



María Alejandra Salgado González - Costa Rica

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Good morning, everyone. My name is Alejandra, from Costa Rica, a small country in Central America. I brought some simple pictures for my solution. Just for you to know about Costa Rica, there is a level of around 22% of poverty, and 9% of all the population lives in extreme poverty, but this doesn't happen just in the rural countryside. We have what we could call the developed communities, which have industries, schools, a higher employment index; and we have communities really close to these cities or developed communities, and we called them communities of high social risk.

Nowadays, there are efforts being made, some of your ideas are already being implemented by volunteer programs and NGOs working there. However, the reality from here [a developed community] to here [one of high social risk], so many times is not so clear. So many times you drive from the capital or from one of the main cities, and right next to you there is a community that is living in extreme poverty. We know this, and there is information out there; we know that there are volunteering programs, we know they are working, and that there are NGOs also doing something. But for me, what I believe is that a lot of people from developed communities are not willing to volunteer because there is a disconnection in information, they do not know what are the needs. We need to raise awareness of what the needs of these people are. So mainly, we are having a disconnection here. If I want to volunteer I can go to Google and see how I can help someone near my community, there are so many webpages there but maybe I won't be able to find anywhere that I can volunteer, where I could teach, or give support in mathematics or preparation for kids in elementary school.

The solution that I would like to introduce is a virtual platform, which you could imagine as a matchmaker between volunteering and needs. So, as you know, there are matchmaking platforms for people looking for a partner, "I'm like this, I know this, I do this, and I'm good at this", and if you know what are the needs you can go into these platform and you can link with projects and NGOs, and then you can use your capabilities to help others in your communities who are living in extreme poverty. This is my main objective: a virtual platform that will give this space for communities to network.

There will be a big theory of change involved, because communities with high social risks of course are hard to enter, you will be seen sometimes as a foreigner who doesn't understand their needs, so it has to start with a big change in the mindset of people who are willing to volunteer. There are less than 10% of adults worldwide currently volunteering, so there is a lot of space to improve on, but we also need to have an open mindset for people to be able and open to receive help, not help but contribution in learning.

Some steps for implementation of this platform require giving a space to connect communities, to start networking and make information available. If you want to help somehow, you can go into this platform from your mobile, or laptop or any public place that has a computer, and if you are able to help in teaching, then you can do it. So the steps for implementation require a pilot to start, we have to make a selection of communities and funding to develop of the platform. Something that is key here is to have community leaders, who are able to map the needs of the community, the projects going on and the NGOs involved, but also community leaders that are encouraging people in more developed communities or in cities to start volunteering.

I want to close by saying that my solution is a call for action. This is what I want to pilot in education, people who can help in education, but it could be also scaled and translated to different SDGs and initiatives for different SDGs.

Thank you.