

## Transactional Analysis Proficiency Awards for Teachers and Educators in Guatemala

by Piotr Jusik

### How Does TA Fit Into Guatemala?

TA is spreading across the world and finding its way to Guatemala, a diverse country with over 20 Mayan languages spoken and stunning nature, featuring tropical rainforests, mountains, valleys, beaches, and more than 30 volcanoes. Despite these lush natural resources, some parts of Guatemala suffer from an insidious combination of systemic poverty, illiteracy, and striking inequality. The shadow of a brutal 36-year civil war that only ended in 1996 and left more than 200,000 dead still looms over the country and affects the lives of many organizations, including educational institutions.

As a humanistic psychology, TA is in a good position to offer some helpful ways of being, although there are some considerations. Ever since the Spanish conquest in the 1500s, and very much until today, the indigenous Maya people were marginalized, which contributed to their sense of internalized oppression. When putting forward TA as a method of psychological work in



*The TAPA program ends with a celebration ceremony in which participants obtain their diplomas, with Julie Hay attending via Zoom.*

this part of the world, it is vital to do so with cultural sensitivity and the awareness of the neocolonial flavor that may creep into the training process. Achieving this sensitivity can occur through careful and attuned dialogue that creates a lot of room for Guatemalans to interpret TA in their own way.

After all, TA is a system that evolved in occidental individualistic societies, which is in stark contrast to the Guatemalan one, apparently the most collectivistic society in the world. Leaning into the basic philosophy of OKness is a starting point before any of the clever artistry of TA starts to do its magic. People first, theory and practice second!

## International Cooperation

Last spring, the first group of 20 daring teachers in Guatemala successfully completed their Transactional Analysis Proficiency Awards (TAPA) in 40 hours of training. Interestingly, the process was coordinated from the United Kingdom by Julie Hay, delivered in Spanish by a Polish TA counseling practitioner (me), and assessed by a Brazilian organizational transactional analyst, Sergio Caballero. The organization participating in the scheme was Tejiendo Futuros (Weaving Futures) represented by Ingrid Villaseñor. Tejiendo Futuros is a cutting-edge nongovernmental organization that supports the local population through holistic educational projects, community development programs, and even a sustainability eco-farm venture.

## Program Delivery

The learning process based on the TAPA awards enabled teachers to acquire a basic understanding and application of several TA concepts, such as ego states, transactions, games, and script—all embedded in their educational practice in rural Guatemala in the department of Sololá. Each course participant had to create an individualized portfolio containing written work, pieces of art, and a set of recorded discussions about their chosen TA concepts.

The teachers developed their interpersonal skills through a series of interactive workshops, initially in person. Then, when COVID hit, the delivery successfully moved online, though not without teething problems, to be honest! The participants increased their capacity to support learners and families facing quite challenging circumstances. They are more acutely aware of the forces that determine the quality of their

### All drawings by Enrique Márquez



*Ego states interpreted as the inner movie, a chest of memories, and the people we internalized*



*A graphic illustration of TA's basic philosophy of human capacity for OKness, thinking, and change*


*Human hungers: recognition, stimulation, and structure*





Reflection on the learning process is crucial to consolidate the newly found resources. Piotr talks with program participants.

relationships with pupils and parents. The teachers gained psychological insight into their own motivation and now understand what is important to them in their educational practice. Through learning TA in an experiential way, they also became aware of their values and how these determine their way of working.

In a nutshell, Guatemalan teachers honed their educational practice, which supports them in promoting autonomy in the classroom and thus boosts children's emotional literacy. 

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## Members' Forum

Dear ITAA Members,

My name is Jason Brennan, and along with my fellow TA colleagues John Fleming, Eithna Coen, Juanita Husbands, Jacapo Pozzerlle, and Colm Grogan, I would like to announce that it is with great pleasure we share with you the formation of a new TA association: The Irish Association of Transactional Analysis (TIATA). TA has officially landed in Ireland!

Recently we created a constitution and applied to the companies registration of Ireland for TIATA to be recognized as an official association. We also reached out to a number of contacts we have in Ireland, which were a mix of individuals studying TA, TA professionals, and people interested in TA. We have now formed an executive committee to begin preparing for our official launch in the coming months and



to develop a strategy to inform the Island of Ireland that TIATA exists, promote TA and its applications, and explore what the various avenues are to pursue TA training. We have created a website ([www.tiata.ie](http://www.tiata.ie)) and a contact email ([hello@tiata.ie](mailto:hello@tiata.ie)). We hope to hold our first annual general membership meeting (AGM) before the end of this year.

Our main aim is to be a hub for people, groups, and organizations interested in TA in Ireland, to bring them together to learn and share TA, and to broaden the understanding and

application of TA in Ireland. We are looking forward to the support and guidance of the ITAA and, of course, other TA associations worldwide. If you would like to become an international supporting member of our organization, we would very much appreciate your support. You can apply on our website.

We are always open for support and contact and invite any and all ITAA members to reach out to us to help support the growth of TA in Ireland and to help us along the way. We also look forward to participating in future conferences and, indeed, to being able to host something ourselves in the distant future.

Until then, Céad míle fáilte (one hundred thousand warm welcomes) from the "emerald isle" of Ireland.

Kind regards,

TIATA Executive Committee 