

ARE YOU A CITIZEN OR JUST A RESIDENT IN GUATE?



OUR MIL PROPOSAL TO
ANALYZE AND DECIDE
PAGE 3



THE COMIC: A TAMALE
WITH A BILL
PAGE 9



THE IMPORTANCE
OF YOUTH VOTE
PAGE 14

IN ADDITION:

- Voto con Sentido is Launched in the Communities Page 4
- Citizens are Born and Made Page 10
- The Role of Radio in the Community Page 6
- Women's Voices Spring Up in the Ixil Area Page 13

#YOVOTOCONSENTIDO

(MY VOTE IS MEANINGFUL)

CONTENT:

Our MIL proposal to analyze and decide pág. 3

The Media Drive Audiences to Analyze First págs. 4 y 5

The Role of Radio and Communicators is a Key Element in the Community págs. 6 y 7

Do You Just Reside in Guate? pág. 8

The Comic: A tamale with a bill pág. 9

Citizens are Born and Made pág. 10

During Election Times, It Is Crucial to See, Listen, and Analyze Before Deciding pág. 11

Infographic: Women as Voters or Public Officials. Get to Know Some Facts pág. 12

Women's Voices Spring Up in the Ixil Area pág. 13

The Lack of Employment Worries Youth págs. 14 y 15

Learn more in 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 pág. 16

CREDITS:

Chief Editor: **ONEIDA RODAS** Photo Compilation and Logistics Support: **DAYANA CÓRDOVA**

Content Editor: **CELSO SOLANO** Campaign Video Production: **PABLO CRUZ**

Interviews and Systematization: **EUNICE VELÁSQUEZ** Campaign Audio Production: **CELSO SOLANO**

Layout and Visual Arts: **JUAN DANIEL CRUZ** Administration: **MARÍA LAURA SAQUIC**

PARTNER RADIO STATIONS:



SPECIAL THANKS ARE DUE TO THE COMMUNICATORS IN EACH RADIO STATION, WHO OFFERED US THEIR COLLABORATION AND INSIGHT FOR THE VOTO CON SENTIDO CAMPAIGN

- | | | | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Andrés Yax
Teresa Yax
Anahí Velásquez
Verónica Sepón | Carlos Azurdia
José Francisco Noj
Carlos Teleguario
Julio Xico
Matty Nicolás
Gabriela Azurdia | Concepción Ajanel
Giovani Chaclán | María Rivera
Mayra de León
Balbina Cuyuch | Sebastiana Sen
Abel Vicente
Sheny Tax
Josefa Chipel | Aldo Moro
Marileny Choc
Alex Acté
Feliciano Mo |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|---|--|---|

This is a publication by Asociación COMUNICARES in collaboration with DW Akademie, with support from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, within the framework of the Voto con Sentido Project.

Guatemala, March 2023.

The contents of this magazine may be freely used provided that due reference is made to the source. All Rights Reserved.

OUR MIL PROPOSAL TO ANALYZE AND DECIDE

ILLUSTRATIONS: MAFER ALDANA AND JUAN DANIEL CRUZ

BACKGROUND:

In Guatemala, we experience a complex electoral scene. Communities far away from urban centers receive some unusual visits in this period, with extraordinary campaign pledges sparking the dreams of community members. But then, after the election, everything falls into dormancy again for years in which very little or nothing will happen.

The strategies to obtain a favorable vote from the constituents in this communities are not necessarily new. These include a resource used in election campaigns to encourage the communities to vote for a certain candidate in exchange for specific things, like groceries, steel sheets, shovels or hoes, or a bill placed under a plate of food served during a campaign rally. These are some of the commonalities during election times shared with us communicators from six local radio stations in four departments of Guatemala, which are engaged in the project "Voto con Sentido" [which translates into "Meaningful Vote"]

They also agreed that there are other persuasion techniques that have been applied more recently with younger voters, which specifically refer to candidates offering jobs to youth if they get elected.

Another symptom of disinformation and manipulation detected in the six communities visited regards the female vote. We gathered insights related to the prevalence of patriarchal patterns in many regions, where men tell women whom they should vote for, without giving them options and leaving them without access to information on their right to vote freely and without any conditions.



TOWARDS MORE CRITICAL AUDIENCES

In remote communities located far away from the bustle of urban centers, the radio is present every day. It keeps company while carrying out everyday chores and it is also present in family celebrations. This is why the "Voto con Sentido" project was launched at local radio stations, but with an insight different from the traditional way of making radio shows.

"Voto con Sentido" has a significant value because it seeks to promote critical audiences, which means informed audiences that know their vote cannot be bought or committed, that no one can tell an individual whom to vote for, and that everybody is entitled to decide whether to vote or not.

This communication work targets young voters because they represent an important share of the population. They are indeed the majority, and they are often indifferent to the work of politicians. Nevertheless, their lack of knowledge can make it easy to mislead them on how to vote. It also targets women, who have historically had little opportunity to express their opinions at election times.

Broadly speaking, the "Voto con Sentido" project engages radio stations to encourage their audiences to talk about politics, to be informed of candidate pledges, to think about the different options, and to analyze what is best for their community.

PROMOTING AN ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

The project arises from Media and Information Literacy—MIL—training processes that Asociación COMUNICARES, in collaboration with DW Akademie, has been carrying out since 2019 with youth, teachers, and media outlets in communities far away from urban centers in Guatemala.

It urges Guatemalan men and women to not just take up space within the territory where they have been born, but to also take part in their future. This is citizenship. This is promoting an active citizenship.

It also disseminates the fact that the vote is free, personal, and secret; that distrusting political pledges and asking questions is highly important, and it is indeed what makes you exercise your citizenship.

There, where political work reaches every four years and the radio reaches every day, there is where these messages will be broadcast to invite citizens to see, listen, analyze, and decide, and thus be able to cast a "Meaningful Vote".



VOTO CON SENTIDO IS LAUNCHED IN THE COMMUNITIES

TEXT BY: CELSO SOLANO

PHOTOGRAPHS: ONEIDA RODAS, EUNICE VELÁSQUEZ

ILLUSTRATIONS: JUAN DANIEL CRUZ

Today, information travels very fast and in large quantities from all around the world. As long as we have a smart phone available, a lot of information will reach us, including truthful, misleading, and false information that will catch our eye. This may become tiring, but it may also lead people to indifference, which would hinder a comprehensive development of citizenry.

As an institutional response to disinformation and the infodemic, in 2020, COMUNICARES began working with local radio stations and their communicators to contribute to educate and build a more analytical and critical citizenry. Thus, we worked in promoting Media and Information Literacy (MIL) with at least thirty media outlets across the country, developing local initiatives focused on encouraging audiences to ask more questions before believing or sharing any information they could access.

This is how the “Voto con Sentido” [Meaningful Vote] project was launched. This is a MIL project led by COMUNICARES in collaboration with DW Akademie, with the participation of six local radio stations, which aim at building a more active citizenship in the communities they reach in 2023, an election year. During the implementation of the project, male and female communicators at the partner radio stations have acquired MIL competences and are now seeking to promote the meaningful participation of their audiences to identify disinformation and conduct a critical analysis before casting their vote.

“Voto con Sentido” includes a campaign targeting Guatemalans aged 18 and above from rural areas, men or women, younger or older, and encourages them to analyze the political information and make personal, independent voting decisions, free from any type of pressure. It also encourages male and female citizens to understand and compare information before taking it for granted. A fact may seem credible or not credible, but in any case, the campaign calls for not believing anything at first sight. It calls for questioning, doubting, and seeking different points of view.

INTO THE HEARTLAND OF GUATEMALA

“VOTO CON SENTIDO” PARTNER RADIO STATIONS INCLUDE:

RADIO STATION	RADIO FREQUENCY	ON THE INTERNET	AUDIENCE REACHED
Radio Sayaxché	91.7 FM	✓	South of Petén
Radio Quiché	90.7 FM	✓	Department of Quiché
Radio La Voz de Nebaj	90.7 FM	✓	Ixil Area, Quiché
Radio Chuimekená	81.0 AM	✓	Totonicapán
Radio La Niña On Line	*	✓	Western part of Guatemala
Radio Época On Line	*	✓	Western part of Guatemala

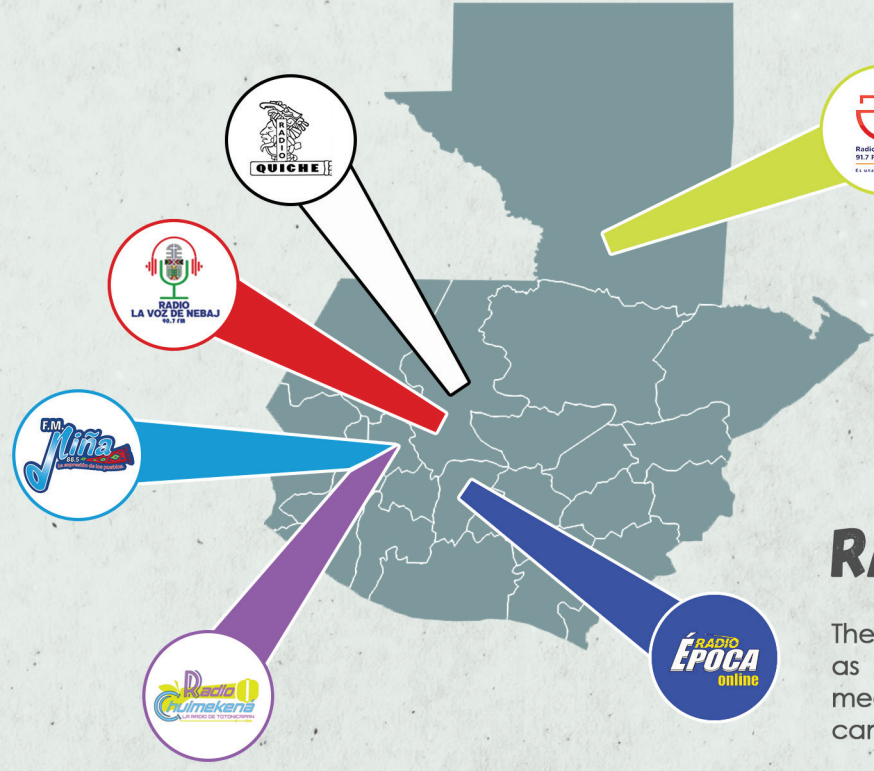
The “Voto con Sentido” partner radio stations have decided to break the traditional pattern of election coverage. During this election period, they will not only inform their audiences, but they will also undertake actions to develop more analytical and critical audiences. They will produce radio shows to conduct local political analyses; they will engage in joint broadcasts to promote an active citizenship and will carry out local dynamics to listen to their audiences.

THE VOICES IN THE RADIO STATIONS

Regarding the project's objective, Carlos Azurdia, Director at Radio Época Online, mentions that "This is for people to analyze and think before voting."

"Voto con Sentido is really knowing how to watch, how to listen, and mainly, how to analyze, so we can make better decisions," points out Mayra de León, Radio Presenter and Editor at La Voz de Nebaj in the Ixil area in Quiché.

Aldo Moro, Director at Radio Sayaxché, says that "Voto con Sentido" promotes "a well-analyzed and reasoned vote." He adds that "This campaign provides youth, women, and the whole community with an analysis; it makes us think and reflect upon what we are going to do in this election."



RADIO AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The campaign comprises audio messages, as well as images and video pieces produced for social media, which will be gradually posted as the election campaign period moves forward.

It seeks to reach communities; thus, radio slots were produced in Spanish, but they have also been produced in Ixil, K'iche', Q'eqchi', and Kaqchikel.

The purpose of this communication effort is summarized by Concepción Ajanel, Communicator and Director at Radio La Niña Online: "The vote must not be manipulated by someone else, neither by a relative, friend, neighbor, or partner, nor by any community leader," she claims.

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE

Since 2019, Asociación COMUNICARES has been working in collaboration with DW Akademie in the dissemination of Media and Information Literacy, known as MIL, in different regions of Guatemala, particularly in rural areas.

Since then, it has introduced at least 1,400 youth from the heartland of the country into different MIL processes. Many of such youth have attended trainings for spokespersons and communication, and they have prepared radio shows or recorded videos using their cell phones to express their ideas, both on the radio and on social media. This is carried out with the purpose of moving forward the promotion of more analytical and critical youth, within the framework of the Informatecos project.

COMUNICARES has also implemented processes to support communicators of at least thirty media across the country.

In 2022, it launched Tinamit, an online open-access visual novel promoting decision-making and targeting youth, which is available to be played without having to download it. In 2023, along with the partner radio stations, we are undertaking this project, "Voto con Sentido," which goes one step further inside the communities.



"Voto con Sentido is really knowing how to watch, how to listen, and mainly, how to analyze, so we can make better decisions".
Mayra de León
Producer at La Voz de Nebaj.



"Voto con Sentido is for people to analyze and think before voting".
Carlos Azurdia
Director at Radio Época Online.



"This campaign provides youth, women, and the whole community with an analysis".
Aldo Moro
Director at Radio Sayaxché.



"The vote must not be manipulated by either a relative, friend, neighbor, or partner".
Concepción Ajanel
Director at Radio La Niña Online.

THE ROLE OF RADIO AND COMMUNICATORS IS A KEY ELEMENT IN THE COMMUNITY

When talking about radio, one might think of a communication medium characterized by keeping company to the community with music, by informing immediately the latest news, and by bringing home interesting and educational programs. All this is true, but radio today is not limited to this. In the past, radio was regarded as a one-way means of communication, i.e., the radio station broadcast and the audience listened.

Social media, messaging applications, and other virtual spaces have driven radio stations and radio producers to mainstream new technologies into their way of communicating facts, which require audiences not only to listen, but also express themselves and provide feedback to radio broadcasters on the contents of their shows right away.

This turn has also posed a challenge for local radio stations, which now must juggle multiple tasks, such as producing their radio shows, managing their social media, and responding to WhatsApp messages often with the same number of staff as they had before the digital era.

Radio stations engaged in the project "Voto con Sentido" [Meaningful Vote], this new way of broadcasting, have been presented with the possibility of analyzing the importance of listening to the voice of audiences and developing ideas on how to contribute to the promotion of critical thinking among citizens, especially in election times.



WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR RADIO TO PROMOTE MORE ANALYTICAL AND CRITICAL AUDIENCES?

This was asked to communicators at the "Voto con Sentido" partner radio stations. Mayra de León, Presenter and Editor at Radio La Voz de Nebaj, states that in her experience, nowadays community members have a lot more information than ever, but a delicate issue is that oftentimes they do not know if such information is fake or trustworthy. In her opinion, radios must encourage people to ponder before casting their vote; but for this, she adds, it is crucial for radio presenters to be better informed, prepared, and provide information that prompts people to doubt before believing everything they hear during election times.



ABEL MEDRANO, PRESENTER AND PRODUCER AT RADIO QUICHÉ

Abel Medrano, Presenter and Producer at Radio Quiché, considers that in the run-up to the elections, the radio plays a key role when it encourages the population to reflect upon the importance of not being misled. For Medrano, during this period, it is very common to have fake information circulating, and the emergence of individuals with a political agenda, who will try to induce the community to favor certain candidates with their vote and not consider other options. "People feel confused, and amid the confusion, they become more easily influenced. This is where radio broadcasts can promote spaces to think, analyze, and reflect upon before voting", he adds.



For Carlos Azurdia, Director at Radio Época Online, the radio must focus on driving people to compare their options before voting, since this will get radio listeners to discuss these issues at home and in spaces where they interact with other community members.

CARLOS AZURDIA,
DIRECTOR AT RADIO ÉPOCA ON LINE



ALDO MORO, DIRECTOR AT RADIO SAYAXCHÉ

To complement this view, Aldo Moro, Director at Radio Sayaxché, considers it is very important to foster spaces where community members are able to express themselves, and in this regard, he adds that “Freedom of speech of community members is only possible if they are able to do it in their own language,” and Radio Sayaxché focuses on ensuring community expression in Q’eqchi’. Moro adds that the radio plays a very important role in reaffirming people’s right to make their own decisions, since someone could try to manipulate communities through leaders or family members more influential in the household.

HOW TO MAKE TWO-WAY RADIO BROADCASTS?

Breaking the traditional one-way radio broadcast represents a challenge for communicators of the “Voto con Sentido” radio stations because it is important not just to ask people to interact with radio stations, but also to start incorporating their ideas and voices into the programs. This may be due to the fact that when you learn the traditional radio broadcasting trade, it is made clear that the radio broadcasts and the audience listens.



MARILENY CHOC, PRESENTER AND EDITOR AT RADIO SAYAXCHÉ

On this regard, Marileny Choc, Presenter and Editor at Radio Sayaxché, focuses mainly on producing two-way radio broadcasts for women. She explains that most women in the Sayaxché region are Q’eqchi’ speakers, and she lets us know she has noted that the migratory phenomenon has led to communities in the south of Petén made up mainly by women. So, in her opinion, talking to them in their language and promoting spaces for them to bring up doubts through phone calls or WhatsApp messages in Q’eqchi’ is a first step towards their expression within a space where they feel safe, say what they think, ask questions, and analyze issues related to elections.



GOOD PRACTICES TO LISTEN TO AUDIENCES

xink'ul jun esital sa' lin
b'oqleb'aal utwaj xnawb'al ma
a'an jun b'alaq

taqlachaq renaq toruhanq chi
xtz'ilb'alrix

B'antiox, yookin xtaqlankil li
xjalamhu li xink'ul...

It is important to mention that one of the good practices applied by Radio Sayaxché is encouraging their audiences to send the station via WhatsApp, either in Spanish or Q’eqchi’, the news circulating in community groups, when they are not sure if the news is false, true, or misleading. The radio station team undertakes the task of investigating and clarifying on air the result of their research. Practices like this one make the role of radio stations and the communicators integrating their teams a key element in the community to promote a critical and active audience. It is also a way to get on the road to make radio broadcasts a two-way space that listens and promotes dialogue and critical analysis among community members.

DO YOU JUST RESIDE IN GUATE?

TEXT BY: ONEIDA RODAS

ILLUSTRATIONS: JUAN DANIEL CRUZ



When a person turns 18 years old, something special happens, since the National Registry of Persons (RENAP, its initials in Spanish) issues the so-called Personal Identification Document (DPI, its initials in Spanish) that certifies his or her being a Guatemalan citizen. At this age, one of many questions we ask ourselves is: what does it mean to be a citizen? because when we turn 18, there are other matters occupying our young minds and hearts.

It would be interesting, but also very enlightening for the country, if at 18 years of age, people could understand that, while being a citizen means legally belong to a society or organized community, this condition of citizenship makes us holders of political rights and compels us to observe the law. But no. In general, at 18, we do not properly appreciate these facts.

The most complicated aspect is that there are many people who, whether they are 20, 30, 40, 50, or more years old, are not clear about the meaning of citizenship. Admittedly, being defined as citizen is not a matter of just "residing" in a country. It is also a matter of taking part in its development and contributing to its wellbeing.

In Guatemala, when we attend primary and secondary school, civic days are commonly held, and they are characterized by singing the national anthem, pledging allegiance to the flag, and other patriotic tributes that, as children, we do not fully understand; mainly because during these activities we must

stand under the sun wearing a sweater, as we must wear the uniform in full. If only Guatemalans learned that everything civic relates to what belongs to us, citizens, as early as primary school, it would be much easier to understand that the country belongs to us, and that citizenship goes beyond school civic days.

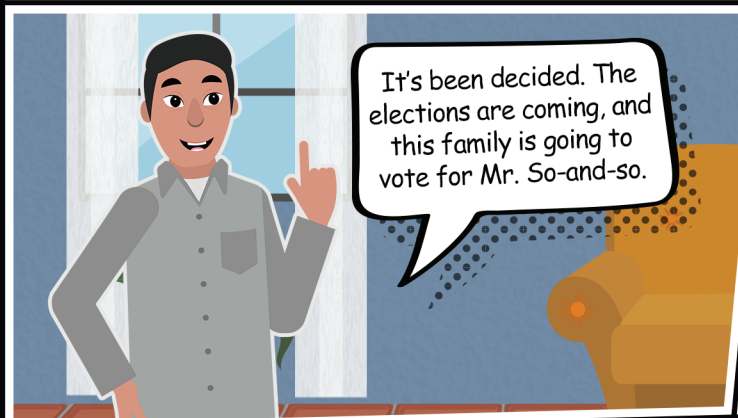
THE PHRASE "GUATEMALA BELONGS TO US" IS NOT JUST A SET PHRASE, BUT THE BACKGROUND OF WHAT IS TRULY CIVIC.

Every four years, the term "civic duty" appears in collective thinking, making adult Guatemalans think that being a good citizen has to do with voting. In this instance, the flags fluttering are not national flags, but they represent political parties; what people sing at "civic" events is not ¡Guatemala feliz...! que tus aras... [the first line of the national anthem: Happy Guatemala...! may your altars...], but the notes of catchy tunes custom-made for the running political parties.

The phrase "Guatemala belongs to us" is not just a set phrase, but the background of what is truly civic, and before deciding whether to vote or not, we should conduct a genuine exercise of citizenship, recognizing freedom of speech and access to information as fundamental rights for life and democracy. Investigating and analyzing political proposals, making contributions to discussions in our family circle, and why not, our social media to promote a responsible dialogue on defining if we are really citizens or just residents in Guate.



A TAMALE WITH A BILL



It's been decided. The elections are coming, and this family is going to vote for Mr. So-and-so.

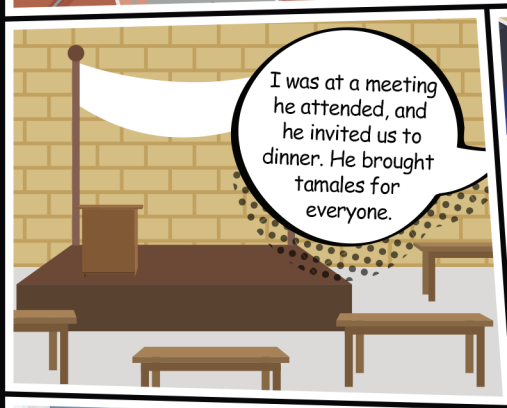


And why him?

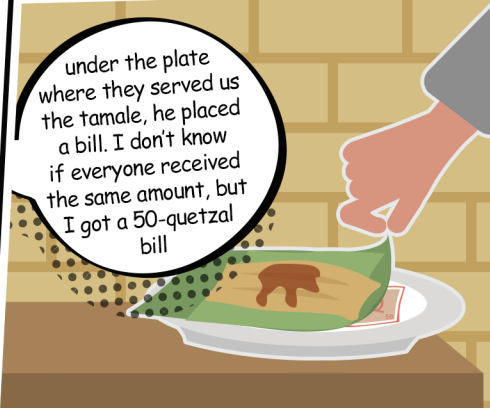
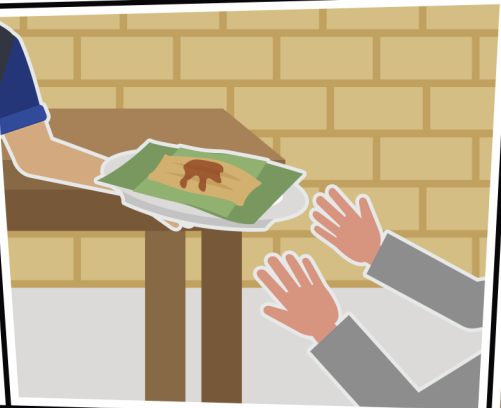
Because he is a really good person and understands our needs.

But how can you say so, Rodrigo? You don't know him.

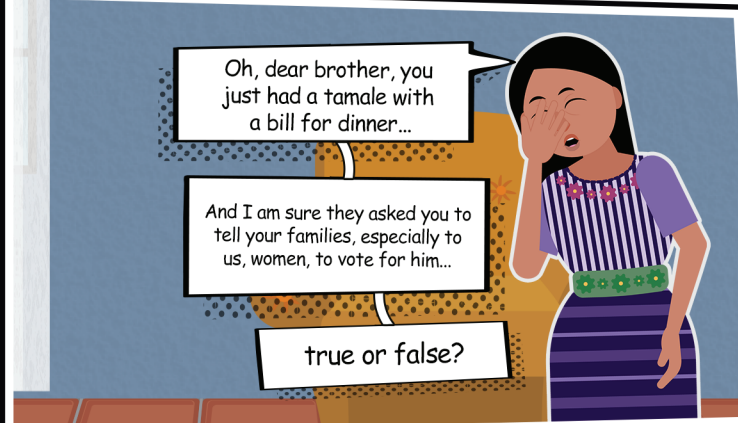
Oh, Marta, always criticizing...



I was at a meeting he attended, and he invited us to dinner. He brought tamales for everyone.



under the plate where they served us the tamale, he placed a bill. I don't know if everyone received the same amount, but I got a 50-quetzal bill



Oh, dear brother, you just had a tamale with a bill for dinner...

And I am sure they asked you to tell your families, especially to us, women, to vote for him...

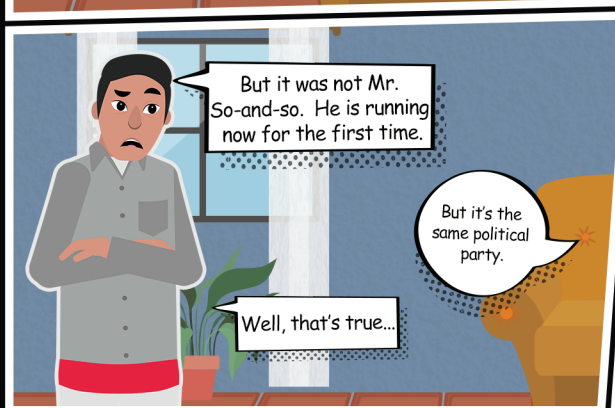
true or false?



That's right. But how do you know?

Because four years ago, they did the same to my father - may he rest in peace -

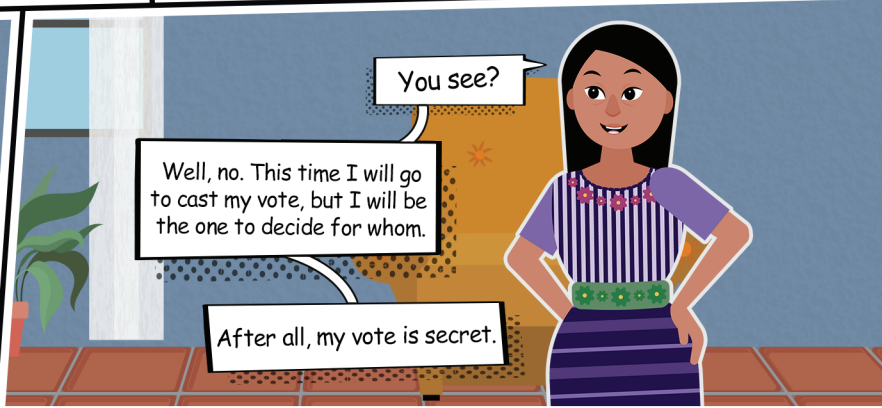
and he told us the same thing.



But it was not Mr. So-and-so. He is running now for the first time.

But it's the same political party.

Well, that's true...



You see?

Well, no. This time I will go to cast my vote, but I will be the one to decide for whom.

After all, my vote is secret.

A TAMALE WITH A BILL IS A PRODUCTION OF ASOCIACIÓN COMUNICARES IN COLLABORATION WITH DW AKADEMIE IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE VOTO CON SENTIDO PROJECT. GUATEMALA, 2023.

REDACCIÓN: CELSO SOLANO
GRÁFIC ELEMENTS: MAFER ALDANA

LAYOUT: PABLO CRUZ
FINAL ART: JUAN DANIEL CRUZ



A CITIZEN IS BORN AND MADE

TEXT BY: CELSO SOLANO

PHOTOGRAPHS: STOCK COMUNICARES, FREEPIK

[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/2NJAE52D](https://tinyurl.com/2NJAE52D)

From the moment we are born, it is our legitimate right to have a name and a nationality. Being born within a community, makes us part of it, and hence the origin of the term "citizen", because we are born in a "city" or organized community.

Therefore, since this is the legitimate right of every person, it may be exercised or not. It may be active or passive, turned on or off.

When an election comes, the term "citizen" rises to stardom, as though it were a button that must be activated. But in fact, citizenship is a right that every individual should exercise all the time, i.e., keep it active and turned on.

Citizenship refers, among other things, to the sense of belonging to a community. When we are part of a community, we can exert influence upon it, participate in its development, and contribute to its wellbeing.



CAN I PARTICIPATE?

Participating in a community means activating your citizenship. For instance, when a child takes part in an event that sends a message to his/her school, he/she is exercising citizenship and is helping others to build their own.

A teenager exercises citizenship when he/she takes part in a volunteer group. An adult engaged in the parent association of a school is also exercising citizenship. The teacher, fireman, doctor do likewise.

The media encouraging people to express themselves, to think, and to analyze are also building citizen values. And this can be achieved through what is known as Media and Information Literacy – MIL.

NICE TO MEET YOU, MIL!

Today we are talking about an informed and pondered vote, but in our everyday life, we must also conduct ourselves in an informed and pondered way. Exercising this invites us to put MIL into practice. It is a way of facing each day accessing information, expressing ourselves with freedom and responsibility, and using media in an analytical manner. In a world that is hyperconnected and with so much information circulating, MIL becomes a fundamental tool for those who wish to build a critical citizenship and live it actively.

DURING ELECTION TIMES, IT IS CRUCIAL TO SEE, LISTEN, AND ANALYZE BEFORE DECIDING

TEXT BY: CELSO SOLANO

INFOGRAPHIC: JUAN DANIEL CRUZ

If 100 days before the election someone would knock at our door and ask us: Are you ready to vote? Undoubtedly, the answer would be: Nooooo!

I don't know who is running, I haven't heard any catchy tune, nor have I seen any candidate. I am not acquainted with any proposal... and so on... I don't know.

If two days before the election someone would knock at our door and ask us the same thing, as citizens or members of this community called Guatemala, we should be ready to answer more than a "yes" or "no."

However, providing an answer beyond "yes" or "no," depends on the information we might have seen or heard in the last three months.

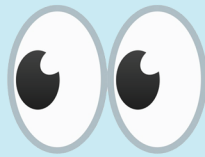
Of course, it will not be enough for information to have reached us. Such information should have at least made us think.



4 NECESSARY STEPS

"Voto con Sentido" seeks to have every individual activating their four- step formula before taking a path: **Seeing – Listening – Analyzing – Deciding**. This formula works in any life situation presenting a challenge.

1. SEEING



It means paying attention to the information that reaches us through mass media, social media, ads on the streets, public meetings, billboards, and flyers. It also means not settling for one single source of information.



2. LISTENING



If we attend a public meeting, it is necessary for us to listen carefully to the proposals, messages they send us through radio, podcasts, and every audio resource.



3. ANALYZING

When we put our senses in motion, we are in a position to compare one piece of information to another. We can accept or reject a proposal. We can choose one and reject the other or look for a third option.



4. DECIDING

It will always be a smart move to decide based on good information. The more information we have, the better decisions we will be able to make

WOMEN'S VOICES SPRING UP IN THE IXIL AREA

TEXT BY: ONEIDA RODAS

PHOTOGRAPHS: EUNICE VELÁSQUEZ, DAYANA CÓRDOVA Y CELSO SOLANO

It is no news that women in Guatemala have been historically excluded from political engagement and, despite the progress made, they still face inequalities and discrimination in politics, both to elect and to be elected.

Exceptions to this rule are like a shrub that flowers in the middle of a dry field. In this case, Radio La Voz de Nebaj, located in the municipality of Nebaj, department of Quiché, is a flowering shrub amidst the Ixil territory. As part of the "Voto con Sentido" project, they are promoting an active citizenship among women, and as part of their routine, they have placed on female communicators the responsibility of managing communications, technology, and radio programming to reach the communities of Nebaj, Cotzal, and Chajul in the Ixil and Spanish languages.

We talked to María Rivera, Mayra de León, and Balbina Cuyuch, Presenters and Editors at Radio La Voz de Nebaj, about the role of women in the election process and their importance within the radio station in this election period.



"If we go further, to the communities for instance, we can see there is a lot of discrimination and inequality. It is believed that men hold the authority within the household, and that women do not have a right to express an opinion or decide over things within the family, and such is the case with elections." This is María Rivera's view upon being consulted on why women must learn more about participation and freedom of speech, and why they should constitute an audience reached by local radios during this election time.



Mayra de León expresses her concern about the current situation in Nebaj: "Sometimes women are heavily manipulated," and she emphasizes the importance of seeing women as a priority to be informed, with the purpose of letting them decide which party, civic committee, or candidate they vote for. Mayra reflects upon the importance of not letting anybody tell a woman who to vote for, and that they should be the ones to decide and choose in a free and well-informed manner. She adds that "Even though gradual steps have been taken to put an end to inequality between men and women, there is still much to be done," especially in rural areas where many women are not aware of their own rights, and many men do not know that women also have rights.

Balbina Cuyuch, who in addition to Ixil and Spanish also speaks K'iche', claims that "We all have the right to know we are all equal, that equity is important, that we are all equally valuable, and that no one can force us to do anything."

Radio La Voz de Nebaj marks an important turning point regarding the key role that women play and its team, comprised by empowered and committed female communicators, reminds us that education and training are crucial to empower women and promote their participation as citizens in Guatemala, not just in election times, but every day of the year.



Mayra de León



María Rivera



Balbina Cuyuch

Broadcasters and editors at radio La Voz de Nebaj

SOME INTERESTING DATA ON THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AS VOTERS OR HOLDING PUBLIC OFFICES IN GUATEMALA



DID YOU KNOW THAT IN GUATEMALA, FEMALE VOTE AND CITIZENSHIP WERE INSTITUTED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 1945?



DID YOU KNOW THAT UP TO 1956, IF A WOMAN WAS ILLITERATE, SHE DID NOT HAVE A RIGHT TO VOTE IN OUR COUNTRY?



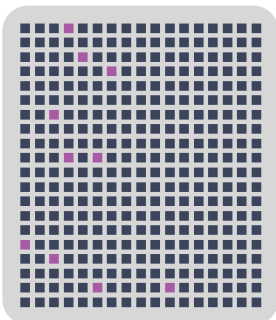
WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THESE FACTS? BETWEEN 1986 AND 2017, THE LARGEST PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN ELECTED AS MEMBERS OF CONGRESS WAS 13.9%, WHICH CORRESPONDS TO 22 CONGRESSWOMEN VS. 136 CONGRESSMEN. THIS WAS DURING THE 2016 LEGISLATURE.



BETWEEN 2003 AND 2015, THE LARGEST REPRESENTATION OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN IN CONGRESS WAS OBSERVED IN 2007, WITH ONLY 4 REPRESENTATIVES, WHICH CORRESPONDS TO 2.5% OF ALL MEMBERS OF CONGRESS.



DID YOU KNOW THAT IN THE 2019 ELECTION OF 340 MUNICIPALITIES, ONLY 10 WOMEN WERE ELECTED AS MAYORS? ONLY A 2.95% OF MAYORS ELECTED ARE WOMEN.



DID YOU KNOW THAT THE PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN WHO WILL BE ABLE TO VOTE IN 2023 IS HIGHER THAN THAT OF MEN? THIS IS BECAUSE 53.98% OF THE VOTER REGISTER IS COMPRISED BY WOMEN.



AFTER BECOMING ACQUAINTED WITH THESE DATA,

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE INEQUALITIES FACING WOMEN IN GUATEMALAN POLITICS?

SOURCES:

ELECCIONES MUNICIPALES DE GUATEMALA 2019: [HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/2A86DJCY](https://tinyurl.com/2A86DJCY)

LA PARTICIPACIÓN POLÍTICA DE LAS MUJERES EN GUATEMALA: UNA MIRADA HACIA LA PARIDAD DEMOCRÁTICA. O NUMULJERES 2018. [HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/2P999WRP](https://tinyurl.com/2P999WRP)

TRIBUNAL SUPREMO ELECTORAL: [HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/44ZCDDMZ](https://tinyurl.com/44ZCDDMZ)

ESTE MATERIAL ES UNA PRODUCCIÓN DE ASOCIACIÓN COMUNICARES EN COLABORACIÓN CON LA DW AKADEMIE EN EL MARCO DEL PROYECTO VOTO CON SENTIDO. GUATEMALA, 2023. TEXT BY: ONEIDA RODAS

GRAPHIC ELEMENTS: MAFER ALDANA
INFOGRAPHIC ART: JUAN DANIEL CRUZ



THE LACK OF EMPLOYMENT WORRIES YOUTH

THE UNCERTAINTY REGARDING JOB OPPORTUNITIES MAKES THEM PONDER THEIR VOTE



A share of 27.5% of the nine million people entered in the Guatemalan vote register corresponds to voters between 18 and 30 years of age. This means that close to 2.5 million voters registered are young individuals; therefore, Guatemala is a young nation!

Someone might say this is news, but why is this fact relevant? For a mere mathematical reason: youth could be decisive.

Let us take a specific case: In the second round of the 2019 elections, Alejandro Giammattei was elected President, with a total of 1.9 million (1,907,801) votes, i.e., with fewer votes than the number of youths entered in the vote register.

Does it seem like a trivial matter? Well, actually it is not

DO THEY WANT TO VOTE?

We talked to three young female communicators from Totonicapán, who work at Radio Chuimekená, a radio station broadcasting on AM band and online. Anahí Velásquez, Teresa Yax, and Verónica Sapón reflect upon youth and their attitude towards the election process.

The first approach was made regarding apathy and how some youth close to them have talked about the idea of not going to vote, because this is an issue they genuinely do not care about. They do not feel involved, and they do not have the necessary information to know about the election process.

They made a second approach related to the conditional vote: in conversations with youth from the community, they have expressed they would vote, because some political party or candidate has offered them a job if elected.



"In my case, I had told my mother I did not want to vote, but she insisted I should register. However, I was not interested in voting, due to all the corruption that prevails across the country. But currently, I am interested, and I think many youths could also be interested if they are informed on this matter, and if they have the opportunity to understand how important elections are for our future."
Anahí Velásquez, 21 years old



EMPLOYMENT FOR YOUTH

informally employed. One of every two people employed in the region has an informal job. Guatemala does not escape from this reality. The 2021 National Employment and Income Survey (ENEI, its Spanish initials) indicated that 70.2% of the population was informally employed, that the underemployment rate was 8.1%, and the unemployment rate, 2.2%.

Anahí Velásquez is concerned about this. “Let us analyze the current situation in Guatemala. We do not have employment opportunities, which worries us – youth – considerably. So, what do we expect in the next four years? Well, definitely better employment opportunities,” she states. On the other hand, Verónica Sapón notes: “We must decide our future, especially the young individuals who are graduating, because we have no chance of securing a job; thus, it is important to analyze what candidate has actual employment plans and projects for youth.”

A WELL-INFORMED AND ANALYTICAL YOUTH

An exploratory survey called Desde Nuestra Mirada [From Our Perspective], conducted by COMUNICARES in 2021, concluded that 72% of youths included in the studio spend at least three hours a day using their mobile devices. This is a very interesting fact, mainly because this information was gathered in Guatemalan rural areas. Most probably, in the urban areas of our country the daily hours spent on mobile devices would be many more. But, how much of that time is dedicated to entertainment and how much – if any – is dedicated to get informed on national or local news, on politics, or on relevant situations?

Teresa Yax shares that, in her experience, “Sometimes young individuals do not take the time to analyze and are just led by what their friends or acquaintances say.” Yax thinks that it is important to educate youth on issues relating the elections, mainly because, in her opinion, “Youth in rural areas do not have the opportunity to get informed. Some of them are not able to leave their communities.” And according to her, this is a situation that leaves them at a disadvantage.

Nonetheless, how can young men and women in communities with low connectivity get informed and find spaces for critical analysis? Undoubtedly, in these cases, radio continues to play a vital role.



Communities surveyed are undertaking major efforts to reach youth in the rural areas, so they can have access to good-quality information. Through AM and online radio, young men and women are being encouraged to conduct critical analyses regarding these elections, as Radio Chuimekená has also joined the “Voto con Sentido” project, and they are achieving an important coverage in the department of Totonicapán.

To be able to analyze the political options, the first step is being able to get informed, having dialogue spaces, being able to ask and compare proposals to finally be able to make the best decisions.

Now, young men and women can make a difference at the polls, if their interest for the political movement can be raised. This will lead them to understand how valuable their opinions, their ideas, and their political decisions are for the future of Guatemala.



ANAHÍ VELÁSQUEZ



TERESA YAX



VERÓNICA SAPÓN

REFERENCES:

TRIBUNAL SUPREMO ELECTORAL CONSULTADO EL 14 DE MARZO 2023: [HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/44ZCDDMZ](https://tinyurl.com/44ZCDDMZ)

ENCUESTA NACIONAL DE EMPLEO E INGRESOS -ENEI- 2021 CONSULTADO EL 14 DE MARZO 2023: [HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/MKEYD6JF](https://tinyurl.com/mkeyd6JF)

GUATEMALA, DESAFÍOS PARA LA PARTICIPACIÓN EN 2023 CONSULTADO EL 14 DE MARZO 2023: [HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/MUXSY3YT](https://tinyurl.com/muxsy3YT)

DESDE NUESTRA MIRADA, MAPEO SONDEO EXPLORATORIO COMUNICARES 2021: [HTTPS://COMUNICARES.COM/ARCHIVO/2971/](https://comunicares.com/archivo/2971/)

LEARN MORE IN 5, 4, 3, 2, 1



Voting is our right, but voting consciously is our responsibility. Here we share five different tips that will help you become responsibly informed:

FIVE KEY DATES IN THE 2023 ELECTION PROCESS:



March 25: Closing date to update data on the voter register.

March 26: Closing date to register candidates.

March 27 to June 23: Election campaign period.

June 25: First round of presidential and vice-presidential election and single round of election of 340 town councils, 20 PARLACEN representatives, and 160 members of Congress.

August 20: Second round of presidential and vice-presidential election

1. Get informed and analyze the different political proposals.

2. Do not share political information if you are not sure it is true.

FOUR ACTIONS YOU CANNOT OVERLOOK:

3. Use your social media to investigate candidates at the national, departmental, and municipal level.

4. Review TSE lists to find out the location where you have been assigned to vote.

THREE PIECES OF ADVICE YOU SHOULD FOLLOW ON ELECTION DAY:

1. When you go to vote, make sure you have your DPI with you.
2. Move away and seek shelter if you see any sign of violence or disturbance.
3. Wait for your turn and be kind to the people who may require your help or guidance.

TWO PLATFORMS TO LISTEN AND WATCH THE "VOTO CON SENTIDO" CAMPAIGN:

Audios: <https://tinyurl.com/y2t4pwmw>

Videos: <https://tinyurl.com/4vxzbr53>

ONE FINAL PIECE OF ADVICE:

If you are a citizen and decide to vote, decide on whom to vote for by yourself. Nobody can force you to vote, never mind tell you to vote for someone in particular.