

WORKING AND LEARNING TOGETHER IN GUATEMALA



Below is an interview with Homero Fuentes speaking about the importance of ATD Fourth World Guatemala's [Working and Learning Together](#) (TAJ) project. Since 2009, TAJ has brought together people from some of the most under-resourced areas of Guatemala City to build artisanal products using recycled and re-used materials. The money brought in by the sale of these products represents an alternative source of income for the families that take part. Twice a week, the TAJ group comes together at the ATD Fourth World house to work together and support each other.

“TAJ is an example of perseverance, a positive attitude, and solidarity. Speaking about TAJ is illustrating a group of Guatemalans who, confronted by the social adversity of the country, have dedicated themselves to becoming an example of change for their families and communities. The coexistence between its members has developed a bond of brotherhood and solidarity that allows them to confront together the different obstacles

of their daily life.

“Each of the works they create has a history behind it. From the origin of the primary materials to the conversations which are shared while the work is going on. The final product symbolizes the strength and perseverance that each that each member needed to learn the technique. The colors and textures are proof that what for many are garbage or waste, for others is a tool to elaborate a small work of art with a new use.

“A project like TAJ allows us to keep hope that, with work, dedication, and discipline, we can make significant change in many areas. And that at the same time, contribute to the sustainability of our environment. All of these aspects are the engines that drive the search for a more inclusive and sustainable economy for our communities. Small changes perhaps, but at the end of the day they are significant for the future generations that surround these agents of change.

“Many of its members may come and go. Their family situation, or their economic situation, doesn’t let them continue. But the call of hope stays strong. It converts itself into the motivation for those who have the chance to continue struggling to go on. This is why I have the honor to say that I know TAJ, and that I hope many others will have the opportunity to know them, and to continue in this struggle.”

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