

Dear PODER supporter—

Should the receiving country of an immigrant assume any responsibility for their well-being? Many people increasingly say no. An immigrant must assimilate. They must adapt to our norms and we have no obligation to facilitate.

Fortunately, my ancestors' experience in the United States was different. Upon arrival in Chicago, they found refuge in ethnically familiar neighborhoods. These welcoming Irish and Lithuanian communities offered food, shelter and a job. The larger society accommodated their cultural values, practices and celebrations. As a result, my grandparents preserved a sense of identity and with each subsequent generation, feelings of belonging increased and successful integration was ultimately achieved.

At PODER, we strive to be the welcoming community that's not often found among today's harsh rhetoric and anti-immigrant policy. For those seeking a better life on Chicago's southwest side, we do what's morally right.

However, PODER's mission and impact extend well beyond moral obligation. The societal benefits are clear. As a city and country, we are smarter when a parent empowered by the English language actively participates in their child's education. We are richer when an adult, equipped with the soft and hard skills necessary to compete for a job, earns a livable wage and is able to provide for family and contribute to a local economy. And finally, we are safer when an integrated immigrant confidently steps out of the shadows to become a civically engaged member of society.

Assimilation or integration? After reading this year's annual report, I hope you'll choose to invest in PODER's integration strategy whereby immigrants adapt to their new environment while we facilitate and co-evolve with them.

e pluribus unum,



Daniel P. Loftus, Founder & CEO

An evolving classroom

When PODER held our first English (ESL) class twenty years ago, teachers had only a textbook and a chalkboard. Since then, we have updated our educational model significantly by diversifying classroom formats, introducing technology, and contextualizing our curriculum to prioritize immigrant integration.

Today, PODER instructors have a dynamic array of teaching tools that not only enhance students' English language acquisition, but also build competencies in our other key integration areas: civic engagement, job skills, digital literacy, life skills, financial literacy, and emotional intelligence.

Immigrant integration is a transformative two-way process by which immigrants adapt to their new home and the receiving society welcomes newcomers. Successful integration makes communities more cohesive, diverse, and economically vibrant for everyone.

From smart tablets to professional guest speakers, our classrooms are evolving to meet the needs of our most important stakeholders: our students.

The remaining challenge

PODER has invested time and resources to tailor our educational model to best meet students' needs, but there remain barriers that threaten their academic success:

- Inconsistent work schedules
- Limited access to transportation
- Unreliable childcare
- Disparate educational backgrounds



These barriers can derail students' academic success and lead to high dropout rates, slower literacy gains, and waning student motivation.

Enhancing immigrant integration through blended learning

PODER is constantly assessing new educational models to determine how to most effectively integrate our students into U.S. society. As a result of this research, PODER recently decided to launch a blended learning pilot.

Blended learning is a hybrid course structure that pairs traditional classroom time with online web-based content, accessed outside of class, for a self-paced learning experience.

Better for students

For students, blending learning brings a number of benefits:

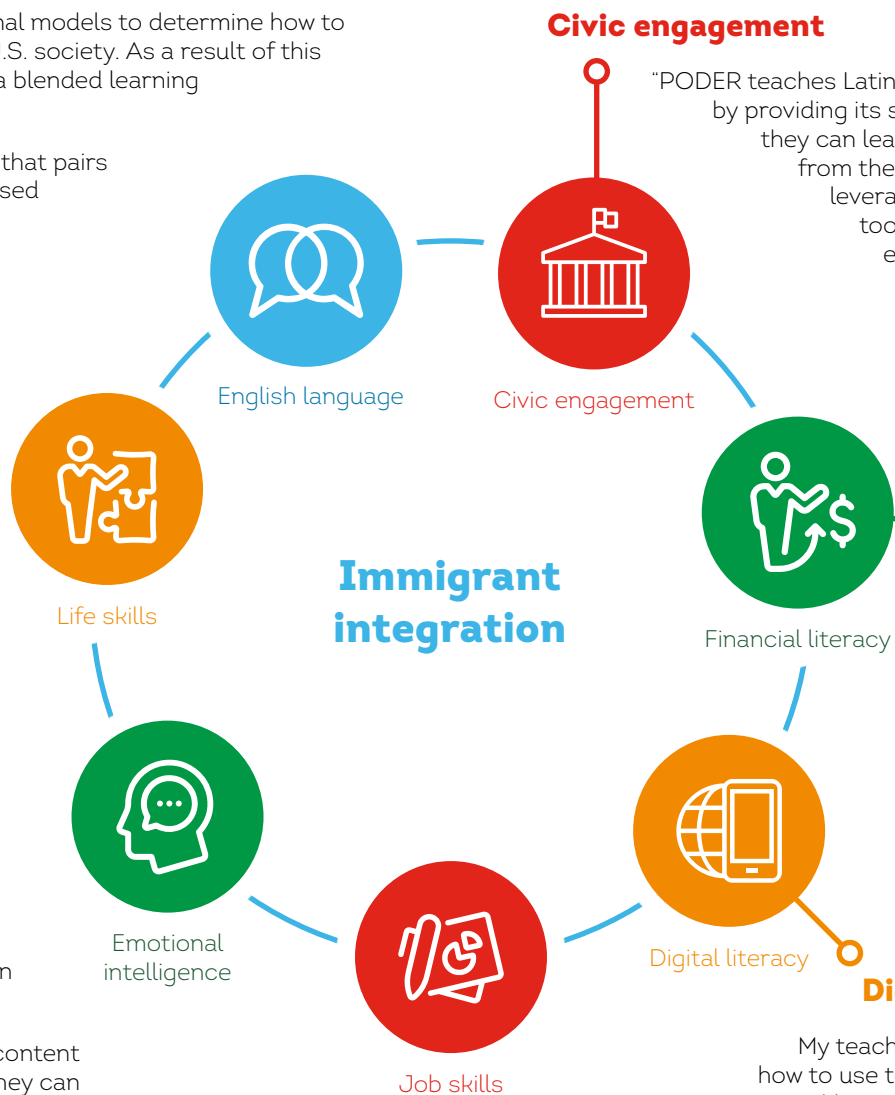
- More control over time, pace, and place than in a traditional classroom
- Increased motivation through self-directed learning
- Digital literacy skill integration
- Promotes strong communication skills through increased peer collaboration, student-instructor communication, and conversation practice opportunities.

Better for PODER

Implementing a blended learning approach at PODER will allow instructors to spend more time on classroom activities that contextualize English language instruction within our key immigrant integration areas.

Instead of asking our instructors to become content experts in all seven of our integration areas, they can instead leverage a curated, on-demand library of online videos, games, and tools to enrich the Integrated English classroom experience.

The approach will ensure PODER instructors remain focused on English literacy while exposing students to a complete range of competencies that ensure successful societal and workforce integration.



Civic engagement

"PODER teaches Latino immigrants more than English by providing its students with a platform where they can learn about policy issues directly from their representatives, and how to leverage social media as an advocacy tool to become more civically engaged."



- Illinois State Senator Martin A. Sandoval

Financial literacy

"PODER's dedication to integrating financial literacy concepts into their English instruction is essential for tackling financial insecurity in a harder-to-reach population: the Latino immigrant community. Their innovative approach of prioritizing hands-on opportunities to explore and understand online financial tools leads to something even more important today: financial empowerment."



- Nadia Coronado, Community Reinvestment & Community Partnerships Relationships Manager, JPMorgan Chase

Digital literacy

"My teachers at PODER have shown me how to use technology to improve my English more quickly. I now use websites at home like Newsela, which helps me set the reading level of news articles at my current English level and YouTube videos to review grammar and class lessons that I struggle to understand."



- Karen Martinez, Level 3 Integrated English Student



PODER by the numbers

412 served in 2017

73% gained a literacy level
after one academic trimester

330 participated in 10 civic engagement activities

97% met with our Career Counselor to set academic and professional goals

133 improved employability skills
through participation in job development courses and workshops

\$11.90 average hourly wage at job placement

100% job retention at 180 days

PODER provides the necessary academic tools to promote human dignity, to increase employment potential, and to facilitate participation in the larger community. An immigrant integration center, we prepare Spanish-speaking adults to seize opportunities in Chicago through comprehensive and tuition-free English (ESL), civic education and job training programs.



Every student who commits to PODER's positive and disciplined learning environment is empowered to build a successful new life in Chicago.

Learn more about PODER at poderworks.org





Thank you to our 2017 contributors!

\$20,000 and up

Anonymous	Marquette Bank
A Private Family Foundation (2)	McCormick Foundation/
Comcast/UnidosUS	Chicago Tribune Charities
Illinois State Treasurer/ Charitable Trust Stabilization Fund	Polk Bros. Foundation
Lloyd A. Fry Foundation	United Way Metropolitan Chicago
	Walmart Foundation/UnidosUS

\$5,000 to \$19,999

Catholic Charities	Comcast Foundation	Mr. and Mrs. Charles Jonaitis
Chicago Citywide Literacy Coalition	Cudahy Fund	Mr. Paul Loftus
Chicago Community Trust/ Nuestro Futuro	Illinois State Library/ Adult Volunteer Literacy Grant	Peoples Gas St. Procopius Church

\$1,000 to \$4,999

2IM	First American Bank	Mr. and Mrs. William Loftus
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\$500 to \$999

Abt Electronics	Howard Bennett-Falben LLC	ParqEx
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\$100 to \$499

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Ms. Cristina Hall	Ms. Lisa Perry	Mr. and Mrs. James R. Woodrow
Ms. Cecilia Hernandez		

\$99 and under

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Ms. Izabela Gluszk		Mr. Jason Romano	Mr and Mrs. Robert S. Wetoska
Ms. Winifred Godfrey			

Financial operations



Report for the year ended June 30, 2017

Consolidated statement of financial position

Assets		Liabilities	
Cash	\$68,978	Accounts payable	\$18,940
Contributions receivable	110,000	Payroll liabilities	10,894
Accounts receivable	2,075	Accrued liabilities	306
Prepaid expenses	3,728	Total current liabilities	30,140
Property and equipment, net	15,813	Net assets (net asset deficiency)	
Total assets	\$200,594	Unrestricted net assets	76,550
		Temporarily restricted net assets	93,904
		Total net assets (net asset deficiency)	170,454
		Total liabilities and net assets	\$200,594

Consolidated statement of activities and changes in net assets

	Unrestricted	Temp. Restricted	Total
Support and revenue			
Contributions	\$62,539	\$295,120	\$357,659
Program fees	8,890	-	8,890
Service revenue	255	-	255
Special events	17,128	-	-
Less: Costs of direct benefits to donors (7,608)	9,520	-	9,520
In-kind contributions	30,320	-	30,320
Net assets released from restrictions	350,716	(350,716)	-
Total support and revenue	462,240	(55,596)	406,644
Expenses			
Program services	262,037	-	\$262,037
Management and general support services	52,501	-	52,501
Fundraising expenses	28,570	-	28,570
Total expenses	343,108	-	343,108
Change in net assets	119,132	(55,596)	63,536
Net assets, beginning of year	(42,582)	149,500	106,918
Net assets, end of year	\$76,550	\$93,904	\$170,454

Statement of functional expenses available upon request.