

2nd Interim Report

Alterna Center for Social Innovation & Entrepreneurship

With generous support from the Jessica Jennifer Cohen Foundation

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Introduction

September 3 – Now more than halfway through my time here in Quetzaltenango I am reflecting on how comfortable I feel navigating a professional environment in Spanish. It's a good thing too because I have started individual consulting sessions with Guatemalan social entrepreneurs and need to be able to communicate not only effectively, but on my feet as well. With a stronger language foundation I also feel I can connect more deeply to the culture and people of Guatemala during both work events and leisure travels. While I feel quite at home here now, the exit horizon is also fast approaching, a slight reminder to

continue making the most out of every moment as volunteer consultant building capacity for these social entrepreneurs of [Alterna](#).

Finding “jugo” in every moment

There is a phrase in Spanish, “sacar el jugo,” which is akin to the English, “squeeze the most out of something.” We tell our entrepreneurs who apply to our programs and workshops that if/when they come that they do so prepared to *sacar el jugo* of the experience. It is a great reminder for me as well, both in the field delivering workshops and in the office designing them. Here are some of the moments where I’ve tried to *sacar el jugo* in the past couple months since my last report.

Marketing Workshop

We partnered with a local marketing agency to provide a one-day workshop on building brand identity, communicating that identity, and creating innovative marketing campaigns. Feedback from the entrepreneurs after the event was overwhelming positive. My expertise is not fully in this area so in order to be of greatest service to the entrepreneurs I had to do a bit more preparation myself in alignment with our co-facilitators. This process gave me new insights both for teaching and for implementation in my own future projects.

Mini-workshop design

As part of the selection process for an upcoming program focused on sustainable eco-tourism I was asked to help design a new workshop that would serve in evaluating not just the entrepreneurial but also the human profile of the applicants.

In other words, while our application online captures their business model and other objective information, it doesn’t capture their commitment, creativity, critical thinking and other aspects that we recognize as essential for entrepreneurs coming into our programs.



To *sacar el jugo* for this project meant diving into relevant didactic literature, evolving our current tools, integrating team feedback, and practicing empathic curriculum design as a means of determining what would also be most useful for the entrepreneurs.

The final product, which we will start delivering in a few weeks is a real-world experience as the training. With groups of 20 entrepreneurs we will head to local parks, open spaces, and generally under-utilized areas, and challenge them to design possible sustainable tourism endeavors for that area.

Like our design process, we'll look for how they collaborate in teams, how they think critically about a business opportunity, and overall how engaged they are with the process. In the end, we'll ask ourselves, did they *sacar el jugo*?

Individual consulting



Before arriving at Alterna I was most excited about the opportunity to work one-on-one with entrepreneurs here Guatemala, developing strategic action plans, defining impact strategies, ensuring financially viable models, and more.

After a couple months getting oriented to Alterna's methodology and to the local context I am now in the process of that individual support. The entrepreneur I am currently working with has invented a system of rainwater capture and storage that he wants to deliver to rural communities in Guatemala who suffer from lack of access to water.

In our first meeting we discussed his capital needs and refined his plan to justify those needs to an investor. We also further developed his product validation plan, which will consist of several pilot programs in rural communities and a focus on raising awareness of the product, developing strategic partnerships, and evaluating logistical costs.

I enjoy working with this entrepreneur because he always comes to our meetings incredibly well-prepared. With such commitment I am driven to do the same so that I can meet him where he is -- enthusiastically ready to *sacar el jugo* of every encounter.

A look ahead

Much of these past couple months has been spent in creative sessions designing and evolving our tools, methodologies, and overall curriculum strategy. The fruit of that labor will be harvested in my final months to come, with workshops for nearly 150 entrepreneurs (combined) planned until November. This is the real joy of our work, at least for me. We experience first-hand the passionate people we have been working hard for, and have the privilege of playing a small role in catalyzing the impact they wish to generate for their communities and for their country.

