

Ana Vasquez
Puntos Solidarios: On Our Way to Sustainability
International House of Chicago
Venezuela

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Child malnutrition causes conflict. Lack of places where kids can develop themselves causes disharmony. The mix of both, causes violence.

The *Puntos Solidarios* initiative seeks to promote and boost spaces where the most vulnerable communities can organize themselves to deal with the crisis through solidarity. We strive to face a temporary situation related to child malnutrition, providing a lasting solution, and promoting organization and citizen involvement to empower communities to address their problems to maintain peace.

We currently have four (4) *Puntos Solidarios* (Solidarity Hubs - as we call them in Spanish) in impoverished neighborhoods in the Baruta municipality, in Caracas, the capital city of Venezuela. These are very complicated and dangerous areas where children do not have the opportunity to grow and develop decently. Our goal is to secure life-changing facilities where kids can grow with love, solidarity, and educational support, thanks to our group of volunteers.

Leading mothers of each community direct these facilities and receive all the necessary equipment to cook every day for 150 children. Additionally, volunteers attend every week to help the children with academic support and recreational activities. These spots broke all the barriers of conflict and are an example of the restoration of nourishing and adequate communities for next generations of Venezuelans.

Despite all this effort, violence and poverty in these communities has deepened significantly. Due to a lack of public services and teachers, most public schools are closed. Meanwhile, due to the outbreak of the COVID-19, most private schools are teaching remotely. In these vulnerable sectors, families do not have access to the basic needs of homeschooling. As some of these kids are becoming poorer, an entire generation is growing without the opportunity to get an education.

Community leaders approached the *Puntos Solidarios* organization because they were worried about this situation. We started a program with Universidad Simón Bolívar, one of the leading academic institutions in the country, where undergraduate students volunteer by teaching our children the essential lessons that are taught in school. Though this solution is valuable, it does not address the problem.

That's why we want to extend our reach and empower our lines of work. With the help of a leading school, we will provide online classes that can be fully shared in some of our facilities. They will provide the academic content at a special rate, and we will train our volunteers as teachers. The next step is to find all the technical requirements to make this happen.

This is a basic and sustainable solution to one of our *Puntos Solidarios*. We will install adequate hardware to have a proper educational experience, as well as energy through solar panels to provide primary power, satellite internet, and other resources. The solar panels and the satellite internet will be provided by a private company donating 30% of its cost. Also, they are contributing the monthly

service for one year. With this savings, we will buy computers and purchase the online courses. *Puntos Solidarios* is committed to pay the monthly service (for solar panels and internet) after the first year.

In the short term, 40 children will start with the pilot plan for three months, free of charge. The cost associated with this pilot plan is explained in the budget section. In the long run, the costs associated with covering the academic material and teachers will be paid by parents, with a \$3 fee per student per course. The other logistical and maintenance cost will be covered by the NGO annual budget plan.

Additionally, *Puntos Solidarios* is part of a more extensive NGO network with more than 276 community kitchens all over the country. Our goal is to show this pilot project to prove that we can pull enough resources to overcome the most serious challenges that our children are facing. Later on, the NGO network can collaborate to find the resources to make a national plan and create more sustainable *Puntos Solidarios* in those 276 community kitchens.

Goal:

To develop our project during Summer 2022 (mid-June until mid-August, 8 weeks total). We will i) install all the technical equipment, ii) train students from Universidad Simón Bolívar, iii) select students with an assessment exam, iv) start pilot plan for 4 weeks. This pilot plan will start with the assessment exam, provide classes for 4 weeks to students and finish the course with a final exam to evaluate improvements on students. The online school course will be teaching to two groups of 20 students (40 in total). Those students will be children from 8 to 14 years old. At the end of the 4-weeks program, we will demonstrate success on children and the organization will continue the program for one more year. The long-run goal is to improve Spanish and Math average scores for their age. During summer, the project will be implemented by one member of the board.

Activities:

1. Installation of equipment: Four (4) weeks
2. Training: Four (4) weeks, three times per week
3. Students' selection: Four (4) weeks, includes assessment exam
4. Activities 1 to 3 happen at the same time.
5. Start of the online program (Pilot Plan): Week 5 until week 8.
6. Week 8: assessment final exam and closing ceremony

Indicators of Success:

- The solar equipment installed and functioning. *Goal: 100% of optimal installation by Week 4.*
- Computers, internet installed and functioning. *Goal: 100% of optimal installation by Week 4.*
- Training exam to the volunteers. *Goal: Complete the 12 training sessions by Week 4.*
- Start of online program. *Goal: Complete group (40) start on Week 5.*
- Initial program exam for students. *Goal: Complete group (40) present on Week 5.*
- End of program exam for students. *Goal: Complete group (40) present on Week 5.*
- Monthly meetings with different community leaders during the program. *Goal: 12 meetings during the pilot program.*

Name: Ana Camila Vasquez
Project Name: Puntos Solidarios: On Our Way to Sustainability
School: International House at the University of Chicago

TOTAL FUNDS REMAINING:
\$ (10,000.00)

Total Additional Funding:		
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TOTAL EXPENDITURES:
\$ 10,000.00

Student Expenses					Project Expenses				
Travel (Including Airfare)	Lodging	Communications	Food (Biweekly)	MISC	Non-Student Travel and Lodging	Direct Equipment and Supplies	Marketing and Event Support	Staffing Costs	MISC
1100	300	100	300			2500	300		
200		50				1000			
200						2000			
						900			
						1050			
Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
\$ 1,500.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 300.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,450.00	\$ 300.00	\$ -	\$ -

Total Student Expenses: \$ 2,250.00

Total Project Expenses: \$ 7,750.00

Puntos Solidarios: On Our Way to Sustainability

Venezuela, Summer 2022

International House of Chicago

Ana Vasquez, Venezuela, University of Chicago

PROPOSAL APPLICATION

“In Venezuela, prevalence of malnutrition among children grows as economic crisis deepens”- Urges Unicef.

I request a Davis Projects for Peace grant to support “Puntos Solidarios” to be sustainable and to be pioneer of accessible homeschooling in low-income communities. Funds from this grant would support an initiative that seeks to promote and boost spaces where the neediest communities can organize themselves to deal with the crisis, resolve and prevent conflicts, and be reconciliation spaces through solidarity.

More than 76% of Venezuelans are living in extreme poverty, 74% don't have continuously water supply in their homes, and 40% have daily power blackouts. Children are growing in a conflict environment and that's why we seek to provide lasting innovative solutions, while promoting community organization and citizen participation to empower community to address their problems.

Child malnutrition causes conflict. Lack of places where kids can develop themselves causes disharmony. The mix of both, causes violence.

As a solution, in every spot, we have created a peaceful atmosphere where the most needed children of each community coexist with mothers who cook every day, volunteers who help them with their academic work, a nutrition team who follow their progress, and coaches who keep them away from violence and fear. These spots broke all the barriers of conflict and are an example of understanding.

Now, we are in a critical moment where the fundings are not enough to cover the assistance of our 150 children and to pay all the cost associated with improving these places with sustainable services and technical installation of homeschooling. The specific pilot project consists of two objectives:

- 1) Install solar panels in one of our dining rooms in “Santa Cruz.” This action will be the start to obtain the main goal: making all the “Puntos Solidarios” sustainable in the next two years.
- 2) Install all the technical requirements to start an online academic program. In specific: we will i) install all the technical equipment, ii) train Simon Bolivar University students, iii) select students with an assessment exam, iv) start a pilot plan for four weeks.

ANA CAMILA VASQUEZ LEON

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EDUCATION

University of Chicago, Harris School of Public Policy

Master of Public Policy

The Pearson Institute Fellow, 2022 cohort

Chicago, IL

Expected June 2022

Universidad Católica Andrés Bello

Bachelor of Arts in Economics

2nd in Class of 2019 (Salutatorian)

Caracas, Venezuela

March 2019

EXPERIENCE

HARRIS SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Research Assistant – Pearson Institute

Chicago, IL

February 2021-June 2021

- Conduct data and survey analysis for Mercy Corps and USAID research project, Community Initiatives to Promote Peace: *Local leaders' role in resolving disputes: A study of farmer-herder conflict in Northern Nigeria.*

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION, COMPROMISO COMPARTIDO

Financial Specialist – Finances Department

Caracas, Venezuela

March – December 2020

- Led data collecting process and analysis to design business strategy of Touristic Cultural Routes Project, to foster small local economies in a sustainable way, through capacitation workshops on social entrepreneurship in Petare and Brisas de Propatria
- Supervised financial outcomes report of: Think Tank for National reconciliation, National Committee for peacebuilding, Social Platform for human rights promotion through arts, and academic exchange program with initiatives for Comuna 13, Medellín
- Managed, evaluated, and monitored organization's financial resources, statements, and accounting reports
- Identified tools for assertive decision-making, opportunities, and strategic allies to boost overall management through comprehensive planning and strategic support to directors

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION, CARACAS MI CONVIVE

Research Specialist – Knowledge Unit

Caracas, Venezuela

October 2019 – March 2020

- Conducted studies and literature regarding crime policy focused on Caracas city vulnerable population on violence prevention, victims monitoring, homicide reduction, citizen security, vulnerable communities' empowerment, among others
- Constructed quantitative and qualitative studies to analyze outcomes databases
- Designed impact evaluation methodologies for: victims monitoring project, program of employment opportunities for young men at risk in violent environments, community spaces recovery program, and psychological support network for violence victims
- Drafted academic articles about policy implications of implemented programs and related studies to be published by national and international newspapers, presented on academic forums, among others
- Advised President (E) Juan Guaido transitional government's national plan (Plan Pais) for citizenship security and police reform research, contributing to security branch report

UNIVERSIDAD CATOLICA ANDRES BELLO

Teacher Assistant – School of Economics

Caracas, Venezuela

March 2016 – January 2020

- Trading of the financial markets (elective), Semester March – July 2019
- Macroeconomics II, Semesters September – January and March – July 2020
- Statistics II, Semester March – July 2016 and academic year 2017 – 2018

CAF – DEVELOPMENT BANK OF LATIN AMERICA

Intern – Direction of Impact Evaluation and Public Policy Learn

Caracas, Venezuela

June 2018 – February 2019

- Led literature review on impact evaluation and policy learning of institution's projects for policy briefs elaboration
- Investigated and designed methodologies for impact evaluation of social projects in areas of education, public health, infrastructure and transportation, water sanitation, social security and violence, urban and rural areas development
- Developed statistical analysis of databases regarding social programs using STATA software

MERCANTIL BANK

Intern – Department of Economic Research

Caracas, Venezuela

June 2017 – February 2018

- Constructed and monitored macroeconomics databases for further analysis and projections
- Drafted weekly and monthly newsletters analyzing most relevant news and its impact on nation's economy
- Prepared departmental presentations to Board of Directors on relevant economic data for bank's decision-making process

NGO, UN MUNDO SIN MORDAZA

Coordinator of Finances

Caracas, Venezuela

June 2016 – December 2016

- Managed internal processes, such as organization's budget, metrics and impact evaluations, and accounting

RESEARCH & PUBLICATIONS

Equilibrium – Development Center for Latin America

Associate Researcher

Lima, Peru

August - October 2020

- Research: COVID – 19 and gender gap increase on Venezuelan migrant population on Latin America

Caracas Chronicles Newspaper

December 2019

- Published article: Left behind & killed, examining data and stories on children murdered within families unraveled by migration and hunger

LEADERSHIP & PRESENTATION EXPERIENCE

University of Chicago, Harris School of Public Policy

Elected Co-President of Latin American Matters

Chicago, IL

October 2020 – July 2021

Universidad Catolica Andres Bello

Elected Co-President of Students Council, School of Economics

Caracas, Venezuela

October 2016 – July 2017

Academic Coordinator, Topicality Economics Congress XXIII Edition

June 2016 – November 2017

- Supervised conference's topics selection, designated, and contacted speakers for biggest national academic event with more than 600 economics and related careers students

Integral student award & Academic Merit Award

June 2015 – November 2018

Harvard World Model of United Nations

March 2018

- Achieved a Diplomacy Award and Best Delegate at Harvard World Model of United Nations Conference held in Panama City, Panama

Universidad de Los Andes Model of United Nations

March 2016

- Accomplished an Outstanding Delegate Award at Universidad de Los Andes Model of United Nations Conference held in Bogota, Colombia

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Universidad Catolica Andres Bello

Volunteering Group Coordinator, School of Economics

Caracas, Venezuela

October 2014 – July 2016

- Guided volunteer math teacher's staff at educative center "Fe y alegria. Andy Aparicio"
- Attained an Outstanding volunteer award 2015, given by the Direction of Projection and Community Relations

Community Ambassadors Foundation

Teaching Staff member

Caracas, Venezuela

October 2017 – February 2018

- Coach for high school students of beneficiary communities, La Vega and Antimano, on programs for leadership development, oratory, and negotiation through Model of United Nations competitions

SKILLS & INTERESTS

- Languages: Spanish (Native), English (Fluent), French (Basic – Intermediate)
- Computer: Microsoft Office: Excel, Word, PowerPoint (Advanced), R (Intermediate), STATA (Intermediate)
- Professional dancer: 8 years of experience as a choreographer and teacher of jazz, commercial dance, hip-hop, tap and Latin rhythms, competed at most important national convention between 2013 -2017, senior staff member of Venezuela's biggest dance academy (Impetu Dance Studio)
- International teaching experience at: Inside Out Professional Company (Chicago, Illinois) as guest choreographer and competition member, and Lead teacher of dancing club at The British School
- Coordinator of School of Economics Reading Club at Universidad Catolica Andres Bello