

Feb 10, 2015

The Landfill Orchestra

How can teens transform a negative experience into something positive?

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Answer the StudySync QuikPoll



What is the best way for teens to transform their lives?

- ☐ Play a musical instrument
- ☐ Play a sport
- ☐ Do well in school
- ☐ All are equally beneficial

Number Crunch

40

StudySync Blast Info



Background


In a perfect world, everyone would have a happy childhood with ample money and access to education. They would be able to play sports if they wanted, or learn to play a musical instrument. Unfortunately, it's hard to imagine a world further from this ideal picture than the one many children grow up with in Cateura, Paraguay.

In Cateura, there is a huge landfill. Recyclers, or *gancheros*, scavenge through the garbage looking for recyclable plastic and aluminum they can trade in for money. The children of these *gancheros* often have nothing to do but play in the landfill while they wait for their parents to finish work for the day.

In 2006, that all changed. Favio Chavez was a technician at the Cateura landfill with a passion for music. He conducted a youth orchestra on weekends in the small town of Carapegua. When he brought the youth orchestra to perform for the people of Cateura, many *gancheros* asked if he would teach music to their children. Chavez agreed, but it quickly became clear that the musical instruments he lent them for rehearsals were not enough. If the young musicians were to progress, they would need to practice at home.

So Favio Chavez came up with an idea: he began making musical instruments out of the recyclables he found in the landfill. After much experimentation, he found that used oven trays, paint pots, and oil barrels all worked well when refashioned into violins and cellos. He gave these instruments to the children, and they were able to practice in between rehearsals.

The orchestra became good enough to play for an audience, and Chavez now takes the children all over the world to perform. There has even been a movie made about the landfill harmonic. How can teens transform a negative experience into something positive?

CA-CCSS:  [CA.L.7.4d](#), [CA.RI.7.1](#), [CA.RI.7.2](#), [CA.SL.7.1a](#), [CA.W.7.1a](#)

CA-ELD:  [ELD.PI.7.1.Em](#), [ELD.PI.7.1.Ex](#), [ELD.PI.7.6.c.Em](#), [ELD.PI.7.6.c.Ex](#), [ELD.PII.7.5.Em](#), [ELD.PII.7.5.Ex](#)