing it with other raw materials (also handmade), syrups, plant extracts, sugar, to sweeten it or give it a touch of other flavors: syrups, plant extracts, sugar, to sweeten it or give it a touch of other flavors.

The last part of this workshop consisted of kneading the dough to make all kinds of figures, according to the imagination of the producers: flowers, animals, dolls and so on, and wrapping it, according to taste.

2.10.3. Basketry and newspaper reuse

There was also a workshop on *handmade basketry*, using newspaper, which started with some videos to recognize what the knitters do, to find and prepare the materials; where, at what time and how they cut, clean, soak the fibers to make wicker, tulle or other materials flexible; how they extract the dyes from the plants and prepare them and, finally, weave them and form various figures.

One of the stories that accompanied this workshop was "Canastitas en serie", by B. Traven, which narrates how a gringo⁶⁶ who was visiting Mexico came across an indigenous who wove beautiful baskets with multicolored and very original drawings (Text synthesized and adapted).



...Bargaining, haggling, the gringo offered to buy a large quantity of his creations from him, if he would lower the price (while he rubbed his hands together, for he had already devised a fabulous business):

- How much would you let me have your baskets for, if I buy 10, and 50, and if I buy 100?

The weaver kept giving him lower and lower prices, as the number of baskets he would sell increased, until he had to stop and think very hard, when the gringo asked him: "What if it were 12,000?"

After several days of doing the math, the weaver replied: A basket is worth 80 pesos, 100, I can let you have them for 60 pesos each; but if there are 12,000, they would cost 150 pesos a piece.

The gringo became furious and called the Indian stupid for not knowing how to do math. But the weaver justified this with a long explanation of all that would be involved in responding to such a demand. Such work would distract not only him, but his whole family from other important tasks (taking care of his cornfield and his animals...) and he would have to hire several workers to do them.



⁶⁶ This word refers to Mexico's 19th century wars with the United States. It is said that Mexicans shouted to foreign American soldiers whose uniforms were green: *Green go home!*

Thus he concluded: ...If I am forced to make them by the thousands, I will not be able to have a piece of my soul in each one, nor will I be able to put my songs in them, nor the trills of the birds, nor the colors of the butterflies. They would all turn out the same, and that would end up eating my heart piece by piece...⁶⁷

As far as weaving is concerned, from the recycling of newspaper, it is surprising what can be made: mats, baskets, hats, hats, "guaraches", trays, sleeping bags, even jackets... It is also impressive the beauty that these objects can acquire, if they are well worked.

An interesting aspect of this workshop was the commitment of the small artisans, as they took the material home with them to make progress and dedicated several sessions to finish their creations, taking advantage of the free time in between the workshops.

In addition to newspaper, this workshop showed how plastic bags can be transformed into knitting yarns to weave all kinds of objects, following the *macramé* technique.

71

2.10.4. Handcrafted toys

Two members of the *Circulo de Narradores de Historias de Carrillo* were invited to talk to the team of artisans apprentices about how they played or had fun when they were children and teenagers, without having to buy anything, because *the important thing is the game, not the toy. They showed how anything could be used: pebbles as matatena, nopales cactus as flying discs and more. The guests showed several games with old coins and how to build handmade toys with waste material: yoyos with bottle caps, ballers with empty cans, sticks and strings, as well as another very old toy called taumatropo, which consists of a cardboard disc containing two complementary drawings, one on each side, and a string to turn it quickly, creating an optical illusion. For example, a little bird seems to be enclosed in a cage, although they are two separate drawings.*



2.10.5 Making musical instruments and playing with sounds



Finally, we also had a workshop to build various percussion instruments (rain sticks, tambourines, tambourines, rattles, etc.,) also with waste materials: (cans, cardboard tubes, sticks, wooden sticks and so on).

This workshop is linked to others, whose purpose was to live diverse sonorous experiences, distinguishing music and the sounds of nature from those produced by human activities. We recognized the body itself as a musical instrument.



⁶⁷Traven, B. (2014). "Canastitas en serie" in: "Canasta de cuentos mexicanos". Ed.CNCA ISBN: 9786075167404 <https://elcuentodesdemexico.com.mx/canastitas-en-serie/>

2.11. Cooperative strategies for problem solving

As we noted earlier, all the activities of the El Tlacuache project took place in difficult times and in the midst of events that directly affected nearby neighborhoods. We knew that the children and teenagers were talking about these issues and we could not ignore them, but it was also not easy to address them directly at any given moment; so we opened a specific space to do so, imagining that we were part of the government and had the power of decision to face certain problems.

If you were part of a government cabinet or a city council, and you had the power, what are the problems that you consider a priority to address and what would you propose to solve them.

2.11.1. Discussions in *Council* or in the *childish parliament*

Thus, we proposed that teams be formed to each raise the three current social problems that they considered most important.

Then, in a plenary session, the responses were shared and compared and we grouped them into the five problems that most concerned the participants, with the following being the most mentioned:

- Animal abuse
- Unemployment or very low paid jobs
- Violence in families, violence against women and school *bullying*
- Addiction to drugs, alcohol, cell phones, TV.
- Damage to nature, contamination, garbage...

In the presentations that were made in the plenary, to justify the choice, we were pleasantly surprised by the great amount of information that the minors handle. In particular, we observed the information they have about feminist struggles and the problem of addictions and various ways of prevention or seeking help (which does not necessarily mean that they practice them).



2.11.2. Problem solving strategies and machines



The town hall activity was followed by another activity aimed at making proposals to solve the problems posed. These proposals involved the design of strategies, such as some *problem-solving machines*.

The instructions were: *Choose the problem that most concerns your team and answer: what would you propose to solve it; then build a machine that does not pollute (at least not as much as the ones we have now), and that allows solving the problem you chose.*

Admittedly, this work proposal lacked foresight and time to separate the two slogans, so the first went relatively unnoticed and the participants spent most of their time attending to the second.

The proposal to design *ecological machines* is based on the recognition that modern society cannot do without factory production, that it is not possible to return to the past and that, although craftsmanship should be more highly valued, it is an illusion to expect it to return to being the main form of production.

Following this idea, the education and training of the new generations (of natural and social scientists, engineers and technicians) should aim to train people capable of recognizing the conditions, causes and consequences of the problems of our time and to develop technologies that contribute to mitigate them, and not only to train workers or administrators capable of getting a good job in large transnational companies.

The machines that resulted from the children and teenagers's creativity reflected the concerns, creativity and ingenuity of the participants: Some already exist, like one they devised to separate waste; others refer to Jules Verne novels, containing ingenious mechanisms that send to the past or to the future a waste, either to reconvert it into raw material or to repair it; others left aside ecological issues to deal with more social problems and built a "violence controller device", a "mailbox transformer of bad feelings (*like hate, depression....*) into good ones" (*like love, joy...*); there was also a "problem scarer" (of a little 5-year-old boy).

It should be noted that, except for the machines dedicated to separating garbage, in the others, the small engineers could not account for the internal mechanism that caused the transformations. This may be an expression of the fact that they still resort to magical thinking. However, the question about *the mechanism that makes them work* implies for them a requirement of praxis and the need to take the search for solutions to the technical level.



This is relevant to strengthen critical thinking. It is not enough to propose solutions *in general or in the abstract* or to criticize from the comfortable seat of the spectator those who do not know how to solve them, but it is necessary to find out how to put them into practice.



2.11.3. Assemblies to resolve certain disputes



Another issue worth considering has to do with conflict management, which is often unavoidable. On one occasion, there was a conflict between two of the youngest participants, which was turned into a spectacle by some of the older ones, who began to whip them up and bet on who would be the winner. In another, a dispute arose over the harm done by junk food, when relatives of a little girl handed her a bag of potatoes and a bottled soft drink during the break; another one revolved around the issue of the existence or non-existence of God.

To address conflicts, we held small assemblies to collectively reflect on the causes and consequences of what happened.

2.11.4. When problems cannot be solved: the bird's funerals

On one occasion, when we arrived at CVS, we found a dead bird in the middle of the main courtyard, which caused great consternation. We then decided to organize a funeral in which everyone could say a few words of farewell to the dead bird.

The speech of a 5-year-old child summarizes one of the central themes of our project: *Thank you, bird, for being part of nature and we apologize because we did not know how to take care of you...*

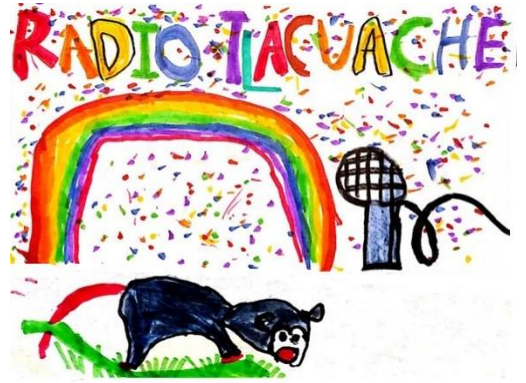


2.12. Social communication for learning sharing

In addition to what was mentioned in the previous sections, another thing we promoted were activities to disseminate what was being done in the project. One workshop consisted in the elaboration of *fanzines*, which was only given in the first summer course. Another one promoted various radio games, articulated, as, in the others, as "Radio Tlacuache". Some dissemination commissioners were dedicated to share on Facebook and Instagram a log of the process.

2.12.1. "Radio Tlacuache".

In 2022, two independent workshops were held, and another, linked to the summer course, on "The Adventures of El Tlacuache". One was based on the revision of two plays that had been produced in 2021 by members of the CVS: "La montaña"⁶⁸, produced by a family, and "La tormenta", produced by two young



75



friends of the CVS.

The radio capsule workshop, derived from these materials involved: *the analysis of a Spanish version of the famous audio "The War of the Worlds" by Orson Wells, to motivate the creation of compelling stories (the text resulting from that exercise is the one that introduces this document); *reading aloud some stories they had already produced in other workshops; *translating those stories into radio scripts; *locating on the net and selecting sound effects, necessary to

accompany the narrations... Training in the use of the editing program was missing, which requires a lot of time and closer accompaniment. We must recognize, however, two difficulties in concluding this production: 1) Reading aloud is not easy for all children and teenagers. In the process we found that some of them did not dare to participate because they did not know how to read, even though they were in third, fourth or fifth grade; others stuttered a lot and could not finish a sentence; others, perhaps because of shyness, did not dare to raise their voices. 2) Several of the audios we were able to record were saved, in the hope that we would find time to edit them later.

2.12.2. El Tlacuaches' video-binnacle and other broadcast products

Although in the summer courses a team of eco-detectives was appointed to keep records and disseminate everything that was happening in the various workshops, it was not possible to publish them on the networks simultaneously; a large number of photos and videos are still waiting to be used and published. However, there were two blogs that were published, not by the children and teenagers, but by two older guides, whose links we have already shared.

⁶⁸ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gf2to0_PqL_3TxZy7jGzDcMrODX8or5K/view?usp=drivesdk
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1geJ2lbVx9_8wXYswukBsexVuk16DIAez/view?usp=drivesdk

2.13. Closing and evaluation of participants



The closing of the second summer course consisted of a great social gathering, in which special guests were invited, not only all the workshop participants who accompanied us in the process, but also the mothers and fathers, older sisters and brothers, aunts, grandmothers and grandfathers of the eco-detectives. Several commissions were distributed to present the products of the different workshops. Several photos and some videos were shared in which the participants commented on the processes followed. Then the friend

musician-tlacuache accompanied the closing singing some children and teenagers's songs and "El Ropavejero" by Cri-Crí.

The team received many congratulations from all the attendees and at the end we broke a delicious cake that a mother brought and we accompanied it with fruit that several friends brought. The day before, we had asked the members of the investigative agency to give us their evaluation.

Due to lack of space, we share here only a few comments, selected at random:

I was shocked by how humans pollute nature. I enjoyed traveling to a place. This course helped me so that when I buy or use something, I think about things more.

(Thank you. M.E.T.L.)

I liked taking pictures and the ending and making friends. I didn't like being forced to come. I learned that, at some point in life, we are all going to die and it's a problem that we can't control the creations that we ourselves create. (Then comes an unintelligible sentence).

(From L.A.F.F.D.S.)

The course made me think about the damage we do to the world. Thank you for joining me on this journey and thank you to the contributors for sharing your knowledge with all of us

(Anonymous).

What I liked most about this course is that I was able to discover many things about the planet Earth, Nature and how we pollute and take care of our streets and the planet, I really liked everything, but I would suggest that there should be more activities on how to cultivate, plant or perhaps sow.

The course helped me to stop buying and consuming things that I don't really need and to be able to see how products go through different places for their elaboration and consumption. It also helps me to be aware of everything that happens in the world, which has to do with Nature.

I would just like to say that it was a pleasure to have met them and to have spent time with them, and also that they enjoyed the course.

(E.G.L.R.)

What I liked the most was when Back came and we did some rhymes and when we did the blindfolded walk.

What I didn't like: ----- etc.---- So nothing, nothing I didn't like.

What changed in me was the way of seeing plants, animals, the importance they have. The healthy coexistence that we can all have, if we cooperate and support each other.

I wanted to thank you for taking the time to open a course among several people and teach a little of what you know. I particularly enjoyed your activities and your creativity, the way of seeing the world, the plants. Things that I didn't know about life, I discovered here.

Thank you for your time, for the very interesting course and for your patience.

(Janeth Reyna)

I liked everything. We learned new things. Everything was great. I want to say thank you very much for these weeks of the course. Thank you for teaching us new things and how to work as a team and it was great to meet new friends. Thank you all for the support you gave us.

(Ximena)

For me, what I liked the most was about human rights and how big the universe is. Now whenever I see trash, I pick it up. Thanks for everything. I liked you guys a lot. Hope to see you soon, in this place or elsewhere.

(Rodri)

I learned that on one side there is nature, trees, flowers and so on, but on the other side there is pollution, destruction towards nature and that we have to take better care of the world and separate the garbage. Thank you for this wonderful experience of meeting you. It has been an honor to have been with you in this summer course. Sincerely Vale

(Valeria)

I made a lot of friends and I really enjoyed the course. I played with my friends, we did a lot of things, we made pots. What I liked the most were the potting activities. The end.

(André for the Casa da Vinculhação)

Walking in Amili. Recycling, making pots with banana leaves, going out to take pictures....

(Sam)

Thank you for this space. It is everyone's job, if not to improve, then not to worsen the conditions of the soil, water, air... which is what sustains the life of everything and everyone. I hope you continue with these activities that are important to create better citizens and better spaces for all.

I am Leo

Thank you for these three weeks. I had a great time making the kites and when it was time to fly them, a little thorn came up during the second week. We made the pigs, the petates; in the third week we continued with the petates; we made sounds, we made musical instruments and the end of the summer course, I am going to miss you.

We made bread, chocolates, also compost; we also went San Miguel de Allende; we made alebrijes, flew kites, looked for tlacuaches, made toys like yo-yos, also baskets and painted. We buried a little bird; I also painted a rain stick, we watched videos and drew.

(Paola Castro Chávez, 9 years old)

Hello: I want to say that I had fun in the summer course; I am going to tell you about what I did in this summer course. We made baskets and kites; we also painted blouses and planted; we also went to Cadereyta. Those were the best days of the summer course.

I want to congratulate all the guides: Rebeca, Karla, Gera, Maric, Fer, Joy, a los dos Luis, a Fanny, en especial a Rebeca y Maric.

(Sincerely: Alexa Valentina G. F.)

Hello: My name is Liz

I came into this course not knowing anyone, not knowing everything I was going to do. I am happy to make friends quickly.

This day we started with a drawing project, about what we could teach a being from another planet. I made a tlacuache, some arches and several plants in that first workshop. I became friends with a guy: Carlos, because I said something silly in the "Pitufialdea". I met a girl, we became friends, and in a short time I liked her very much. During this week, I learned many things, how to make notebooks, kites...; we painted, we did so many fun things, and on Friday we went on an excursion to Cadereyta. It was a wonderful trip with friends.

The second week we did a mat, obstacle courses, we did so many things that were fun for me, even though I missed "him".

The last excursion was to San Miguel Allende; I had fun.

The last week was amazing because I learned how to cook and made chocolates. But I'm going to miss you all, thanks for teaching me and being my friends! See you all.



PART THREE: THE NEIGHBORHOOD EXPO

"THE TREASURES OF EL TLACUACHE, A WORLD WE CANNOT IMAGINE"



During the month of November 2022, the entire CVS was transformed into a neighborhood expo and opened to the public with guided tours, Monday through Friday (and on Saturdays, with live music), to show photographs and productions of the children and teenagers and adolescents who participated in the El Tlacuache project.

Some of the findings of the field work carried out by the project's collaborators were also presented, as well as other samples of historical, cultural and artistic value, related to the topic of contamination, which have a great impact on natural ecosystems.

The 20 themes of this exhibition show examples of the transformation suffered by the people of Carrillo, which can be analyzed from *four territorial scales: global, local (urban), neighborhood and individual*, as a proposal to think about how people live and participate in the environmental crisis, from different spheres.

On a *global scale*, the exhibition introduced the concepts of Anthropocene and Capitalocene, to make visible the current conditions of the planet, identifying as main polluting agents the industries that carry out activities aligned to neoliberal logics, together with the political forces that legitimize such practices. On the *local scale*, the expo shows the disorderly growth of the city of Querétaro, choking natural spaces and segregating diverse sectors in serious conditions of inequality. On the *neighborhood scale*, the history of the town of Carrillo Puerto was taken up again, an example of the transformations suffered since the arrival of industry. Finally, on the *individual scale*, emphasis is placed on the way these transformations affect concrete people, in their occupations, in their family relationships, in their food and health.

We can say that transformations occur in different directions, from the global to the neighborhood and the individual, and viceversa. This means that actions can be taken at any level to change the course of events. It must be recognized, however, that the proportion of **responsibility** for the effects of the *global climate crisis* is not equivalent between a transnational and an individual. Similarly, **the power** to drive the transformations needed to halt the crisis is unevenly distributed.

Therefore, the *ecological education* of the new generations cannot do without a *critical analysis of the root causes of this crisis*, nor can it be separated from the *political struggles* of the social movements of resistance to the dominant system.



3.1. Description of the 20 topics of the exhibition

I Altar in memory of those who were nature or gave their lives in defense of nature

Completion date: October 30, 2022

Description: Traditional Day of the Dead altar, dedicated to some environmental activists, who gave their lives defending nature against the devastation caused by the dominant economic model; it was also dedicated to animal species extinct due to human actions.

Object: formed by five steps made of recycled wood and photographs of people and extinct plant and animal species; candles, flowers, sugar skulls, fruit and seeds. Privileged three types of trees valued by the community: One, called "El abuelito de Amili" that was felled by the neighboring Gerrensheimer factory; others, by the commercial plazas in the area and others, by the reconstruction of Av. 5 de Febrero.

Person in charge: Fernanda García

References:

https://www.nationalgeographic.com.es/naturaleza/animales-extintos-siglo-xxi-lista-que-aumenta-peligrosamente_17382



II Mural of plastic caps

Completion date: 2019

Description: Mural made by more than 150 people. It shows scenes of partying Carrillo, his family chapels, industry and playing fields. It invites to reuse waste materials, demonstrating that, from the "garbage", you can build something with aesthetic and historical value.

Object: plastic covers on wall, glued with waterproofing.

Persons in charge: Local community of Felipe Carrillo Puerto and collaborators of the Casa de la Vinculación Social.

References:

<https://www.buenosaires.gob.ar/educacion/escuelas-verdes/noticias/murales-ambientales-transformar-el-descarte-en-arte>

III Immense sea of garbage

Completion date: October 2022

Description: Industrial and domestic waste dumped in the sea represents a growing and serious threat to marine and terrestrial ecosystems. Garbage generated in cities accumulates in seas and bodies of water, generating problems on a global scale, affecting not only marine species, but all ecosystems. Not only coastal areas are polluted, but also deeper zones, as well as the poles and frozen areas. The magnitude of the mass of floating garbage can cover thousands of kilometers and weigh thousands of tons.

This exhibition invites us to reflect on what marine species experience when swimming and living among garbage, and immerses the public in the experience of the living environment consisting of solid urban waste.

Object: 2-meter long wire curtains, full of cardboard and plastic waste, along the main corridor.

Persons in charge: Fernanda García, Monserrat Cervantes and Rebeca Mendoza.

References: <https://www.gob.mx/semarnat/articulos/que-es-la-basura-marina?idiom=es>



IV The Anthropocene: the human epoch

Completion date: October 2022

Description: The concept of the Anthropocene arises from academic discussion and is taken up by the social sciences and biology. It was coined to show evidence of the impact that human actions have had on the geomorphological transformation of the planet, and to point to humanity as a force of earth change that has surpassed natural cycles.

Object: Printed infographics.



Persons in charge:

María del Carmen Vicencio and Rebeca Mendoza

References:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u8lpPPVJI1c>

<https://museodecienciasambientales.org.mx/>

V History, Resistance and Transformation of the People of Carrillo Puerto

Completion date: October 2022

Description: This exhibition recovers information and photographic material, from documentary work in which five moments of the history of Carrillo are taken up: *first human settlements in the territory, *virreinal era, *rural period, *arrival of industry and *social movements of the eighties: the "Comisión Coordinadora pro-mejoras de Felipe Carrillo Puerto" and the "Asamblea General del Pueblo A.C." (AGP), emphasizing two particular cases of the rescue of vacant lots, formerly industrial or neighborhood dumps, which were converted into parks and gardens for community coexistence.



82

Purpose: Texts, photographs and printed graphics on different stages in the history of this town; archives of the efforts made by the PGA; photo albums that tell the stories of the "Amili" and "Parque Libertad", as well as photo albums of different projects developed by the community of Carrillo in the CVS (such as the rescue of history, based on interviews with children and teenagers and elders, and the painting of murals in the nearby streets).

Persons in charge: Esthephania Olalde R. and Alfonso Juárez

References:

<https://ingro.com.mx/index.php/2020/07/30/felipe-carrillo-puerto-delegacion-de-origen-agricola/>

<https://noticiasdequeretaro.com.mx/2016/12/19/carrillo-puerto-asiento-capillas-indios-pozas-haciendas/>

VI Technological wonders of yesterday: today, junk?

Completion date: October 2022

Description: A room where electronic devices from different periods are displayed, all of them in disuse and arranged in such a way that they can be visualized as pieces with emotional value and nostalgic character, rather than as trash. It brings to the present objects of the past that used to have functional value, but that, with the passage of time and technological development, remain today, but as garbage.



This exhibition emphasizes the *ecological footprint* generated by these devices, from their production to their final destination. It shows as an example the case of Accra, capital of Ghana, whose community works in one of the largest technological waste dumps in the world. It receives all kinds of waste from Europe, which are recycled as objects with new commercial value. The conditions under which these devices are treated have a serious impact on health (especially for the workers who work there), due to their toxic components - such as heavy metals - which are harmful to people and the environment in general.

Although the example corresponds to the African context, this model is also replicated at the neighborhood level since, in the case of Carrillo, there is a large number of people dedicated to garbage and waste collection as their main source of income; they recycle or repair them for sale.

This exhibition raised several questions about the social inequality and environmental injustice suffered by many marginalized communities, pushed to work with the waste of economically stronger societies; it also led to reflection on the useful life of objects and on the *programmed* obsolescence of technology, which in turn serves as an analogy of the way in which people and societies relate to each other, with disposable and ephemeral bonds.



Persons in charge: Rebeca and Fernando Mendoza L.

Subject: electronic devices and cardboard and plastic packaging, displayed on tables

References:

<https://www.redalyc.org/pdf/5722/572260832004.pdf>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=23_0yPHmrDM&feature=youtu.be

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E7q6adSXHno>

VII Food industry: food turned into poison

Completion date: October 2022

Description: This exhibition, in the CVS kitchen, seeks to promote reflection on food and its transformation - from use value (nourishing) to exchange value (obtaining money). It shows the dominant amount of ultra-processed products, mass-produced, that generate harmful impact on the health of consumers.

The dominant mode of production has transformed, over time, the food culture: it replaces the Mesoamerican diet (rich in fruits, grains and vegetables) with mass-produced products with a very high carbohydrate and sugar content. Not only have the ways and times of eating been transformed, but also the ways of producing and bringing food to the population (marketing and agribusiness), affecting soils, species and native crops. In this context, foods have been positioned in the population, not for their content and health benefits, but above all for their image and packaging, generating imaginaries of wellbeing and prestige.



Object: Samples that contrast elements of traditional cooking such as molcajete, metate, mill, baskets and clay objects, as well as traditional foods such as seeds, fruits, vegetables and greens, in front of a huge pot full of junk food wrappers; signs that warn of the diseases it produces. Posters denouncing the effects of food factories (Cocacola, Bimbo, Kellogg, etc.) on nature (due to production mechanisms), the people and people's health; this is accompanied by a sample of the amount of sugar contained in industrialized products.

Persons in charge: Fernanda García and Rebeca Mendoza

VIII Carrillo's *tlacuaches*

Completion date: October 2022

Description: Reading room dedicated to the cleaning workers and chachareros of Carrillo Puerto.

Objects: Black and white photo of a neighbor, working as a recycler; poster on the legend of the tlacuache; handwriting of the "El Ropavejero" by CriCrí; puppet made by Kinxoc Madrigal.

Person in charge: María del Carmen Vicencio



IX Community Mural

Completion date: 2015



Description: Mural made by more than 180 people from 4 to 85 years old. It illustrates scenes of the town of Carrillo, with landscapes, traditions and dynamics of daily life that have taken place throughout its history (agricultural and current urban-industrial period). It also shows characters of the town's culture such as musicians, weavers, peasants, muleteers and merchants. This mural is the result of the project "Voices of elders in the hands of children" of the group "Mezquites y Papalotes".

Object: Illustration based on acrylic paint on wall; it is accompanied by a photo album showing people of all ages, at the moment of painting.

Persons in charge: Local community of Felipe Carrillo Puerto and collaborators of Casa de Vinculación Social.

X Casa de Vinculación Social a space of resistance and search for the Buen Vivir

Completion date: October 2022

Description: The main courtyard of the CVS became a large exhibition space to show the results of different workshops held throughout the Tlacuache project. This space is presented as an *intermediate gear* to promote reflection on what we have to do about the problems that were shown in the previous spaces and what CVS has been doing about it. It welcomes a huge "Eco-alebrije", made with waste material, which invites each visitor to color it and feed it "everything that weighs him down and he wants to discard from his life".

Objects: Posters, canvases with photographs, structures, display cases and tables with various products made by children and teenagers, adolescents and adults who participated in the workshops and other activities of the project.

Persons in charge: El Tlacuache Team



XI Voices of the elderly in children hands

Completion date: 2015

Description: Table showing the process and product of the project "Voices of elders in the hands of children", undertaken by about 80 people from the community. This project consisted of several collective interviews between children and teenagers and grandmothers and grandfathers of Carrillo, to recover narratives about how the village was when the elders were children and teenagers. Although it was carried out in another era, it is placed now to show that the projects we carry out are not entirely independent, but are built on the history of what other people have done.



Objects: Illustrated collective book; canvas with the logo and large format photo album, narrating the process followed.

Persons in charge: Group: Mezquites y Papalotes

XII The spider web of our reality

Completion date: 2015



Description: Representation of the complexity of relationships in any community, at various scales: individual, neighborhood, local (urban), and global (transnational companies). In the center, photos of the history and current events of the town of Carrillo are exhibited, threatened by two beasts: industry and the market, against which popular movements are rising, demanding the right to the city; a right that was denied to the population, when they were promised "progress". They highlight the complaint of government abandonment and the question: And what are you doing here and now to stop the disaster?

Object: Structure in the form of a spider web, woven from woven threads of recycled plastic, with a large number of photographs of various scenes from the past and present of Carrillo Puerto, newspaper clippings that refer to local pollution problems and signs pointing to actors Relevant: industry, commerce, peasants who become workers and waste collectors; the government and the garbage inserted everywhere.

Persons in charge: Jimena Guajardo V. and Sofía Tovar G.

XIII Monster and Alebrijes Club

Completion date: April-August 2022

Description: Showcase that displays the productions, *unique pieces* resulting from the workshops of the "Club de monstruos y alebrijes" and the imagination of each participant. In the sessions of these workshops, each participant drew different representations of the monster or alebrije that he/she later built with waste material.



Objects: Display case with a collection of alebrijes, made from recycled materials, kites with wooden and plastic sticks; portraits of monsters; photographs and explanatory texts about the process.

Person in charge: Claudio D. Sánchez

XIV Discussions in the children and teenagers's parliament or town council

Completion date: August-October 2022



Description: Samples of the activity carried out in the Summer Course 2022, in which the teams of participants were asked to choose some social problems that they considered important. The most important issues were: violence against women, animal abuse, drug addiction and environmental pollution. Each team presented the arguments for their choice, after sharing with their "colleagues" their own experiences and opinions on various problems.

Objects: Canvases with photographs of children and teenagers in assembly and texts explaining the activity; painted cardboard structures, simulating machines to solve various social problems: pollution, relationships...

Persons in charge: Rebeca Mendoza and Fernanda García

XV Eco-detectives and craftsmen in action

Completion date: April 2021 to October 2022

Description: Corner in the main courtyard of the CVS, dedicated to present the "adventures" that ran the team of eco detectives in their quests to understand the causes and consequences of the current climate crisis. The research process is not reduced to recognize the problem, but to find other forms of relationship with others and with nature, as well as production, within the framework of the Buen Vivir, which involves *solidarity economy*. This space is presented as a tribute to manual laborers who work in the fields, construction and handicrafts and who are socially undervalued. It also presents samples of the products made in the various workshops.



Objects: clothesline from which hang several canvases with photographs and explanatory texts; table with various products made from recycled material: basketry, handmade toys, musical instruments, fanzines, blogs and others.

Persons in charge: Tlacuache team



XVI What is *Micelio Urbano* and what is it looking for?

Completion date: 2021-2022

Description: After exposing what is done in the CVS, the penultimate space of the neighborhood expo, was dedicated to present the group *Micelio Urbano* and how it contributes to the ecology. The whole garden of the CVS is under the care of this group. *Micelio* is a group that proposes actions to rehabilitate green spaces in the city and promotes ecological practices in everyday life.



Object: Clothesline at the entrance to the orchard, from which hang canvases with photos and texts, showing various scenes from the workshops offered to minors.

Persons in charge: All the following sections are the responsibility of MU.



XVII The orchard and its vegetal species

Date of implementation: January 2014- November 2022

Description: This space has a high ecological and cultural value. On the one hand, it is home to diverse species of flora and fauna (such as worms, insects, birds); its plants have a long life and have managed to survive, despite the pollutants that have impacted its air and soil; the latter is being rehabilitated. On the other hand, it is a historically valuable space for the people of Carrillo, since it is a sample of the rural stage of the town, in which the houses had a space available to cultivate aromatic and medicinal herbs, fruit trees, nopaleras and ornamental plants.

Several comments from visitors indicate that this space takes them back to that rural period in which they grew up and of which they keep significant memories.

Object: Each plant species in the garden contains a plastic card with the name of the plant and a QR code that refers to its characteristics.



XVIII “Escor: the garbage monster”



Completion date: August-October 2022

Description: Character of approximately 1.5 meters high and 4 meters in diameter, built from the waste that was dug up when trying to clean the land. The decision to accommodate this waste as a *garbage monster* was to make visible the problem that occurs at all stages in the production chain: extraction, processing, marketing, distribution, consumption, waste and pollution. It was this unearthed garbage that gave rise to the Tlacuache project.

Purpose: Waste of different classifications: batteries, disposable batteries, wood, bags, processed food wrappers, cans, paper, glass, iron, among others; Tarpaulin with explanatory text.

Persons in charge: MU Team

XIX Insect Mobile

Completion date: 2022



lead to pollution and



Description: Curtain placed at the entrance of the last area of the orchard, which aims to make insects visible, as small species that are a fundamental element for life and ecological balance throughout the planet. Insects make up an extremely large, dense and diverse population. If they could be placed on one side of a scale and the rest of the animal species on the other side, the scale would be tipped towards insects, due to their numbers worldwide. These beings perform vital functions for ecosystems so that their absence can imbalance.

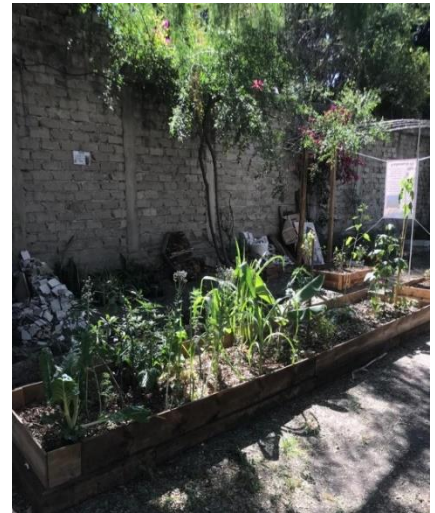
Object: Curtain made with disposable material: wire strips in which discs (CDs) with illustrations of insects and plastic caps are inserted.

Persons in charge: Fernanda Razo and MU team.

XX Eco laboratory

Completion date: January 2021-October 2022

Description: Final space of the CVS vegetable garden, which was intervened to recover and regenerate the soil highly contaminated by the mismanagement of USW, which made it impossible to produce vegetables or any other food crops. After a thorough cleanup, agro-ecological practices were introduced for soil regeneration and the cultivation of various plants. The transformation of the landscape of this space implied several questions, since it was not transformed into an "ordered garden", but rather the attention was given to the needs of the land, in terms of nutrients, water, native species, arrival of insects and birds, giving freedom for the species to distribute and settle naturally.



Purpose: The space is currently a backyard demonstration garden, which has cultivation beds and a dry bath where organic waste composting and domestic plant propagation activities are carried out.

Persons in charge: MU Team



3.2. Some evaluations from visitors to the expo

We did our best to encourage the evaluation of the people who visited the exhibition. In the Saturday presentations, at the end of the tours and before the music, we formed a wide circle to give the floor, in front of the others, to each visitor. We also asked them to leave us their opinion in writing.

Initially we had placed a notebook at the exit, so that people could leave their comments and contact information before leaving; however, this was impractical, so we opted for them to write some notes on loose papers. We belatedly discovered that with this new strategy, the details of those who wrote were no longer recorded.



Below are presented, in no particular order, the ones we received. It was not possible to meet to discuss selection criteria and we prefer to let the reader decide which ones to choose. In some cases, grammar and spelling were corrected to facilitate comprehension, respecting the style as much as possible.

1. In general, the evaluations were positive. Only one person expressed some dissatisfaction, although the writer did not shed enough light on his reasons: *-I would have liked them to talk about topics with more interest. There are many topics that are of interest and as inhabitants of this neighborhood we would like to deal with, and it seems to me as lack of interest that they do not know about them.*
2. *I want to give many congratulations to all those who participated in this project, which is extremely wonderful. It is incredible what we can find in the CVS. I want to thank you for letting me participate in this project. I really wish you all success in your future projects. I have no words to describe how much I enjoyed being here, meeting and learning (Liz).*
3. *It was great; how cool that there are still people who care about the importance of nature.*
4. *Originally from Felipe Carrillo Puerto. I think it is very good what you are doing for the history class and to remember again part, although small, of my town. Thank you and congratulations.*
5. *I think it's incredible what they have done with the children and teenagers. I think you have given them a space where they can express who they are, in a world that tries to limit you to being a copy of a mold, where even their feelings must fit. That opportunity that you give them, I think, is very valuable. Angie.*
6. *It seems to me a space where you can see the activities they have given the children and teenagers, expressing it in a very creative way; even a place to let off steam and learn.*
7. *It is good and very interesting.*
8. *Marveled by this journey with a lot of memory. Grateful for reminding us of the responsibility that exists in our environment and with the human being. Thank you for raising awareness for a better world. Our congratulations and special recognition for this great task. Thank you for reminding me of wonderful*

*moments that are now pleasant memories. I wish you much success in all your projects. Sincerely yours:
Moises Martinez Ramirez.*

9. *It's ok.*
10. *I really liked the exhibition. You can tell you are passionate about what you do, congratulations!*
11. *I found the tour interesting, especially the backyard with the plants. We had an express tour and therefore I could not make a great reflection on the purpose of the exhibition.*
12. *I liked the visibility and exposure given to the community. They are different exhibits from the others, but acceptable. I wish I had had more time for the tour.*
13. *Overall, I liked the awareness raising with the garbage curtain, the sugar in the food and the workshops given to the children and teenagers. Congratulations.*
14. *I found the tour of the neighborhood museum interesting. The topics, such as how Carrillo was created and how industries came to it, fill you with anger to know that what was once beautiful and agricultural is now one of the most polluted places in Queretaro. In the technology section I also found it interesting how people collect and collect regardless of the fact that we don't need it. We continue to accumulate garbage. I also liked the workshops they offered, which is something you don't see much and brings you together as a family and community.*
15. *Personally, I think it is a nice place and a good recreational space for the community. They do a lot of activities that help to reflect and to be more aware. I like the fact that there is also support from the community. They are good projects. I hope they continue in this way, because in the end it is a good option for the children and teenagers to have this space. As for the tour, the place has a lot of history in its murals, different rooms where each one tells something different. I like the way they tell stories, the anecdotes, etc. I like the place!*
16. *I liked it: it was quite safe to learn more about the house and everything that is done, especially the awareness that is made about the waste that is generated, the work from small ages, I liked it a lot. Above all, I liked how we changed the chip to a more conscious one for the new generations.*
17. *I certainly feel it is a good environment. To materialize something leads to a road with obstacles, so they share with us in voice. They have overcome the obstacles at the beginning of a project that has soul. You can feel the essence of the people and the hope is planted here, in the energy that I felt in this beautiful and welcoming space. I hope to return soon and see the life of your garden grow exponentially. May it transmit that vibe of being and perpetuating community change, promoting community and social bonding.*
18. *I really liked the exhibition, because it is dynamic and invites you to be part of it and contribute to it; I also loved how the issues are addressed in an eye-catching way while still having that character of importance and urgency to be addressed. It is also an emotional exhibition that raises awareness of what has been lost and sensitizes us.*
19. *Great exhibition! My congratulations to Rebeca.*
20. *I found the exhibition extremely interesting and challenging, because very few times we think about all that technological progress and the loss of the ecosystem that this implies. I think it is a very important project to raise awareness from the youngest to the oldest. Congratulations! Continue with this project.*
21. *Thanks to Fanny for inviting me. From the moment I walked in, I felt a good vibe. Congratulations to everyone. The truth is that in Querétaro we need more spaces like this one, to make people aware of*

how the current system transforms lives, unfortunately for the worse, and thus be able to build solutions. (Armando Caz).

22. *In general, it was an interesting journey, both in terms of putting myself as a researcher, as well as interacting with people, organizing myself with my colleagues.*
23. *I remember that when we stopped at a little shop the ladies greeted us kindly, I don't know if it was because they felt observed or because people are cheerful like that, but at the time I felt confident.*
24. *It was interesting and entertaining.*
25. *The expo-barrial of subway waste "The treasures of El Tlacuache" means the exhalation of the period 2020-2022 that emanates the resistance of Carrillo. It is a striking expression of the history of this town, devoured and mutilated by the big industry and the big commerce, which invites to the reflection on the coexistence Nature-humanity. What is experienced through the voice of the exhibitors is a summary of what can be known in this territory, submerged in a hyper-industrialized shell, but never finished "urbanized" in the name of development. I congratulate, admire and recognize the work that represents the execution of the museum of the Anthropocene by the kids who have joined the call of the tlacuache: Micelio Urbano and CVS. Carrillo has memory and resists! Water is a treasure that is worth more than gold!*
26. *Congratulations! My respect and admiration, because it shows a lot of hard work and great organization. It highlights the ethical work they show to society.*
27. *Very good work. Very well explained; interesting, entertaining.*
28. *It was interesting Xd.*
29. *I congratulate you for the great effort you are making in our community. On my part I will do my best to make CVS known. Thank you very much for the invitation. You will see me more often here, along with a friend.*
30. *A motivating experience.*
31. *Enriching experience. You learn a lot from it. May it reach more people.*
32. *It's a great job L.*
33. *Everything they did was very interesting and at the same time very nice.*
34. *Very nice all and thank you for inviting the band.*
35. *The work they are doing is fine, and I applaud that very much.*
36. *I found it interesting to know about what's in Carrillo and how it used to be :3*
37. *I was surprised by the number of projects developed and the quality that can be seen in the products. I am moved by the objectives that this Casa achieves and the way in which they are sustained. It gives strength and hope to continue building spaces like this. I would be delighted if more people knew about this, because sometimes I don't know what is going on and I can't find the publicity to share it.*
38. *Many congratulations for focusing on nurturing us and giving us a bit of the history of the place where we live.*

39. *It is a very nice and informative exhibition, congratulations! You deal with very important topics and explain them quite well.*
40. *It was very good and I think it was very interesting and educational and somewhat reflective.*
41. *Comments about the exhibition: I thought it was very interesting and good...*
42. *Thank you very much for this great exhibition! It is a reality that we don't always see or want to see. A big applause to all the people who participated in the organization, I will definitely invite more people to get to know this house and the project! (Jimena G.V.).*
43. *I found it interesting and I started to think about a lot of things about life and garbage, how it pollutes.*
44. *I found it interesting to know all this, about the plants and the town of Carrillo. Sometime I would like to know more.*
45. *Hi! Congratulations for the effort; just a comment: Have you considered the use of "sludge" from the treatment plants in the garden composts? Greetings! (Alex Maya).*
46. *I want to thank CVS for the great example they give us by doing such a beautiful job. You can see the hard work behind it and the love with which they do it. The whole team are wonderful and very kind people. Thank you very much (Sandra Catalina González Ortiz).*
47. *Congratulations! A very pleasant surprise to discover this space. So full of life, work and love? I receive a message of hope, optimism and faith in humanity, through this group of young people who are eager to improve and leave a better environment to (Arturo Sanchez, Nov. 19).*
48. *I warmly congratulate those who have personally maintained this space: the CVS in the heart of Felipe Carrillo Puerto, Qro. A recognition of admiration to the inhabitants of this town, who have been able to resist the deadly blows with which capitalism continually stalks us. I also recognize an era, the current one, that takes charge of the need to maintain the care of spaces, soils, waters, colors and, above all, of the love we receive and give. Thank you, thank you, thank you.*
49. *I love the space. I find everything that is shared and lived inside the house extremely enriching. I really like the environmental focus of the whole house. It has been a space where I found people with my same concerns and that add up, instead of just giving a complaint. Congratulations for all the work and effort you put into the activities, for sharing that knowledge and for generating community. Congratulations (Montse Cervantes).*
50. *Thank you for this space. It is everyone's daily work, if not to improve, at least not to worsen the soil, water and air situations, which is what sustains everyone's life. I hope you continue with these activities, which are important to create better citizens and better spaces for all.*
51. *I really enjoyed the presentation, as it covered topics I was not familiar with.*
52. *I think it is a great project, as it reminds us of our Carrillo that we miss so much. "Many congratulations".*
53. *It's okay.*
54. *I found the exhibition very entertaining. I knew things I didn't know and they are extremely interesting.*
55. *Perfect. It is very necessary to recycle and to know how to take care of the environment and to take care of the plants.*

56. *It was very interesting and fun.*
57. *Despite the time that has passed, the place remains a beautiful space of civil resistance to the onslaught of climate change. I was impressed to see the sea of garbage, because I got stuck like a turtle! A beautiful place.*
58. *It was very good how they explained and how they did their things. They were very good at everything.*
59. *I found the experience very important and beautiful. I also liked the fact that they take care of the organisms and the fauna, since we are all one and we should take care of nature. I loved that they have a lot of books.*
60. *I like the space to learn how to take care of our home (planet), the workshops, the book exchange, and to learn about the history of Carrillo.*
61. *I like the games that are played at the Casa because some of them teach us how to act in front of others; I learned to know that I am capable and to work in a team. I have made new friends and learned to share with others (Lesli Janeth Gutiérrez).*
62. *I like the contrast experienced when visiting the second part (orchard), after visiting the urban footprint. It takes light to appreciate at night and feels solid overall. Congratulations.*
63. *The exhibition seemed relevant to me because of the topics about garbage, how it influences the environment and how we can raise awareness about its impact.*
64. *I really loved this exhibition because everything was organized and just seeing the zucchini plants, I got very excited and loved everything.*
65. *The expositions were very good, I liked it. It is very well explained.*
66. *Amazing the diversity of nature that you show us, relating a myriad of actions for development. I am happy and excited to know that we do not need more, but to be empathetic and make use of our natural means to preserve the natural life of our plants and animals, which influence the existence of this one. I join in these actions. Thank you for giving us knowledge and experience, greetings!*
67. *The tour had a lot of history and context behind it and I found that interesting. It is a very creative and unique exhibit. It's nice to see how the house has activities for awareness. All very nice.*
68. *It is a very good idea, but I think it is very sad that few people join your movement. For me it would be very pleasing if this place was full of people.*
69. *Hi, I found it interesting. There should be more places like this. Everything seems perfect to me. I loved the orchard and how you specified each space built. Many congratulations to all who collaborate and thanks for the invitation.*
70. *It seems to me that the exhibition touches very important points at a social and cultural level, both for the society that lives it, as well as for the next generations.*
71. *A well planned project to raise awareness of the importance of doing something to rescue our world. I like that there are projects like this to save our world.*
72. *My opinion about the tour is that Carrillo has many beautiful places, I would like to invite more people to get to know the places, for example, the new parks and the CVS.*

73. *In my visit to the exhibition at the Casa I observed several things. Among them was the research and dedication that was carried out. That is to say, you can see the effort and participation of all the people who made this Expo possible. My favorite part was where we went through the garbage tunnel. It is incredible and I like how our technology has evolved and how this has helped our environment.*
74. *It was very good how they explained and how they did their things. They were very good at everything.*
75. *I like the space to learn how to take care of our home (planet), the workshops, the book exchange, and to learn about the history of Carrillo.*
76. *I like the games at the Casa because some of them teach us how to act in front of others; I learned to know that I am capable and to work in a team. I have made new friends and learned to share with others (Lesli Janeth Gutiérrez).*
77. *I like the contrast experienced when visiting the second part (orchard), after visiting the urban footprint. It takes light to appreciate at night and feels solid overall. Congratulations.*
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82. *The route had a lot of history and context behind it and I found that interesting. It is a very creative and unique creation. It's nice to see how the house has awareness activities. All very nice.*
83. *It is a very good idea, but I think it is very sad that few people join your movement. For me it would be very pleasing if this place is full of people.*
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87. *My opinion about the tour is that Carrillo has many beautiful places, I would like to invite more people to get to know the places, for example the new parks and the CVS.*
88. *In my visit to the exhibition at the Casa I observed several things. Among them, the research and dedication that is seen to have been carried out. That is to say, you can see the effort and participation of all the people who made this Expo possible. My favorite part was where we went through the garbage tunnel. It is incredible and I like how our technology has evolved and how this has helped our environment.*

89. *Casa de la Vinculación Social* is a space with a lot of richness, which should be promoted to continue with the priority of helping the community of Carrillo Puerto. I believe that what is taught here has been of great help to many families and we have worked with many projects and people. I wish we could continue. I congratulate everyone who is part of this great work, thank you for your attention (Maestra Maria de la Paz Perez Sanchez).
90. This project seems to me to be extremely interesting and important for the community of Carrillo. The *Casa de la Vinculación* is a space from where the culture and customs of Carrillo can be rescued, as well as rescuing children and teenagers, youth, adults and the elderly from industrial and technological modernization and the social problems that this generates. Excellent work. I hope this project continues for a long time (Anahí Escobar).
91. Visit *Casa de la Vinculación Social*: an excellent space that allows us to rescue the problems and establish a social link with the actors of the community. I recommend it, because it allows us to share our knowledge and to train ourselves personally and professionally (Maestra María Cristina Martínez Villanueva).



CONCLUSIONS

For our core team, the experience gained in the realization of the project of El Tlacuache implied:

- *analysis of our local reality and interaction with several groups and resistance movements committed to ecology,
- *recognition of the conditions that have led to the global climate (and civilizational) crisis, *as well as design and practice of educational strategies of *alternative popular pedagogy*, to work adequately with groups of minors.

This experience was nourished by some previous ideas (as suspicions), such as:

The climate crisis affects the population unequally. There are clear differences between residential areas - which monopolize nature and water - "because they can pay", and popular areas or neighborhoods, where people live subjected to shortages, socially excluded, anonymous; where migrants have had to abandon their land and air due to aggressions by the owners of capital.

It also allowed us to become aware of the neoliberal fallacy that assures that education (of individuals) "is the key" fundamental and solution to all social problems. According to this idea, the neoliberal state:

- allocates large percentages of public resources to "educational" programs, purchased from private companies (many of which, in reality, are reduced to training and training in information technologies); on the other hand,
- justifies the neglect or lack of municipal or governmental services for popular housing zones, claiming (as happened in Carrillo) that *...these people should understand that this is already an industrial zone and they should make an effort to progress, to go live in better neighborhoods (sic)*⁶⁹.

The neoliberal regime (which reduces education to training in the use of information technologies, imposes a predominantly individualistic and meritocratic vision, as well as bureaucratizing and technical control of society and workers) has placed the teaching profession, especially in basic education, in a condition of vulnerability and defenselessness.

When the neoliberal State wanted to justify the neglect of public schools, it opened the doors to multiple forms of covert privatization⁷⁰, it spread the belief (endorsed by certain "researchers") that, "regardless of the disadvantageous structural conditions in which school communities in marginalized areas live, it is possible to offer students an education of excellence". This statement

⁶⁹ In the Municipality of Queretaro, for example, an important part of the public budget is given to a private company called 'Women's University', as a strategy to "attend to the most vulnerable classes"; on the other hand, it leaves streets undeveloped, without drinking water, public lighting, cleaning services, parks or gardens for family coexistence in poor neighborhoods; at the same time, it limits popular support, in the form of scholarships, for young people to study in public or private institutions in the state.

⁷⁰ Ball S. and Youdel D. (2008). "The disguised privatization of public education". International Observatory on Education.

https://observatorioeducacion.org/sites/default/files/ball_s._y_youdel_d._2008_la_privatizacion_encubierta_en_la_educacion_publica.pdf

is usually accompanied by "examples of success", pretending to "prove" that "the key lies in the skills and the will of individual effort of the teachers, without considering the social, environmental and herramental conditions that make such results possible. Such neglect can become a vicious circle when certain groups of teachers justify their lack of commitment.

Making new generations aware of these inequalities, as well as of the damage that big industry or the big market cause to health and nature, implies responsibility and adequate preparation for:

- to care for the children and teenagers's spirits, their optimism and confidence that basic transformations are possible, even in their micro-spaces;
- prepare them to be able to manage some of the conflicts that dominate in their environments, when the family assumes the dominant culture;
- (In this case, it is difficult, for example, for a mother or father to accept, without further ado, criticism of the ecological damage generated by the industry that employs him or her).

This project provokes, on the other hand, reflections on:

- how the problem of the climate crisis is addressed in schools, from preschool to higher education. Schools committed to an alternative popular education start from the conviction that the educational relationship has, among others, the basic and fundamental purpose of promoting analysis of reality, which is possible if there is a real active link with its environment;
- schools committed to popular education are certain that learning is not merely theoretical, but requires practice, which is accessed by facing challenges and identifying what is involved in overcoming them, not only by listening to speeches from teachers or solving activities that are marked in textbooks. Practice, in this case, implies the creation of infrastructure and the organization of the entire educational community to turn the practice of the 5Rs into a *daily habit*. However, not all schools are in the same logic or in a position to do so.

As far as the "success" of our project is concerned, it is clear that there are differences between the ways of working in *non-school education* and those of an institution. Non-school education, to give just a few examples, is not under pressure to follow official programs or prepare students for exams, nor Kafkaesque procedures to obtain official authorizations for tours or excursions.

Likewise, our project allows us to propose that the school system should give greater freedom of action or flexibility to teachers, so that they can communicate better with their students and interact more with the environment of the school in which they work (as well as open up to non-school educational experiences). This implies considering **teaching** as a **highly complex and specialized profession** that requires full time for training and continuous updating; for study, planning, design and selection of materials for all teaching moments; for interaction; for nourishment not only from the exchange of experiences with colleagues on the greatest social problems, but also from the multiple cultural expressions offered by the environment.

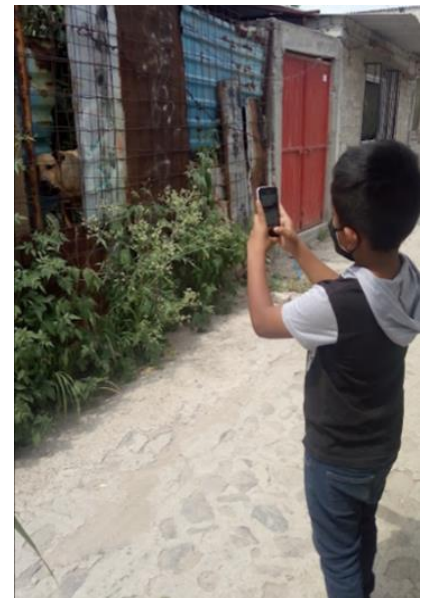
We also consider it essential to **strengthen non-school education spaces in** order to offer new generations greater opportunities to approach the sciences and the arts, since in the current context of crisis and social division by class, it is particularly difficult for marginalized groups to enter and remain in school for long periods of time.

Finally, we have asked ourselves what the impact (of each of the activities we carried out within the framework of this project) may have been on the people who participated in it.

It is difficult to know. We do what we can. Social processes aimed at change are long, complex and multifactorial. It would be simplistic to think that only through brief educational interventions can cultural trends that have been consolidating for centuries (or years in the lives of individuals) be stopped or reoriented. The weight of big capital on all social sectors is immeasurable and no matter how much evidence is presented of the crisis that the system has generated (to the point of putting us in danger of extinction), it would be naive to expect from it a real change, since this would imply its self-destruction. What has happened is the simulation of this "green capitalism"⁷¹, *which changes in order not to change*.

However, when it seems that we have reached a dead end, when there is no way back and when we assume our own dependence on lifestyles and productions that market society has imposed as "indispensable", critical thinking opens horizons of hope. The questions with which we began this project: *where do the things we consume come from, where do they end up when we throw them away, and what happens to people and nature in the process*, can open cracks in the system, to give way to other ways of living that are healthier and kinder to others and to nature, at least in our micro-spaces.

What we were able to do in ours made sense and was worthwhile, for us and, we believe, for most of those who accompanied us. The multiple dialogues we had with El Tlacuache opened up new horizons for us about how the threads of history are pulled.



⁷¹ Mejia, Fabrizio. "Our climate anxiety". newspaper La Jornada; Saturday February 11, 2023.

APPENDIX ONE

SCHEDULE OF PARTICIPANTS (in alphabetical order of last names)			
60 CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS AND YOUTH PARTICIPANTS			
By age and in alphabetical order of last name			
AGE	NAME	AGE	NAME
5	Estrella Dailin Aboytes H.	9	Jade Trejo P.
5	Zahel Contreras V.	10	Blue Azarcoya R.
5	Joshua Córdova M.	10	Mía Kyrenne Cardona M.
5	María Elisa Flores A.	10	Diego Iván García L.
5	Dafne Dolores Guerrero A.	10	Janet Jimenez H.
5	Esdras Emanuel Hernandez M.	10	Valeria Soto G.
5	Uriel Isaí Zendejas G.	10	Renata Villanueva M.
6	Bryana Samantha Gonzalez F.	11	Santiago Cruz A.
6	Rubén González M.	11	Ivo López M.
8	Guadalupe Melina Arauz J.	11	Javier Emiliano Maldonado
8	Natalia Delgado H.	11	Francisco Rangel G.
8	Íker Eliam Hernández I.	11	Cristian Reyna P.
8	André Martinez	11	Juan Mateo Ribera C.
8	Carlo Magno Pacheco P.	11	Moises Emiliano Trejo L.
8	Samuel Charbel Perez L.	12	Jonathan Nicolas Hernandez
8	Brian Isaac Robledo P.	12	Evelyn Yisell López R.
8	Jennifer Regina Rodríguez V.	12	Sara Montero O.
8	Sofia Paloma Hernandez	12	Cinthia Mayte Ramírez R.
9	Leonardo Castro Ch.	12	Alejandra Reséndiz R.
9	Paola Castro Ch.	12	Rodrigo Soto G.
9	Lucía Cruz A.	13	Ximena Danahe Cruz R.
9	Maria Cruz L.	14	Diego Azarcoya R.
9	Ireland Danahe Garcia T.	14	Aarón Reyna P.
9	Alexa Valentina González F.	14	Ansel Kael Rodriguez
9	Alejandra Juarez M.	14	Angela Sofia Shimano B.
9	Juan Andrés López S.	14	Carlos Eduardo Venegas
9	Santiago Isaías Martínez.	15	Luis Angel Flores de S.
9	Juan Pablo Maldonado M.	15	Lizbeth Ariel Gonzalez
9	Fatima Perez R.	16	Janeth Reyna P.
9	María Valentina Pérez G.	16	Sofia Tovar G.



SCHEDULE OF PARTICIPANTS (in alphabetical order of last names)	
BASE TEAM MEMBERS (promoters, organizers and workshop facilitators)	
NAME	MAIN FORM OF PARTICIPATION IN THE PROJECT
Iván Carlos Aguilar	Founder of MU, promotes "Festival Agua que corre".
Karla Flores de S.	MU member; horticulture workshops
M. Fernanda García G.	Social service, general guidance; "Come fly kites"; <i>rally</i>
Constanza Guajardo V.	El Tlacuache's digital log (mother of a family), proofreader and editor
Rebeca Mendoza L.	Carrillo Canal; general guide; tours; <i>radio clips</i>
C. Estephania Olalde R.	Canal Carrillo; Storytellers Circle
Luis Osorno S.	"The Adventures of El Tlacuache" and "Imaginary Geography".
Claudio D. Sanchez H.	"Club of Monsters an Alebrijes", design of the "Eco-alebrije".
Gerardo Vázquez M.	MU member; general guide in summer courses
Karla Venegas A.	Founder and coordinator of MU; "Botanical Passion".
Maric Vicencio A.	General coordinator of the project and "Handmade basketry".
LECTURE COLLABORATORS AND WORKSHOP COORDINATION	
Elsa Doria M.	Talk on "Solidarity Economy".
Manuel Escoto P.	"Storytellers": handmade toy workshop
Oswaldo Garcia	Design and production of fanzines
Alba S. López G.	Canal Carrillo; musical instruments manufacturing
Monica Maldonado	Talk on agroecology; presentation of "Xata".
Denisse Monroy A.	Terrariums elaboration
Minerva Perez B.	Elaboration of artistic pots
Jimena Guajardo V.	Artisan bakery (mother of a family)
Abraham Ramirez H.	"Storytellers"; handcrafted toy workshop.
José L. Reséndiz G.	Rap, rhythms and "beat box" workshop
Alfonso Juarez R.	Canal Carrillo; handmade chocolates and the pitarra set
Luis Ugalde M.	Talk on "Solidarity Economy".
Sofía Tovar G. (16 years old)	General logistical support; Artisanal bakery workshop
COLLABORATORS IN OTHER AREAS (continued below)	
Luis Castañeda J.	Musical accompanist
Monserrat Cervantes	Setting up of the neighborhood expo and work in the vegetable garden
Diana Gallo B.	"Club of Monsters and Alebrijes".
Juan Carlos Gamboa	"Immense sea of garbage"
Gonzalo Guajardo G.	General counsel; proofreader and editor
Claribel Hernández C.	Herbal bed guide
J. Fernando Mendoza L.	Hall "Yesterday: technological marvels, today, garbage?"
Galdina Moreno C.	Food service
Emmanuel Olvera V.	General logistical support
Alejandro Vera Vázquez	Support to the "Club of Monsters and Alebrijes".

COLLABORATORS IN VARIOUS ARTISTIC AREAS

AUDIO PROCESSING

Soto Guajardo Family	Audio story narration: "The mountain".
Mitzi Ramos	Narration of the audio story: "The storm".
5 students from "Margarita Maza de Juárez" urban morning elementary school CCT22DPR=294L; Z.E. 031 SECTOR: 04	Promotional audios

PLASTIC WORK

Kinxoc Madrigal O.	Design and elaboration of the puppet El Tlacuache
Claudio D. Sanchez	Giant eco-alebrije
MU Team	"Escor": the garbage monster
María Fernanda Razo Z.	Drawings for cell phone of insects
Rodrigo Soto G. (12 years old)	Logo and representations graphics of El Tlacuache
Santiago Woo (12 years old)	
Karla Flores D.S.	Cover design of the Memoirs

All the drawings that appear in this document were made by children and teenagers and adolescents who participated in the various activities of the project.

MUSICAL GROUPS THAT CLOSED THE SATURDAY TOURS

"Vivache" Children and teenagers's Symphonic Band of Felipe Carrillo Puerto
Group "Injerto".
Claudio Irrera and Juan Manuel Soto
"Los Jijos del Maiz"

COLLABORATORS OF THE WORK IN THE GARDEN AND ECO-LABORATORY

Alma, Ale, Ana, Ángel, Anggie, Antón, Arturo, Beto, Carlos, Casimiro, Eduardo, Eva, Evan, Grecia, Grupo Rotario, Juan Carlos, Isaura, Lara, Laura, Lobo, Lore, Marge, Mariana, Miguel, Monse, Natalia, Pilar, Piter, Poncho, Silvia, "Talachaman" (Daniel and Juan), Toño...



APPENDIX TWO

El Ropavejero Francisco Gabilondo Soler “Cri-Ccri”

Here comes the Tlacuache
carrying a tambache
through all the streets
of the big city.

Mr. Tlacuache
buys trinkets
and to buy them
he usually hawks:

Bottles for sale,
used shoes,
ruined hats,
mended pants... I
trade, sell and buy alike!

Spoiled pigs,
fearful sellers,
and children and teenagers who are
accustomed to
shouting or shouting:
I trade, I sell, I buy,
I buy, sell and trade alike!

Here comes the Tlacuache
carrying a tambache
through all the streets
of the big city.

Mr. Tlacuache
buys trinkets
and to buy them
he usually hawks:

Selling papers,
old newspapers!
Scorched Tiliches
and trebejos cuatrapeados.
I trade, sell and buy alike!

Gossiping mothers!
nagging blabbermouths!
and nagging old women
to put in my sack,
trade, sell and buy,
buy, sell and trade alike!



102



APPENDIX THREE

OUTLINE OF ACTIVITIES ARTICULATED TO THE PROJECT IN 2022
<p>Public presentation at the CVS of the 'Report on forced displacement due to environmental impacts in Querétaro' by the organization <i>Bajo Tierra Museo del Agua</i>, which specifically addresses the case of Carrillo Puerto (January 2022).</p>
<p>Presentation at the IV Congress of Ethnography of the State of Puebla: "La CVS and El Tlacuache: a neighborhood experiment" (February 24, 2022).</p>
<p>Feria de la Vinculación: for the promotion of art and local economy: 2 sessions of 6 hrs. each, once every 3 months: March and July 2022. 30 participants, in each session, of all ages. Product: temporary gallery of local artists (from Querétaro and Carrillo).</p>
<p>Video forum "Organic Agriculture" (with Jairo Restrepo) with a practice session for the reproduction of forest microorganisms. Projections that allowed us to share a space for listening and reflection with those interested in the subject, discovering, from the hand of an expert (Jairo Restrepo) in <i>organic agriculture</i>, a possibility to assume the commitment with life, in a <i>harsh criticism towards the current production system</i> and carrying out practices, such as the reproduction of forest microorganisms, that allow us to approach to understand ourselves as <i>mycelium</i>, as vulnerable beings, connected with the <i>whole</i>. 8 sessions of 3hrs. each, twice a week in February 2022, 10 participants over 20 years of age. Product: 200 kg of forest microorganisms.</p>
<p>Tasks: "Hands in the garden": 3 sessions of 4 hours, once a week, in April 2022. A space open to all ages to practice and share knowledge about horticulture; production and reproduction of medicinal plants and vegetables, which bring us closer to solidarity economies and community coexistence, allowing access to healthy food, free of pesticides and agrochemicals. Each session closed with the harvesting and preparation of food directly from the garden, emphasizing "people and food for communion" (with each other and with nature). All the colleagues who joined us added their knowledge to enrich the practices. 10 participants over 20 years old. Botanical passion: Product: 300 plants planted and 250 cuttings.</p>
<p>5 independent workshops: in June and July 2022, 8 sessions of 2 hours each.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Club of Monsters and Alebrijes"; • "The adventures of the Tlacuache" (literary activities and radio exercises); • "Detectives in the tunnel of time and space" (neighborhood tours with mapping or mapping exercises, interviews with elders and neighborhood recycling workers, video projection); • "Challenges to lose your mind": Board games (strategic thinking). • "Botanical Passion": Various activities on horticulture: *Herbarium, *Earth we are, *Rethinking, *Ecofashion, *Very natural kitchen. <p>15 participants, between 8 and 12 years of age. Products: logs, drawings, alebrijes.</p>

OUTLINE OF ACTIVITIES ARTICULATED TO THE PROJECT IN 2022 (CONTINUED)

"Storyteller circle": 10 sessions on Fridays in June, 4 of them only for women in September; several meetings with elders of Felipe Carrillo Puerto, which allowed a better understanding of the transformations suffered by this town, due to the irruption of the industry and the market.

15 participants over and two drivers.

Product: collection of collective interviews, texts, audios, photos and posters for a room of the expo-barrial: History and social movements of Carrillo.

"Test and pedagogical training camp": June 23 and 24, 2022, in Huimilpan, Querétaro, aimed at those who would participate as guides in the July and August summer courses, to share educational concepts and refine the work plan.

10 participants.

Product: logbook on the exchanges held.

Rally or game of clues to recognize the neighborhood: June 25, 2022; a 4-hour day;

Participants: 8 adult and 15 minors between 5 and 16 years old.

Product: logbook, photographs and personal diary entries.

Second summer course: in July and August; 3 weeks, five days per week, in 4-hour sessions:

- Induction activities for cooperative organization and distribution of tasks.
- 3 preparatory workshops for tours: bindery of logs, photography and elaboration of maps (or sketches) of the locality, physical and emotional.
- 5 video forums to recognize scenes of the universe and planet Earth (cards).
- 5 neighborhood tours.
- 2 excursions to exemplary sites (Planetarium and Botanical Garden of Cadereyta and Charco del Ingenio in San Miguel de Allende Guanajuato).
- Recreational activities (obstacle courses, board games, building and flying kites).
- 3 imagination activation workshops with multisensory experience (sound/touch/olfactory), literary recreation (stories) and plastic arts (drawings, alebrijes, collages, landscapes...).
- 5 workshops related to horticulture (descriptions and instructional texts).
- 2 workshops related to municipal solid waste management (MSRU).
- 5 workshops on handicraft production.
- 1 "engineering" production workshop (designs of "problem-solving machines").
- Activities for discussion and problem solving and conflict management.

Participants: 25 children and teenagers between 4 and 16 years old and 16 adults at different times.

Products: Collective logbook. Each workshop produced various materials that are described in the corresponding sections; several samples were exhibited at the neighborhood expo.

OTHER RELEVANT ACTIVITIES RELATED TO EL TLACUACHE

Festival agua que corre (Running Water Festival): CVS hosted three times (November 27, 2021, March 5 and June 9, 2022) this festival, which provided important clues to work on the themes of El Tlacuache.

Participants: between 20 and 30 people in each session.

Meeting of the Red en defensa del agua y de la vida (Network in Defense of Water and Life) (October 1, 2022)

Participants: 30 people.

Both activities integrate several environmental organizations that participate in an important resistance against actions of the Government of the State of Querétaro, aimed at privatizing water.

Micelio Urbano and CVS participate in the Festival and the Network and exchange knowledge and strategies that strengthen the educational work of the *El Tlacuache* project.

Presentation for the XXXII Meeting of the Alternative Education Network: "Life and Nature for urbanites and the projects of El Tlacuache, our attempts to change the course"; to be held at the Concepción Méendez School in Parral, Chihuahua, on April 2 and 3, 2023.

EXPO-BARRIAL THE TREASURES OF THE TLACUACHE: A WORLD WE CAN'T IMAGINE

Conclusion of the entire process,

Participants: about 50 collaborators, 3 months of preparation and 20 exhibition themes. Opening: November 2022, Monday to Friday; 4 Saturday tours, with live music; FREE ADMISSION for all public.

Visitors: about 180 people of all ages, from November 2022 to February 2023.

Products: They were described in the corresponding section.

Spetial Tanks to

Fédération Internationale
des Mouvements d'École Moderne
Pédagogie Freinet

www.fimem-freinet.org
cafimem@gmail.com



and
**For having trusted
our Project**

Sincerely

Team of **El Tlacuache**