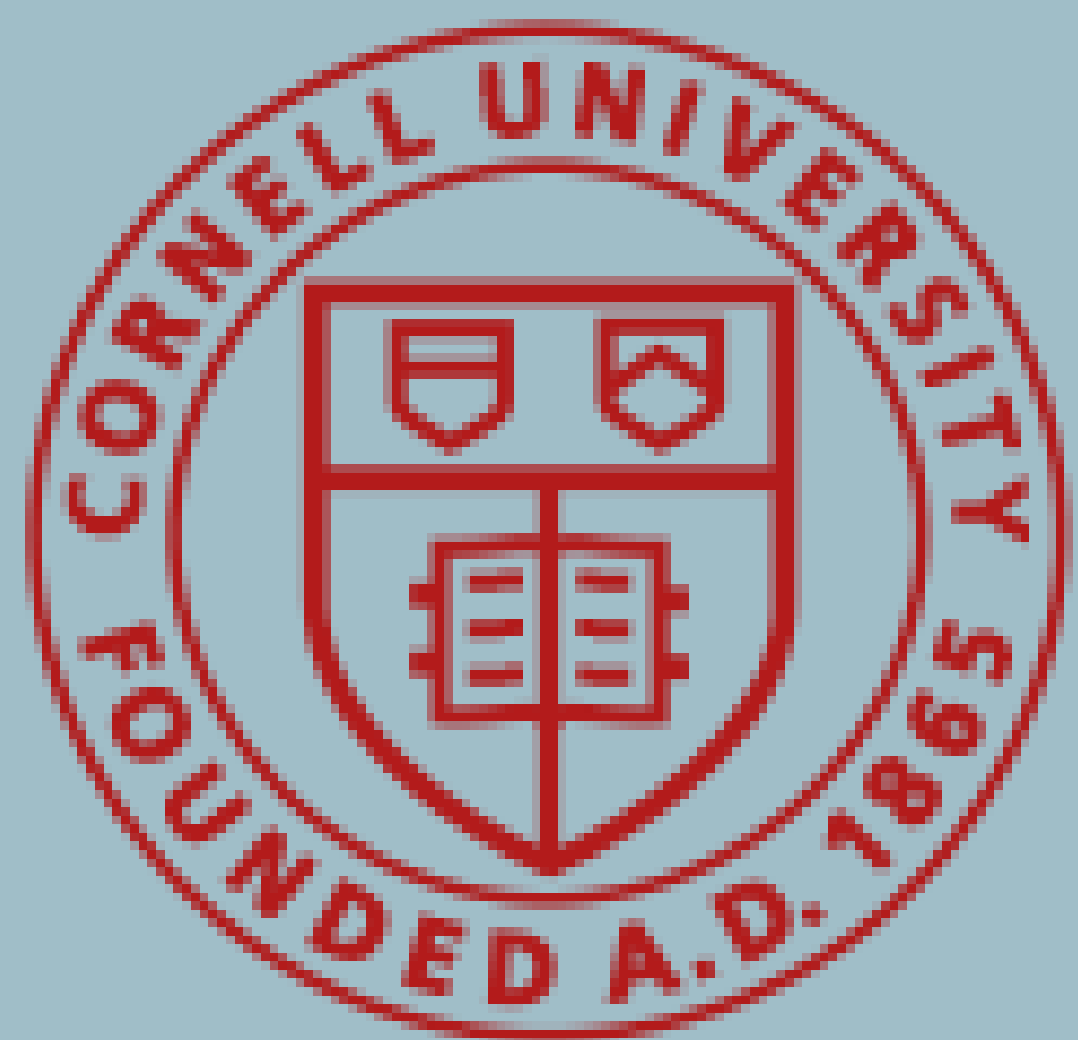




From Medellín to the World

Building International Support for Community-Based Work in Colombia



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Laidlaw Scholars Programme | makesense × Platohedro

Abstract

During my six-week Laidlaw International Experience in Medellín, Colombia, I worked with makesense and partnered with Platohedro, a community organization that uses art, education, and technology to support youth, women, and families. My project focused on strengthening Platohedro's international fundraising efforts. I researched and organized 100 potential donor contacts across Latin America, North America, and Europe, created an outreach email template, supported fundraising platforms, developed a content calendar, and helped with website updates and translations in English, Spanish, and French. During the experience, my role also shifted toward direct community engagement with youth in El Faro and women and mothers through creative workshops. Because outreach began near the end of the six-week experience, fundraising outcomes could not yet be measured. Instead, the project created resources that Platohedro can continue developing and evaluating.

"Platohedro gave me the language to say what I always felt. My art now has meaning - for me and for my community."

Valentina M.

Materials

The project used Platohedro's existing digital and fundraising resources, including its Patreon and Vaki platforms and website. I also worked with an international donor database, an outreach email template, and a content creation calendar to organize and support future fundraising efforts. Website materials were also prepared in English, Spanish, and French to make Platohedro's work more accessible to an international audience.

For the community portion of my experience, I worked with the art materials and activities already used by Platohedro's youth and women's programming, including creative workshops in El Faro and activities with women and mothers.

Methodology

I searched for potential supporters across Latin America, North America, and Europe. Contacts were intentionally selected based on their geographic connections, interests, professional networks, and potential connection to Platohedro's mission.



Donor Identification Process

1. Identify potential international supporters.
2. Consider geographic connection, mission alignment, community involvement, and interest in international nonprofit work.
3. Research a variety of potential supporters, including nonprofits, entrepreneurs, content creators, churches, law firms, and community organizations.
4. Create a structured database of 100 potential contacts.
5. Develop an outreach email template and digital resources for future communication.

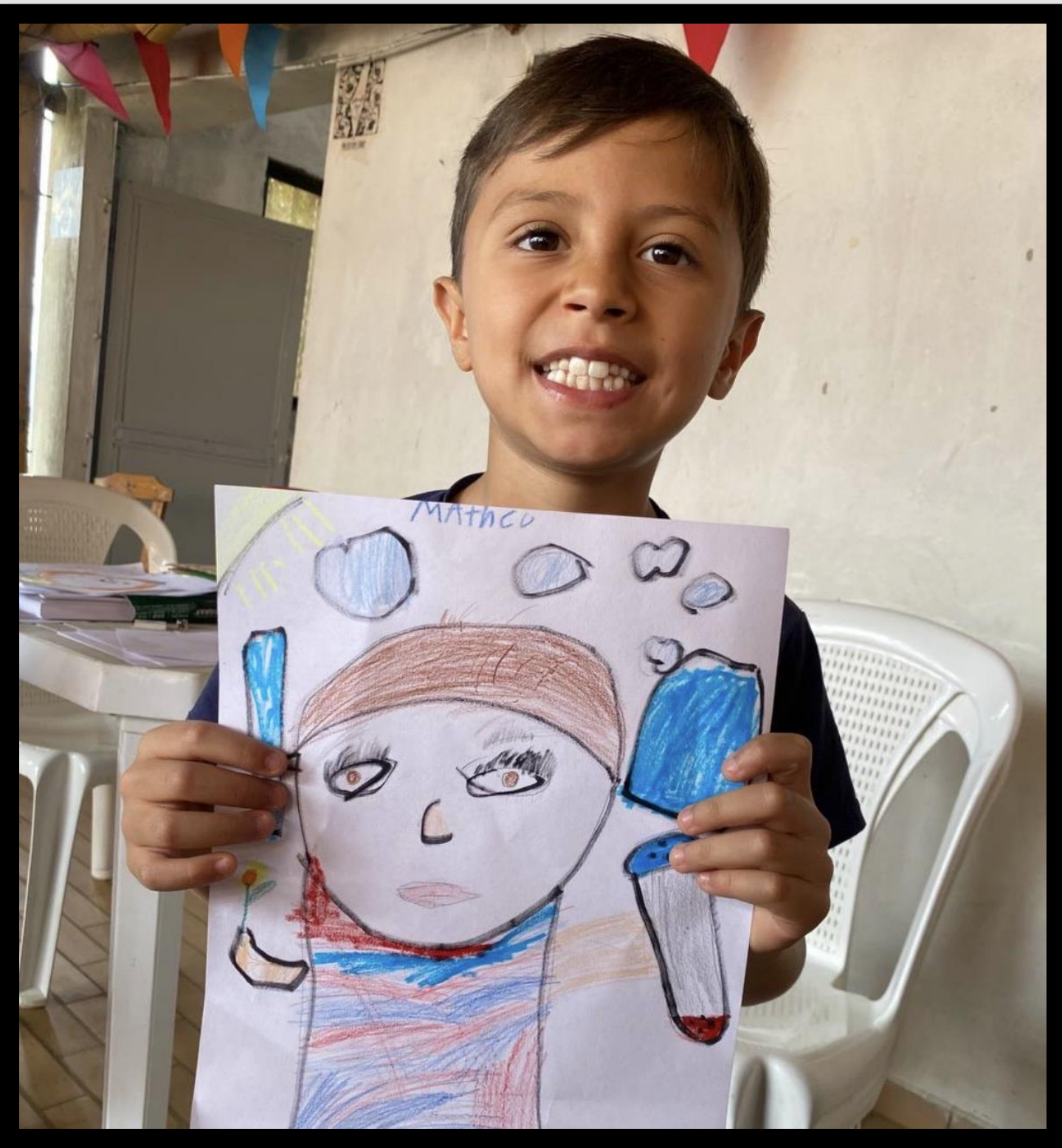
As my role became more independent, I shifted from primarily working on fundraising to participating directly in Platohedro's community programming. I worked with youth in El Faro and participated in workshops with women and mothers.

Results



By the end of the experience, we were able to improve Platohedro's website and update its Patreon and Vaki fundraising platforms to make them more accessible for potential supporters. We also created a social media content calendar to help maintain consistent posting and regularly increase visibility and viewership of Platohedro's work.

As my role became more independent, my work expanded beyond fundraising. I participated in youth programming in El Faro and creative workshops with women and mothers, giving me the opportunity to directly engage with the communities connected to Platohedro's work.



Conclusion

The experience showed me that international fundraising is not only about finding potential donors. It is about creating support that connects back to the people and communities the organization serves.

My role changed during the six weeks, moving from fundraising research toward direct community engagement. Working with youth and women helped me better understand the connection between organizational resources and community programming.

The experience also strengthened my leadership skills in Restorative problem-solving, collaboration, communication, adaptability, and decision-making. I learned that Restorative leadership for me means understanding a problem and creating a solution that fits the specific environment and situation, rather than assuming one solution will work everywhere.

The goal is not just to find a solution. It is to find the right solution for the people and environment involved.

Introduction

Platohedro is a Medellín-based organization that uses art, education, technology, and community collaboration to create opportunities for people in the communities it serves. Its programs include creative activities for youth and workshops for women and mothers in communities including El Faro and Buenos Aires. Platohedro needed additional resources to help sustain its community programming. My project explored how an international donor network could provide another potential source of long-term support.

Research Question

How can Platohedro expand its international donor network while continuing to support the needs of its local community?



Recommendations

Platohedro can continue building on this project by using the 100-contact donor database as a starting point for consistent international outreach. Future outreach should be tracked by region, type of organization, responses, and donations so Platohedro can identify which connections are most useful over time. The organization can also continue using its updated fundraising platforms, multilingual website content, and content calendar to make its work easier for international audiences to understand and support. Most importantly, fundraising efforts should continue to stay connected to the needs of the youth, women, and communities participating in Platohedro's programs, so that international support directly helps sustain the community work already taking place.

"I arrived thinking I had nothing to say. I left with a fanzine and a book from the library. That changed everything."

Andres K.

Acknowledgements

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#BuenVivir #BuenConocer

