

During my time in Colombia, I worked with an organisation called Todos Podemos (which means we all can). This organisation works at training and empowering social entrepreneurs from low socioeconomic areas. They mainly work with women and have trained over 100 social entrepreneurs to build sustainable businesses, giving them a sustainable income and the opportunity to transform their local communities.

My team and I were tasked with helping to lessen the disengagement between the foreign expat community and the local community and to find sponsors for 25 women to be able to be trained by the organisation. They called this sponsorship program *Adopt a Dream*.

We set out to do this by creating more awareness for the organisation and promoting the Adopt a Dream program through digital and in-person outreach. I led the in-person outreach team, which included volunteers from the local university, who were essential in understanding more about the local community and how best to engage with people (as well as providing necessary translation into Spanish). We engaged with expats in popular areas around Medellín by attending different events and networking with expat leaders of local businesses. From hearing feedback from them on the strategy given to us, I presented the founder of Todos Podemos with an alternative strategy to have the best impact and engagement rather than just talking to individuals to sponsor the entrepreneurs. I found that establishing trust was challenging in the context, especially when money was involved. My alternative strategy was to promote a free in-person event to help build this trust between the communities, as well as raise awareness about the organisation and issues of sustainability. I planned this event with very little available time, and even though others were hesitant at first about the idea, it resulted in a huge success with a great turnout and vital discussion.

This event prepared the team well for the final event, where we were able to engage with social entrepreneurs that Todos Podemos had previously worked with. I made many posters and flyers to help people find out about it, and I also reached out to online networks popular with expats, messaging different leaders of different groups and being able to make posts about the event in popular accounts. The final event went well, with people being really engaged with the organisation and the purpose behind it, leading them to respond to the call to contribute financially. This money will then continue to support women in making sustainable businesses from the essential resources given by the organisation. From the entrepreneurs we met who had previously had this opportunity, I was astonished at the long-term impact it has had on their lives, as a sustainable income for these women transforms their home and family lives, as well as the impact it had on other women in the local community who can benefit from services or employment from the sustainable businesses.

From this project, I learned a lot about engaging and transforming communities in need. Make\_sense delivered training throughout the project and told us to prioritise empathy from the start of the project. We developed this skill by engaging with a great diversity of local communities in Colombia in the first couple of weeks, learning about individual struggles and community initiatives that shape the character of a community. I also learnt this through meeting women whose lives were changed by the work of Todos Podemos, and hearing from the founder of this organisation his purpose and drive to help those and

transform individual's lives and opportunities, to build peace and social resilience within the community.