

Lessons learned from organizations implementing income generation plus health education among indigenous Guatemalan women artisans:

Findings from a qualitative study

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Introduction

- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are working in Guatemala to alleviate poverty through income generation activities.¹
- Across the globe, some organizations are combining income generation and health education activities to address health issues more directly.^{2,3}

Objective

To identify lessons learned from NGOs working to improve the livelihood and wellbeing of indigenous Guatemalan women artisans through income generation plus health education

Methods

Organizations:

- NGOs that combined health and income generation with indigenous artisans for over five years
 - Friendship Bridge
 - Aj Quen



Participants:

- Indigenous artisan women (n=45)
- NGO staff (n=11)



Data collection:

- Semi-structured interviews
- Participant observation



Analysis:

- Grounded theory approach
- Conceptual model

Results

Organizational Factors

- Staff dedication to NGO's mission and values
- Staff reliability and trustworthiness among clients
- Group structure format of educational sessions and other meetings



Artisan Level Factors

- Need to supplement artisan income
- Family support and involvement

Health Education Potential

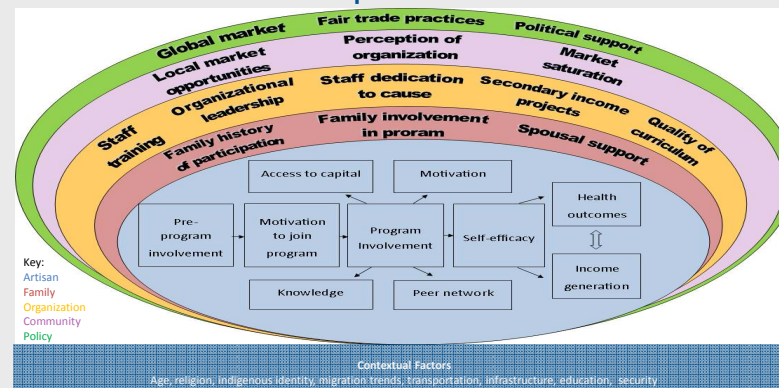
- Some recall of health information even at a low dose
- Topics frequently recalled
 - hygiene
 - reproductive health
 - self-esteem
- Group format of meetings in combination with organizational trust maximized this potential

*"I feel different now...
I feel like part of an association.
I feel like I'm at home and I trust them.
Before we were scared...
but now we're not afraid anymore."*
—Artisan from Aj Quen

*"What I need to do next is learn other things,
other types of work...
but I'm not going to say
that I'm not going to be an artisan.
I just want to learn another type of work,
so I can earn my plate of beans."*
—Artisan from Aj Quen

*"I learned about health.
That the mother always cares for her children,
for their health.
Wash your hands before eating.
Wash the fruit before eating it ...
You always have to see a doctor
at the health post if you have problems.
You have to care for your health."*
— Artisan from Friendship Bridge

Conceptual Model



Discussion

- Addressing participant needs at multiple levels helps ensure success.
- Family plays a critical role in the sustained participation of an artisan with the NGO.
- The group structure helps diffuse and reinforce health information.
- Local and global markets impact participant success.
- Individual success depends on self-efficacy fostered through participation.

Conclusion

NGOs that include health education with income generation have the potential to improve the health of vulnerable populations.

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References

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