EMERGING ECONOMIES INITIATIVE

COSTA RICA, 2022
- proposal -

BACKGROUND

Costa Rica is a small, rugged, rainforested country located in Central America, which has coastlines on the Caribbean and Pacific. Over 90 percent of the population speaks only Spanish.

Of all the Central American countries, Costa Rica is generally regarded as having the most stable and most democratic government. In 1949, the constitution abolished the country’s army, gave women the right to vote, and provided other social, economic, and educational guarantees for all of its citizens.

Throughout the 70s and 80s Costa Rica managed to stay relatively peaceful compared with its war-torn neighbors. Because of the country’s peaceful reputation, its commitment to human rights, the high literacy level, and a well-established ecotourism industry, the country attracted foreign investment, which has been shifting the country’s agriculture-based economy to one that now includes services and technology.

Three aspects characterize its 4.5 million population:

1. Although Costa Rica is not a wealthy country, Costa Ricans have a strong desire to get ahead and improve social conditions. It is by far the country with more hopes across Central America—the one with increasing levels of education and policies focused on opening borders to become a software offshore hub for developed countries.

2. A strong sense of family translates well into a strong sense of community. The care for others and thoughtfulness are evident at personal and professional levels.

3. Since the country is in the middle of the Caribbean, both African and Latino roots have played an important role in its history; the Costa Rican culture is rich, plenty of colors, rhythms and tastes.

These three factors created the ideal conditions for a community of designers to grow a couple of decades ago. About ten years back, with the explosion of the Internet, an important percentage of that community turned its attention to WordPress—since WordPress is a platform that requires low-tech skills to build simple, static websites, it offered graphic designers a way to transition to the digital world.

Over time, a portion of that community became more knowledgeable on front-end computing languages (HTML, CSS, Java Script) and turned into freelancers and/or small entrepreneurs.

WHERE THE INITIATIVE FITS

Agile is not a well-known topic in Costa Rica. Only a few people in IT might have had access to some literature and online classes, with the implicit consequences of being exposed to unfiltered information: Scrum is the definition of Agile, Agile is for tech people, Agile is about tons of annoying meetings, certifications are what matters, etc.

The vast majority have never heard of Agile.

We believe that, as a different way of working (approaching work, organizing and developing teams, and fostering innovation), some knowledge in Agile might accelerate the professional journey of some Costa Ricans:

1. Knowledge on Agile technical practices are in high demand in the US and Canada.

2. An Agile mindset is great asset to have when one faces interviews with companies located in developed countries.

3. Learning about the existence of Agile communities in other countries expands exponentially one’s professional horizons and connections.

4. Having contact with people from developed countries generates the curiosity and encouragement needed to dive deeper and walk further.

In our hunt for non-profits and underserved groups in developing countries, during the Agile Alliance conference in Nashville we found a person from Guatemala who had some contacts in Costa Rica.

Those contacts took us to two leaders from the Costa Rican WordPress community: Lidia Arroyo and Merary Alvarado. They happened to be putting together a two-day gathering for the WordPress community in San Jose, Costa Rica’s capital (November 5th and 6th, 2022).

After a few conversations, we realized that the gathering might be a good opportunity for the Initiative to make an impact:

- It is a not-for-profit event.
- The event is organized by individuals from an informal community trying to self-organize.
COUNTER PROPOSAL

- Over 95 percent of the attendees are self-taught and willing to grow and expand their knowledge.
- At least 35 percent of the audience will be women.
- The venue is a small university (Universidad Fidélitas), although the event is not organized by the university or intended for the university’s students.
- The event does not accept sponsored talks or commercially focused presentations.

In addition to that:
- Sponsorships will cover a large portion of the expenses—which allows the organizers to charge very little for a ticket.
- The ticket cost $35, but it includes t-shirt, swags and a happy hour.
- Sponsors are hosting companies and plugin developers—nothing related to Agile, classes or certifications.
- The event does not pay the speakers or give them any type of compensation, treats or perks—except for a small, casual meal the night before the event.

ORIGINAL PROPOSAL

The gathering’s talks are one-hour-long. However, since this would be a specialized presentation, the organizers offered a 4- or 8-hour time slot.

In terms of capacity, they also offered an auditorium with fixed chairs to accommodate up to 100 people or a classroom to accommodate up to 40 people.

The presentation on Agile would run in parallel with the conference or as a pre-event the day before: anyone attending the conference would have the chance to register for the Agile presentation.

The original proposal received by the Emerging Economies Initiative included three asks:

- A presenter to conduct a talk or workshop in Spanish, either during the first day of the event (November 5th) or as a pre-event (November 4th).
- Financial support to cover logistic expenses—attendees’ lunch if it happened on November 5th or both attendee’s lunch and venue if it took place the day before (pre-event).
- Permission to include the talk as a “specialized workshop” in the event’s program.

At that time, we explained that, due to the current Agile Alliance financial constraints, we might be able to help only with a presenter and some supplies. That is because:

- Depending on the city of departure, a flight ticket in economy class, with one or two stops (to make it even cheaper), might range from (USD 480 to USD 800).
- The presenter would have to allocate at least four unpaid days of his time (one day to prepare content and materials, two days to travel, and one day to present).

- Supplies might range from USD 50 to 100.
- A simple, casual lunch in San Jose for 60-70 people might range from USD 600 to USD 900 (around USD 7-10 per person, plus utensils, delivery and gratuity).
- If the event takes place the day before (pre-event), the venue might range from USD 400 to USD 1,000.

COUNTER PROPOSAL

Although this is not an Agile conference, we believe it is a good event to support:

- No commercial purposes.
- Self-organized community.
- Not-professional-level audience.
- Tech- and business-oriented attendees.
- More than a third of participants are women.
- Great opportunity to pique curiosity about a topic that attendees can use one way or another.

However, the challenge was “how we could accomplish more than simply presenting for half day within a two-day conference.”

After countless emails and a few more conversations, we met Rita Robles, who is an IT professor of the Universidad Fidélitas’s (conference venue) and is familiar with the conference. We proposed to run a presentation only for the university’s professors (IT, Business and Project Management), some administrative stuff and the organizers of the conference. We offered three options:

- A series of lectures on different Agile topics with interactive short-exercises: history behind the movement, principles and values, retrospectives, feedback lops, Design Thinking, high-performance teams, user stories, technical practices in software development, misunderstandings in the industry, communities of practice, resources.

- A practical, long exercise (small talks + exercises): discover the need (crowdsourcing ideas, brainstorming techniques, Design Thinking, powerful questions), develop the product (MVP, story mapping, user stories, backlog refinement, technical practices in software development), and execute properly (kpi’s and okr’s, high-performing teams, customer feedback, product canvas, micromanaging).

- Three simulations and a Q&A (immersion in Agile): each simulation would have an introduction (10-20 min talk), the activity itself (45-60 min exercise), and a debrief (30 min interactive conversation). The first simulation would be focused on estimations, retrospectives, bosses, micromanaging, long term planning and organizational culture. The second one on cross-functional teams, T- and H-shape skill, collaboration and estimates. And the third one would be focused on vision, scaling and feedback lops. Then, a 60-90 min “Ask What you Want” session would take place.
Rita and the conference organizers met with the university’s management team. They loved the idea and unanimously chose the third option. Therefore,

- On November 4th, before the WordPress conference, a 6- to 8-hour “Immersion Day on Agile” will run for teachers and community organizers. It will be free for attendees. The university will not charge for the venue. The room will accommodate at least 50 people. We might help with lunch. It will be completely separated from the gathering.
- On November 5th, we would run a shortened, 4-hour version of the “Immersion Day on Agile” to 40 gathering attendees. It will be run in parallel with the conference and advertised as a “specialized workshop.” It will not have cost for attendees. We might help with coffee and snacks.
- On November 6th, we would run repeat the activity planned for November 5th for a new group of people.
- Nothing of what we propose would cost a penny to attendees, conference organizers or the university.
- There will not be sponsors (signs, material or merchandise) linked or involved in our workshops.
- We will not receive any type of compensation—not even a ticket to attend the gathering.

We are proposing the following agenda for the workshop on November 4th: “Dia de Inmersión en Agile: Principios, Valores y Beneficios para IT y fuera de IT”

09:00 am – Breakfast and connections
09:30 am – Introductions and background
10:00 am – Simulation #1
11:00 am – Simulation #2
12:30 pm – Lunch
01:30 pm – Talk
02:00 pm – Simulation #3
03:00 pm – Session “Ask what you Want”
04:30 pm – Conclusions and Takeaways
05:00 pm – Closing

This proposal is not intended to request funding from the Agile Alliance. Instead, it is to explore:

1. If you see/feel that such type of event would be a good fit for the initiative.
2. If their request to include the initiative’s name and AA logo on their website and promotional material is appropriate.
3. If instead of displaying the presenter’s bio in the event program, they could post information about AA and the initiative’s purpose.
4. If it would be ok to bring the Emerging Economies’s sign to the event.
5. If we have some AA merchandise to hand out during the workshops.

AUDIENCE

November 4th Workshop (8 hours)

- University’s professors (IT, Management, PM)
- University’s admin stuff (HR, Operations)
- IT students

November 5th Workshop (8 hours)

- Freelancers attending the WordCamp
- Designers attending the WordCamp
- Beginner level developers
- Entrepreneurs
- Curious

VISION AGREED

TIMELINE

1. Initial contact – July 17
2. First thoughts – July 25
3. First conversation – August 12
4. Original Proposal by Community – September 10
5. Contra Proposal by Agile Alliance – September 18
6. Confirmation – September 30
7. Vision agreed – October 5
IMMERSION DAY IN AGILE

Principles, Values and Benefits for IT and out of IT

Friday, November 4th, 2022 9 am – 5 pm
Auditorium – San Pedro Campus – Fidelitas University

AGENDA
9:00 am – Breakfast and connections
9:30 am – Introduction: Software and Teams
10:00 am – Simulation #1: The Production Line
11:00 am – Simulation #2: Cross-functional Teams
12:30 pm – Lunch
1:30 pm – Talk: System Thinking and Design Thinking
2:00 pm – Simulation #3: Scaling
3:00 pm – Session “Ask what you want!”
4:00 pm – Conclusions
5:00 pm – Closing
Title: Invitation Workshop on Agile

Message body:

Dear Professor

The Information Technology school wants to invite you to be part of this workshop.

If you’ve ever wondered what Agile is, why some people say that it works, when it should be applied, how it is implemented, who makes it, who it is for and what it is used for, you will love this workshop!

If you have heard others talking about frameworks, Sprints, courses and certifications, you definitely have to be here – this tour will land you and it will fully broaden your perspective.

Friday, November 4th, from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.
Find the schedule here …
Reserve your seat here …

Since seats are limited, reservations will be confirmed through email.
Registration close: Tuesday, November 1st, 2022.

Find attached brochure and agenda.

We appreciate confirmation. Thank you.

Cordially,

JOSETTE ÁLVAREZ FONSECA
Universidad Fidelitas
INVITATION for NOV. 5th WORKSHOP

WHAT TO DO IN A WORDCAMP?

At WordCamp San José, participants will be able to learn from experts from Costa Rica and beyond, who are passionate about teaching and who selflessly want to share their best experiences and trends.

We invite all students, professionals and entrepreneurs to dare to participate in a national event that supports knowledge in technology and business, to connect with top-level exhibitors who donate their time and knowledge so that everyone can learn to make web pages, and successful e-commerce.
La Universidad Fidélitas es el Venue del WordCamp San José 2022, por tanto te dejamos toda la información sobre cómo llegar al campus a disfrutar del evento.

¿Dónde?

El WordCamp San José 2022 se llevará a cabo en la Sede San Pedro de la Universidad Fidélitas, específicamente en el edificio del Ágora. Nuestro Venue cuenta con amplio parqueo y estación de bus cercana para que puedas desplazarte con tranquilidad.

¿Cómo puedo llegar?

Dirección Exacta: Del Colegio de Ingenieros y Arquitectos en Curridabat, 500 mts al norte y 300 al este. San Pedro, Santa Marta, Costa Rica

Autobús: Santa Marta/San Pedro

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ROOMS

➢ WP and accessibility
➢ Negocios and Woo
➢ WX & Marketing design
➢ Development

Fidélitas University is the Venue of WordCamp San José 2022, so here you have all the information on how to get to the campus to enjoy the event.

Where?

The WordCamp San José 2022 will take place at the Fidélitas University’s San Pedro complex, specifically in the Ágora building. Our Venue has ample parking and a nearby bus station so you can get around with peace of mind.

How can I get there?

Exact Address: From the College of Engineers and Architects in Curridabat, 500 meters north and 300 meters east. San Pedro, Santa Marta, Costa Rica

Bus: Santa Marta/San Pedro
WORKSHOP: AN IMMERSION DAY IN AGILE

Through three simulations, you will learn some of the principles and values behind the Agile movement. In addition, concepts such as speed vs agility, bosses vs leaders, groups vs teams, big vs small, dashboards vs KPIs, estimating vs guessing, and many more will be explored.

We will not talk about Scrum or Scaling methodologies; most of those called "commercial frameworks" are a barrier to being Agile; in fact, the largest technology companies stopped using them more than a decade ago and focused on the heart of Agility: principles, values and techniques.

In the last 45 minutes of the workshop, you could ask all of the questions you have about these frameworks – both technical and non-technical – or anything else you want to know.

- **Assigned room:** Workshop 1
- **Day:** Saturday, November 05, 2022
- **Time:** 09:30 p.m.
- **Duration:** 8 hours.
THE VENUE - FIDÉLITAS UNIVERSITY (San Jose, Costa Rica)
SUPPLIES AND FOOD
PART OF THE MATERIAL
WORKSHOP DAY 1 AND 2
WORKSHOP DAY 2
PLENARY SESSIONS
“We traveled from Guatemala, a neighbor country, to attend the event. We knew Scrum but hate it. This workshop seemed to be different and provocative. We are self-taught developers (32 and 21 years old) –we dropped out college because we couldn’t stand more than 30 minutes of a class.

At the end of the workshop –after eight and a half hours–, the presenter asked: ‘have you ever had fun for so long in a classroom?’ Both of us became speechless. I became a bit emotional. We had never learned so many practical things, tips and techniques. We want to have this event in our country. Please help us! And thank you Agile Alliance.”

HOSMEL QUINTANA (right)
RENE CORRALES (left)

“My friend Andrea attended the workshop on Friday and told me about it. Immediately I knew I had to attend the session on Saturday, even though I already had plans –it was my birthday!

Every activity and conversation in the workshop blew my mind. Now I need to figure out how to implement so much at work.

At night, my boyfriend invited me to have dinner at a nice restaurant. After a while he said: ‘have you realized that you have been drawing stuff and explaining Agile things for almost two hours? We haven’t even ordered the meals! And there is no room on the table to put the drinks.’

This became a memorable, enriching birthday to me.”

ANTONIETA ARIAS
“A few weeks before the event, we felt that Ricardo became annoying: countless calls, emails and text messages. When Lidia Arroyo – the main organizer of the WordCamp – got tired, she passed the ball to Rita Robles, who later passed it to Samantha Arburola. Those messages were overwhelming: ‘the room size, invitations, lunch for the first day, coffee, water, tables!’ He didn’t understand that Costa Ricans are not extremely organized, punctual or formal; we just go with the flow and figure out things on the fly. Lidia, Rita and Sammy were skeptical and annoyed, that didn’t attend the workshop. But I did! Then I understood why an 8-hour workshop requires so much preparation – it’s not just a one-hour regular talk. When Lidia, Rita and Sammy heard attendees’ comments about the workshop, they truly regreted not having attended.

There are no words to express how amazing the workshop was. Tomorrow we will hold the retrospective for the WordCamp; guess what? – I’ll bring what I learned in the workshop! Next year we will implement more Agile techniques to organize ourselves and the whole event: visualization, team accountability, Kanban, DoD and more.”

ANDREA NAVARRO

“I’ve been teaching for 22 years at Fidélitas University’s IT Department. I didn’t bring high expectations to the workshop. I thought the activity was going to be a boring lecture, so I planned to stay only from 9 to 11 am and then go back to work. However, it was impossible to leave. By 6:30 pm, when the security crew was turning off the building lights and locking the doors, I run to them to ask for 30 more minutes of time. It was disappointing when they said ‘no, we can’t.’ Now we need to find out how to have another workshop.”

KATY SANDOVAL

“As I said at the beginning of the workshop, I attended because the invitation said, ‘learn what small vs big means and a control panel vs real KPIs.’ I ended up learning so many other concepts and tips that I will use the rest of my life.”

JAIME ANDRES MARTINEZ

“I’m still trying to understand how someone is able to stand up for 8 hours to teach us, entertain us and change our beliefs… for free. Thanks Agile Alliance.”

JAIME ANDRES MARTINEZ
Agile Alliance,

Gracias... gracias por haber sido parte del WordCamp SJ 2022, por habernos permitido crear un evento magnífico.

A ti que participaste con mucho entusiasmo en cada una de las actividades que planeamos, a ti que fuiste ahí para compartir y aprender.

Fuiste esencial para que el WordCamp San José 2022 se convirtiera en el evento más grande de la comunidad en Latinoamérica.

Gracias por un WCSJ2022 inolvidable, esperamos vernos en 2023 con muchas más actividades alrededor de la comunidad.

Organización WordCamp SJ 2022

Agile Alliance,

Thank you... thank you for being part of WordCamp SJ 2022, for allowing us to have a magnificent event.

To you who participated with great enthusiasm in each of the activities we planned, to you who were there to share and learn.

You were key for the WordCamp San José 2022 to became the largest community event in Latin America.

Thank you for an unforgettable WCSJ2022. We hope to see you in 2023 with many more activities around the community.

Organization WordCamp SJ 2022
1. **Intention** is key. During the November 4th workshop only one of the four simulations planned was run. During the November 5th one, only two were run. The reason: lack of time. Over 70 percent of each workshop became conversational. Unexpectedly, questions, answers and stories came from both the presenter and attendees, while techniques and low-tech tools were explained. Because of that dynamic, the presenter constantly jumped randomly through the 200+ slides according to each particular conversation. The number of conversations held and the quality of them made both events remarkable, useful and unforgettable to attendees.

2. Culture, language, and background have to be carefully taken into account when selecting topics and preparing slides, material and short talks. It’s not just “let’s pass slides and talk about Agile.”

3. A native speaker presenter is key to have a remarkable event. Understanding and using native expressions and jokes keep attendees engaged and excited and help them speak, share and interact.

4. It is challenging for one single presenter to take care of the workshop flow while at the same time he or she pays attention to other matters. Supplies and material must be prepared in advance. Snacks and lunch should be coordinated in advance.

5. As it was learned in previous events, having at least two presenters is ideal, especially for events with more than 30 people and/or longer than three hours.

6. It became more and more difficult to take the Emerging Economies sign into international flights. If it is not checked as a special type of luggage, security at the airport can retain it.

7. In Latin America, volunteers on site—whether individuals or organizations—seem to feel done when the event is confirmed. Then, they usually get relaxed and even detached. It is on the Initiative’s team to continue pushing and even taking over certain logistics to ensure a smooth event.

8. The academic community is a great partner to spread the word of Agile. However, lack of trust in Latin America is high: it’s well known that “no one teaches for free” and “no one offers a workshop without selling something.” An effective approach might have two phases: the first event should be designed to call the attention of some people and gain credibility (to show that our purpose is free from commercial manipulation and intervention). The second one to create evangelists that spread the word within a specific institution and become the seed to create learning groups, communities of practice, etc.

9. A successful, enriching event does not require a well-known presenter or an Agile celebrity. However, comprehensive knowledge about Agility (principles, values, techniques, technical practices, human-focused practices, practical examples ready to be used, what works and what doesn’t, personal examples of success and failure around a different variety of topics, what is useful about frameworks and what is not, etc.) along with thoughtful preparation are enough to successfully manage and enlighten a group of people who continuously ask challenging and provoking questions.