Executive Summary External On-Site Evaluation, Peru-Florida Partnership Civitas International Exchange Program Conducted by Gary Marx, President, Center for Public Outreach

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The External On-Site Evaluation

Since its founding in 1995, the Civitas International Exchange Program (Civitas) has developed and provided support for partnerships that pair U.S. states with countries undergoing a transition to democracy. Activities range from delegate exchanges and conferences to engaging students in identifying and dealing with community issues and problems. A primary aim is to enhance students' civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Each Civitas partnership provides the Center for Civic Education with quarterly progress reports. However, the bottom-line, on-the-ground success of the program, both quantitatively and qualitatively, can only be confirmed through periodic external on-site evaluations. External evaluator Gary Marx, president of the Center for Public Outreach, observed the Civitas program in Peru from April 27–30, 2009. In Lima, the country's capital city, and in Cajamarca, located in the northern Andean region, he met with students, principals, parents, and community leaders at five schools. He observed many student Project Citizen presentations. The evaluator visited the mayor's office in Independencia, a Lima suburb; a teacher training institution, Instituto Superior Pedagogica "Paulo Freire"; a rescue center, El Centro de Asistencia Para Las Madres y Personas Que Sufren Violencia; the Peruvian Ministry of Education; the U.S. Embassy; and the staff of IPEDEHP, the Civitas partner organization in Peru. During each of these visits, which also included the actual sites of some student projects, he sought to validate reported information and gain even further insights.

The Partnership

This relatively new Civitas partnership, which formally began in 2006, brings together the Florida Law Related Education Association (FLREA), located in Tallahassee, and Instituto Peruano de Educación en Derecho Humanos y La Paz (IPEDEHP), located in Lima. From 2004-2006, prior to becoming a recognized partnership, the two organizations worked together as a consortium within the Civitas network. Annette Boyd-Pitts, executive director of FLREA, and Pablo Zavala Sarrio, a founder of IPEDEHP, provide front-line leadership. In addition to its work with Peru, FLREA directs similar Civitas partnerships that involve Hungary, Panama, and Romania.

Programs

Civitas programs, generally devoted to Project Citizen, are offered through the Peru-Florida Partnership in four of the country's twenty-five regions—Ayacucho, Cajamarca, Chiclaya, and Cuzco—plus the capital region of Lima. Known as Proyecto Ciudadano in Peru, Project Citizen brings together teams of middle and high school students to identify community issues or problems, conduct research, develop solutions (including action plans), and formulate recommendations for public policy. In the process, through classroom instruction and invigorating hands-on, real-world activities, students learn firsthand the importance of civic engagement, self-determination, and an inclusive, democratic approach to creating a better future for themselves and their communities.

Facts

From the program's inception during 2004–05 through 2008, IPEDEHP estimates that 18,550 Peruvian students have been involved in Project Citizen. The number of students has grown from 455 in 2004–05 to 11,900 in 2007–08. During that time, thirteen teacher training workshops have been held and 530 teachers have offered Project Citizen in their classes. In 2008–09, the program was active in eighty schools. IPEDEHP estimates that 74,200 parents, community members, teachers, and students have, in some way, been involved in or influenced by the program since it began. National showcases have been held in Lima during March 2008 and May 2009. Through 2008, 166 showcases had been held locally and four regionally.

Peru

Peru is the fourth largest nation in South America, covering nearly 500,000 square miles, straddling the Andes Mountains and draining into the mighty Amazon River or the storied high altitude Lake Titicaca. Bordered on the west by the Pacific Ocean, its neighbors include Ecuador and Colombia to the north, Brazil to the east, Bolivia to the southeast, and Chile to the south. Nearly seventy-six percent of the country's population of 29.18 million (2008) lives in urban areas, around cities such as the

capital city of Lima, Arequipa, Chiclayo, Chimbote, Cuzco, Huancayo, Iquitos, Piura, and Trujillo. A nation of contrasts, some Peruvians live in chilly Alpine regions, while others live in the Amazon rainforest. Some are wealthy, while an estimated thirty-nine percent are poor: fifty percent of the poor are Amerindian. From 2003 through 2007, the country's Gross Domestic Product grew annually at average rates ranging from four to nine percent, fueled by mining, manufacturing, services, fishing, and a free trade agreement with the United States signed in 2006. As this land of the storied Inca moves toward a more democratic future, it faces challenges ranging from extreme poverty and environmental degradation to corruption and concerns about human rights. With the conviction of former President Alberto Fujimori in 2009, many were encouraged by this example that no one, whatever their position or social and economic status, is above the law. Current President Alan Garcia has declared his commitment to advance democracy, build the economy, reduce inequities, and decentralize government. However, in some communities, economic development and environmental sustainability have gone out of balance, and appeals by students and other citizens for help from those local or regional officials are sometimes lost to inattention or jurisdictional disputes. As Peru's GDP grows, worldwide expectations that the country will effectively address the many issues facing the lives of its people will also increase.

A New Civic Education Requirement

Peru has adopted a law requiring a new approach to civic education in secondary schools. A new curriculum will place increased emphasis on civic engagement. The country's Ministry of Education has asked that the Civitas Peru-Florida Partnership develop a concept paper, a textbook, and other materials for consideration in achieving this national goal. At the time of the external on-site evaluation, drafts of these documents were nearing completion. During a meeting held at the Ministry, officials confirmed for the evaluator that Project Citizen is consistent with what they hope to do in practice. Ministry officials also expressed interest in continuous improvement, the need to move ahead with establishment of new criteria for civic education, ongoing engagement with the Civitas partnership, and the opportunity to learn from teachers who are already using Project Citizen to engage students in identifying and addressing community concerns.

Observations

The Civitas Peru-Florida Partnership benefits from the work of highly experienced, talented, and dedicated leadership in both countries. Since the partnership is relatively new, the program should be considered an early work-in-progress. Teachers and principals often demonstrate heroic efforts in working with students who are affected by poverty and the maladies that accompany it. That dedication and heroism is even more remarkable considering that many teachers themselves face similar challenges. Children frequently suffer from a lack of nutritious food and susceptibility to illness, poor public sanitation, environmental contamination, unsafe water, family violence, sexual molestation, gangs and gangsters, and a sense that their needs are being overlooked by society.

These students, educators, and others in the community are sometimes inhibited by what seems to be a culture of fear and low expectations. Finely crafted student proposals are too often ignored by public officials, and some in the community even fear retribution for raising sensitive issues. Some companies, such as those that extract huge quantities of gold and other minerals with what seems to be little concern for the environment and the well being of the population, demonstrate little in the way of corporate citizenship and social responsibility. Yet, these students move forward and sometimes amaze their parents, members of their communities, and public officials with their sense of purpose and thoughtful research, action plans, and public policy recommendations. In the five schools visited by the evaluator, students grappling with these conditions demonstrated enthusiasm for their work in Project Citizen, determined to overcome these obstacles.

Contributions to Civic Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions

The evaluator met with more than 150 students in five schools located in Independencia, in the province of Lima, and in Cajamarca, the capital city of the northern Andean region of the same name. Students were asked whether they would likely be more or less involved in identifying and addressing community issues in the future because of their Civitas experience. A full one hundred percent of students responded that they would likely be more involved. Students were also asked to quickly identify issues facing their communities, which they were able to do with what appeared to be significant knowledge, forethought, and enthusiasm. When asked to describe the Civitas program as they would like to see it in 2015, they immediately shared dreams about the scope of Project Citizen in the future, often expressing the hope that community problems they have identified will be solved, that more students will become involved, and that adults, including public officials, will learn from the process.

Project Citizen Student Portfolio Presentations: Independencia (Lima Province)

While visiting schools in the province of Lima, the evaluator observed many Proyecto Ciudadano/Project Citizen student portfolio presentations. Each team addressed a key issue or community problem, reviewed research and possible solutions, laid out a plan of action, and explained its public policy recommendations. At a school in Independencia, located in the Lima

metropolitan area, one team addressed the need for greater citizen security in their community, citing a lack of electricity, inadequate lighting, and the sense of danger in the streets. Students conducted a petition drive, met with the mayor and other public officials, and communicated the need to the company that provides street lighting. Another team took on the issue of cleaning up their community, which led to a joint campaign involving the school and the Independencia mayor's office. In another challenging project, students took on conflicts among three local governments sharing jurisdiction of the same territory. After substantial research, students suggested passage of a new law that would be more specific about boundaries and jurisdictional authority. They eloquently presented their case to the mayor of Independencia and members of community organizations.

Project Citizen Student Portfolio Presentations: Cajamarca Region

In this northern Andean community, home of one of the world's largest leachable gold mines, social and economic conditions for the indigenous, the rural poor, families, women, and children, have deteriorated. For many, inadequate food, a lack of fresh water and sanitation facilities, environmental degradation, family violence, and unacceptable living conditions are a way of life. These massive unmet needs have a direct impact on the health and well being of children and the issues they identify through Project Citizen.

One Project Citizen team addressed pollution of the San Lucas River, which flows directly through Cajamarca and has become a toxic sewer, carrying everything from mining chemicals to slaughterhouse waste. In addressing the problem, students developed a plan that ranged from a campaign suggesting that citizens refrain from dumping trash in the river to asking public officials to enforce laws prohibiting pollution. Even though students received little or no response from government officials, some measures have been taken to clean up the river since students undertook their project.

At a school located in a community where many students and families are destitute and regularly endure a scarcity of food and fresh water, a Project Citizen team took on the lack of adequate sanitation in their community. The area has only two toilets for twenty-one families. In their research, students studied the consequences of the sanitation problem, such as infections and blindness. They concluded that pools of water in the streets are sometimes used as a water source for the population, even though the water might be contaminated with mining runoff and other possibly toxic substances. Their research revealed that existing laws requiring certain levels of sanitation are not uniformly enforced. While students continue their appeals for community awareness, they await a response to their request that local government enforce these laws. Another Project Citizen team addressed problems caused by litter and the lack of trash pick-up. They have started a recycling center at their school where they collect trash from homes and businesses and sort the collected materials for recycling.

At another school in the Cajamarca region, a Project Citizen team focused on the need to improve the condition of school bathrooms and sanitation services, and hygienic behavior that may lead to illness. A second team addressed the issue of the illiteracy of their parents, noting that because many could not read or write, their families suffered from communication breakdowns, a sense of shame, difficulty in getting jobs, and feelings of inadequacy resulting from a failure to provide a sustainable income. Students met with representatives of their school and local government to suggest a way forward. Regional government approved a plan but took no action. As young people continue their campaign, a local religious organization is offering classes to build literacy and technical skills.

At a secondary school that is affiliated with a university, students presented a Project Citizen portfolio addressing the need to protect an ancient archaeological site at Huacaloma. After conducting research, students expressed concern that this 1,500-year-old pre-Incan site is deteriorating, gangs are gathering there, and some people are building homes on the ruins. Even though laws exist to prevent this type of encroachment, they are not enforced. Students have stimulated community dialog about the problem, suggesting that the site should be maintained first out of respect, and second to attract scholars and tourists, who would contribute to the economy by renting hotel rooms and purchasing food, handicrafts, and other legitimate services. The students' sophisticated plan also calls on government to enforce existing laws respecting and preserving archaeological sites.

At one of the most historic schools in the Cajamarca region, Project Citizen students addressed the issue of family violence. According to students, violence within the family leads to a lack of self-respect, drug and alcohol addiction as early as age twelve, prostitution among young girls who fifteen and younger, physical and psychological injury, and other problems. In their research, students determined that women are often disadvantaged because they are fully dependent on the work of the father and are reluctant to bring charges when they are physically abused. In recommending public policy, the students asked that existing laws be enforced. Working with an outside organization, they have supported workshops to help families avert or deal with the aftermath of family violence. They have given newspaper and television interviews to discuss the severity of incidents and to help people deal non-violently with their often multiple frustrations. A telephone hotline, "Ayuda Amiga," has been developed and publicized to help those needing counsel. Students have also worked with a local rescue center providing counsel and refuge for victims of violence.

Visit to the Center for Women and Other People Who Suffer from Violence

The evaluator visited this center to learn how it is working with Project Citizen students to address issues such as family violence and the need for saleable skills. Located near the center of Cajamarca and operated by a religious organization, the Center provides a safe place to stay for family members who are victims of violence. At the time of the visit, a fifteen-year-old girl and her two children occupied one of the rooms. In addition to a safe haven, the Center offers workshops to help victims of violence learn skills that they can take to the marketplace, such as creating handicrafts, baking, homemaking skills, banking, sewing and tailoring, and jewelry making. An aim of the organization is to build self-confidence, respect, and economic independence, even to develop victims' skills to start their own businesses. Lawyers are available to offer legal counsel to desperate families. At the time of the evaluator's visit, seventy-nine people were enrolled in the Center's classes and workshops, which are aimed at developing basic literacy and hope for the future.

Meeting with Teachers

The evaluator met or visited with Project Citizen teachers at each school. One of those meetings was held in the Cajamarca region, where several of these educators gathered to share their experiences in using the program and how it has benefited their students, who often live in or on the edges of poverty. The following are just a few of the teachers' observations when asked how they believe their students are different because of their involvement in Project Citizen:

- We are proud of the change we have seen in our students. The change has been incredible. We see confidence in children who had not believed in themselves. They feel like important people because they are dealing with important issues.
- Because they have been involved in Project Citizen, our students learned even more about the value of life with dignity. They have learned to talk like professionals because they know they are addressing problems that have a significant impact on the lives of others.
- o Our students learned values, such as responsibility, respect, and self-esteem...and how to identify and solve problems.
- Our school is very proud of its students. They have worked for two years without responses from government about their concerns and suggestions. However, they have discovered how important it is to believe in a cause.
- Relationships between students and teachers are better. We are working as one on important things.
- Teachers give many hours of their time, far beyond what they are paid to do. That shows that we place great value on the Project Citizen program and what it offers our children. Their success is our success. There is little time to rest.
- We are teachers. Yet we are always learning. Our students often teach us, especially about courage. Teachers sometimes think they will just give up on students. Then, they see what happens in programs like Project Citizen, and they are reminded how important those students are. As teachers, they rediscover the importance of their work.

When asked to envision the Civitas Project Citizen program in 2015, the teachers offered comments such as:

- Principles of Project Citizen would be instilled beginning in childhood. Children and adults need to develop motivation and a sense of values that will help them respect themselves and others as well as the environment.
- Civil society organizations would be reinforced, so that we can offer a voice that may not be provided at any point by government. People...need to feel that their voices are heard and that public officials...are sensitive to their needs.
- As part of the process, our students will develop respect, relationships, and an understanding of human rights.
- By 2015, Civitas programs will expand into more schools, and classrooms and needed funding will be provided.
- My dream for 2015 is that we will continue working on Project Citizen. The need for this program will never end because our community will always have problems that need to be solved.

Meeting at the Office of the Mayor, Independencia

Mayoral Assistant Soledad Villalva described Project Citizen as "a bridge between schools and local government." These students, she said, are helpful to the municipality in identifying and developing solutions for significant problems. The program, she pointed out, offers an opportunity for student participation and helps the mayor's office stay in touch with local schools and students. "These activities create a presence for local authorities with the schools and for local schools with the authorities," she offered. Villava highlighted a recent activity stimulated by Project Citizen students to make streets safer for citizens. This project, she noted, also involved parents. "Security is a problem in many communities. Guns, alcohol, drugs, and juvenile delinquency are among the concerns of the municipality, and these students are contributing to possible solutions," she concluded.

Meeting with the Peru Ministry of Education

The evaluator and Peru Civitas Director Pablo Zavala discussed Civitas programs during a meeting with Ministry of Education officials. They included Rosa Berta Rodriguez, who has responsibility for curriculum, and Marco Antonio Rodriguez, a member of a team that is developing a new secondary school curriculum for civic education that reflects an increased emphasis on public engagement. As noted earlier, the Ministry asked that the Civitas Peru-Florida Partnership develop a concept paper or agreement and a draft of a textbook for consideration. These officials noted that they were anticipating the materials and the proposed agreement and looked forward to continued collaboration with the partnership, noting that Project Citizen is consistent with what they are hoping to accomplish. Other topics discussed during the meeting included the need to develop students' civic knowledge, skills, and attitudes; continue professional development and training; pursue continuous improvement; and build understanding of the contribution Civitas programs make to active learning, project-based education, learning through inquiry, learning across disciplines, real-world education, teamwork, and the development of thinking and reasoning skills.

Meeting at the U.S. Embassy

At the U.S. Embassy in Lima, the evaluator and Zavala met with Cultural Affairs Officer Paul Degler and Cultural Affairs Specialist in Public Affairs Jorge Rivera. Both are familiar with Civitas programs, including Project Citizen. Among the topics discussed were diplomatic opportunities inherent in the program and how efforts of the Civitas Peru-Florida Partnership could be helpful to Peru in pursuing goals devoted to consolidating democracy, ensuring justice, overcoming poverty, and further developing its economy. Degler and Rivera suggested possible ways the Embassy might further support partnership programs. Ideas included sponsoring student travel to national showcases; providing public communication assistance; providing resources for Civitas teacher training; calling on the partnership to provide presentations by Project Citizen students or suggest sites in Peru for visits by international public officials; arranging presentations by Project Citizen students for the president; convening meetings of leaders of education organizations in the province of Lima committed to education for all; seeking help in identifying students for an exchange program; and considering Lima as a site for a future Civitas World Congress. The Embassy uses Project Citizen materials in its Bi-National Centers to teach English as a second language. However, the evaluator noted that Civitas programs such as Project Citizen, when offered in schools or colleges, are under direction of the Civitas Peru-Florida Partnership. Degler asked that Peru Civitas partners contact the U.S. Embassy with ideas or requests for assistance.

Visit to Instituto Superior Pedagógico de Paulo Freire, a Teacher Training Institution

The external on-site evaluator and Peru Civitas Director Pablo Zavala met with Manuel Franco Molfino, director of the Instituto Superior Pedagógico de Paulo Freire, located in the Comas municipality of Lima Norte. The institute, which includes Project Citizen training in its curriculum, takes its name from the late Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire, who placed a strong emphasis on respectful dialogue. He made clear that values are involved in this type of collaboration, which is aimed at enhancing community, building social capital, creating a sense of consciousness, and leading people to act in a way that promotes justice and improves the human condition. Freire was a champion of informed action and activities to help students understand the significance of what they are learning. Franco Molfino pointed out that Peru Project Citizen Partner IPEDEHP has worked with the institute to help educators understand the principles of democracy, human rights, and conflict resolution.

"The implementation of Project Citizen can be an important part of preparing good teachers. We need to be sure we are preparing 'citizens of conscience," said Molfino. Consistent with the Institute's programs, he added, "When students are able to look critically at problems and find possible ways to solve them through a program like Project Citizen, they develop a more positive attitude. They are likely to become more caring and more democratic. We have used Project Citizen materials in preparing teachers." He emphasized that the program helps in identifying problems, strengthening connections to the community, highlighting the importance of research, promoting social context, and developing public policy. According to Molfino, Project Citizen stimulates reflection and brings the school, public officials, businesses, and others together to discover common ground.

In concluding, Molfino declared that active learning is at the heart of Project Citizen, and it leads to reflection and compromise. Students get actual practice in society. The process has been useful and the methodology works. Professors Vilma Silva and Edgar Quispe joined the conversation and shared stories reinforcing the importance of Project Citizen and why they use it in preparing educators.

Visits with Civitas Partners

While in Lima, the evaluator met with IPEDEHP staff and spent many hours visiting with Peru Civitas Director Pablo Zavala. In addition, the evaluator spent time learning about the program from Annette Boyd Pitts, executive director of the Florida Law Related Education Association, who directs the partnership. The partnership has clearly stated goals such as strengthening organizational capacity and evaluating the institutionalization of civic education at partner sites, increasing technological capacity of Civitas partnerships and programs, designing university pre-service civic education courses, broadening visibility for the program, increasing teacher training opportunities and resources, and expanding Project Citizen partnerships.

Members of the IPEDEHP staff were asked to describe their projections for Peru's Civitas program in 2015. Among the several ideas the leadership team identified were the following:

- The textbook, *Citizenship Education in the Schools of Peru*, will be published and used in schools.
- Project Citizen will be related to the text.
- A program for the training of public officials will be developed with support from Jurado Nacional de Elecciones, Peru's national election commission, and other key organizations.
- o A human rights perspective will be incorporated into the program's methodology.
- o Project Citizen processes will be adapted and incorporated into other IPEDEHP programs.

IPEDEHP Board President Willy Lopez Prieto emphasized the importance of the organization's work in Peru and its worldwide impact during nearly twenty-five years of leadership devoted to emphasizing democracy, human rights, and peace. "We need to strengthen our networks at all levels," he said, adding, "To be prepared for the new millennium, we need to improve our connections and processes to deal with social, political, economic, and technological issues, and we need to understand that the fundamentals of democracy are directly related to how we address human rights."

Recommendations and Considerations

Considering strengths and needs of the Civitas Peru-Florida Partnership, the external on-site evaluator offers the following recommendations:

- **Consolidate the Civitas program in Peru.** All Civitas programs offered through schools and colleges should be under the direction of the Peru-Florida Partnership, including those that emerge from the U.S. Embassy's use of Project Citizen materials in its English as a second language program. This approach will ensure the integrity of the program's methodology, make students in all Project Citizen classes eligible for participation in national showcases and other Civitas events, and avoid any impression that a two-tier program is offered in Peru.
- Create professional development programs for teachers who work with students living in poverty. Consolidate and share what Civitas has learned in working with students who suffer from severe social and economic conditions and often exist at the margins of extreme poverty. Working within the framework of the Center for Civic Education, the partnership of Peru and Florida, perhaps including other Civitas partners, could convene a council of countries that encounter these problems, share what they have learned, and develop programs and materials that could benefit students worldwide.
- **Consider development of a specific human rights component for Project Citizen in Peru.** An ad-hoc council of Civitas partners might be convened by the Center for Civic Education to discuss how this component could be appropriately emphasized by partnerships, such as those that are confronted with a particular sense of urgency.
- Maintain lines of communication between the Civitas Peru-Florida Partnership and the U.S. Embassy. Primary funding for Civitas programs is provided through the U.S. Department of Education with support from the U.S. Department of State. In most countries where Civitas is functioning, U.S. Embassies offer what they consider appropriate support for the program.
- Work with the Ministry of Education to develop programs to meet new requirements in civic education. Ministry officials have noted the direct connection between Civitas programs, such as Project Citizen, and what they hope to achieve. The partnership is urged to continue its work with the Ministry as it develops this new approach, to be available to provide educator training, and to help ensure the delivery and integrity of the program in the future. The Ministry is urged to provide adequate funding to support this effort.
- Consider development of a Student Issue Forum to provide annual reports to the president and Congress. A program such as a Project Citizen Student Issue Forum, which would report annually to the Peruvian president and Congress, could have profound implications for the economy, civil society, and Peru's reputation in the world.
- Create professional development opportunities for public officials, based in part on the model of Project Citizen. Based on a Project Citizen model, the Civitas Peru-Florida Partnership could help the Executive Office of President or other key groups, such as Jurado Nacional de Elecciones, the country's election commission; Oficina Nacional de Procesos Electorales, Peru's main vote counting body; and the Regional Offices of Ombudsman to organize and deliver professional development opportunities.
- Develop Civitas materials and workshops to promote corporate citizenship and social responsibility. Working with Civitas Peru and other partnerships, the Center for Civic Education might consider the development of training

materials as well as a template for a campaign to promote corporate citizenship and social responsibility among businesses and other community institutions.

- **Develop plans for continued program fulfillment and expansion.** Civitas programs, generally devoted to Project Citizen, are offered through the Civitas Peru-Florida Partnership in four of Peru's twenty-five regions. Plans should be developed for program expansion to other regions of Peru as well as to additional schools, classes, and students in those areas already being served.
- **Further develop and use technologies to enhance Civitas programs.** The Civitas Peru-Florida Partnership has been working to use existing and emerging technologies to enhance programs and communication. These efforts should continue with full consideration of resources, including time, equipment, and training available to schools.
- Use technology to make statistical reports even more readily available. The evaluator suggests that a user-friendly reporting system be developed to make statistical information about the partnership program immediately and easily available. While quality is paramount, regular reports of this type can reinforce the program's sense of accountability and help to reflect progress and needs of the program.
- **Develop a Civitas Alumni Association.** During the external on-site evaluation, one teacher remarked, "We are interested in how and what our students do as citizens when their classes end." Using online social networks or other methods of communication, Civitas may want to consider developing a Civitas Alumni Association.

For further information contact:

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