

Enseña por México gaining deep knowledge to place local leaders in Yucatán

Snapshot

When Enseña por México (ExM) began to expand to a new region in the easternmost part of México, Yucatan, they had to learn and adapt organizational decisions towards collective leadership. ExM successfully attracted and onboarded local staff and fellows who deeply understand and connect with the Yucatan community.

Context

ExM first cohort was placed in 2013. As of now, the organization has 254 active teachers and 656 alumni. Three years ago, ExM started working in the Yucatan peninsula, known for its own culture, language, and ways of living. With most schools being rural and remote, access to universities and places where ExM could promote the program and recruit participants was limited.

Choice

ExM choice is two-phased: understanding the community first to then adapt the approach to engage and recruit local leaders. Through working in the region for two years, ExM came to different realizations. A key insight included that many students speak Mayan. To build a strong relationship and foster local leadership with these students and their communities, ExM needed to recruit local fellows who understood the community, spoke the local language and had a commitment to transformation. To identify and recruit such local leaders, a person in their team also needed to have a deep understanding of the regional dynamics and Mayan, and hence, needed to be part of the community. ExM recruited a local recruitment and selection coordinator who translated promotional videos to Mayan, understood local customs and needs, and approached the communities. Learning that physical access was a significant constraint and online promotion was not an option, ExM adapted its recruitment and selection strategies to make time for in-person promotional events. The idea of becoming local leaders resonated with the candidates.

Collective leadership

Through this contextualized approach ExM understood what is needed to recruit Mayan-speaking leaders that were interested in being part of the program. Identifying and recruiting leaders who represent the community will enable locally-driven collective leadership that unlocks systemic change based on an understanding of the needs of the communities.



Community impact

To have an impact at the system level Enseña por México is now focusing on structuring collaboration with local stakeholders to create pathways for participants to continue fostering their leadership and impacting their communities after the program. Moreover, Enseña por México is also joining efforts with local leaders to ensure the preservation and use of the Mayan language.

Further resources

- [Overview of recruitment choices and results by ExM](#) (Spanish)
- [Story of an ExM fellow from Yucatán](#) (Spanish)