



Introduction to The Freedom Academy by The Democracy Lab Foundation

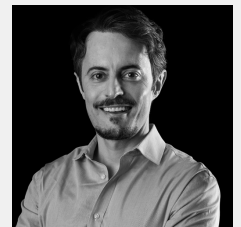
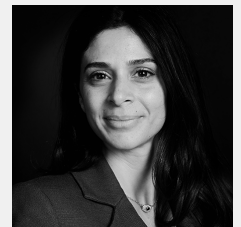


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The Democracy Lab Foundation

The Democracy Lab Foundation

Protecting Costa Rica's Legacy of Freedom.

Headquartered in Costa Rica, The Democracy Lab Foundation (Demo Lab) is a civic participation laboratory dedicated to innovate how citizens engage with democracy. Our mission is to ensure Costa Rica remains a beacon of freedom in Latin America, serving as a model for the region and beyond.



We achieve this through three strategic pillars:

The Freedom Academy:

We transform civic education by integrating our Freedom Curriculum with strategic partnerships, whether through community programs in sports, technology, entrepreneurship, and art, or through collaborations with universities and professional development initiatives via our online platform.



Innovation Lab:

We design and scale tools that foster active citizen participation and strengthen democratic engagement.



The BLISS Summit:

We organize a yearly global gathering of freedom and democracy advocates to collaborate on transformative projects. By combining capital and innovation, BLISS drives impactful initiatives that empower communities and advance freedom worldwide.

Introducing the Freedom Academy

The Freedom Academy is Demo Lab's pioneering civic education ecosystem for Latin America, focused on empowering individuals through key areas of active citizenship, including civic participation, principles of freedom, entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and leadership development.





Freedom + Academy



As a bold response to outdated civic education models, the Freedom Academy uses two complementary approaches to engage diverse audiences:



Community Partnerships:

We work with outstanding programs in sports, technology, entrepreneurship, and art to combine their activities with our Freedom Curriculum workshops.



Academic and Corporate Collaborations:

We scale our impact through partnerships with academic institutions and employee skill enhancement programs, leveraging our digital civic education platform to provide accessible and effective learning at scale.

Our Digital Civic Education Platform

Courses / Episodes / Political Freedom with Leopoldo López

Political Freedom, Civic Organization, and Participation
7 lessons 14h 4.7 (2000 reviews)

Share Enroll Now

Lesson Content

- EP01 - Political Freedom and Civic Participation with Leopoldo López 1h
- ▶ Political freedom as an essential pillar in a liberal democracy. 2 min
- ▶ What local issues in your community could be solved through teamwork and collaboration? 5 min
- ▶ A community action plan. 12 min
- ▶ Identify a problem in your community and propose a strategy to solve it as an active citizen. 3 min
- EP02 - Rights over Private Property with Berta Valle 1h 20 min
- EP03 - Freedom of Expression with Victor Navarro 36 min
- EP04 - Limited Government and Division of Powers with Jhanisse Vaca 40 min

General More Information FAQ Discussion Forum Transcription

The Story of Leopoldo López
Leopoldo López, a Venezuelan activist living in exile, shares his journey, highlighting the importance of political freedom and civic participation as fundamental pillars of democracy.

The Freedom Academy's digital platform engages participants through innovative and impactful methods:

The Freedom Mini-Documentary Series: Personal and inspiring stories of freedom fighters and movement leaders, designed to raise awareness about the risks of tyranny.
Immersive Learning Modules: Interactive lessons that develop critical thinking, governance skills, and leadership capacity.

Call to Action: Exercises that empower participants to take immediate action in their communities to defend freedom and democratic integrity.

Graduates of the Freedom Academy earn the title of Freedom Ambassadors, taking on the responsibility of promoting classical liberal principles and driving positive change in their communities and beyond.

Key Figures

Key Figures

Our protagonists include inspiring voices of freedom and democracy, whose personal experiences make the Curriculum impactful and relatable:



DR. ÁLVARO SALAS
President and CEO, The Reynolds Foundation
Chairman, Demo Lab



JHANISSE VACA DAZA
Chairwoman and President,
the Jucumari Foundation



ANA CORINA SOSA
Venezuelan advocate for
freedom and human rights



LAURA CHINCHILLA
President of Costa Rica
(2010–2014)



BERTA VALLE
Nicaraguan Human Rights
activist and spokesperson,
World Liberty Congress



LEOPOLDO LÓPEZ
General Secretary, World Liberty
Congress



IVÁN DUQUE MÁRQUEZ
President of the Republic
of Colombia (2018–2022)



ROSA MARÍA PAYÁ
Cuban Pro-Democracy Activist
and Founder, Cuba Decide



THOR HALVORSSSEN
CEO, Human Rights
Foundation



VICTOR NAVARRO
Founder, Voces de la
Memoria



CÉLINE ASSAF BOUSTANI
President, Human Rights
Foundation

SEVEN CORE PRINCIPLES OF FREEDOM

The Freedom Academy's curriculum centers on the essential pillars of democracy:

1

Political Freedom, Civic Organization, and Participation:

Fostering active engagement in community and political life, and exploring the risks of non-democratic systems.

2

Government by Consent and Representation:

Highlighting civic initiatives for government reform and promoting human rights advocacy.

3

Private Property Rights:

Exploring the importance of private property rights for economic and social resilience.

4

Freedom of Speech:

Using technology to promote human rights and combat oppression.

5

Rule of Law:

Demonstrating the importance of nonviolent resistance and civic education.

6

Limited Government and Division of Power:

Exploring checks and balances to protect freedom and autonomy.

7

Voluntary Relationships and Association:

Promoting grassroots movements and peaceful transitions of power.

Episodes

EP01 – Political Freedom and Civic Participation



The Story of Leopoldo López

Leopoldo López, a Venezuelan activist living in exile, shares his journey, highlighting the importance of political freedom and civic participation as fundamental pillars of democracy.

LESSON:

Your Role and Your Community's Role in Democracy and Freedom

Learning Outcome: Design strategies to strengthen civic engagement in democratic contexts by analyzing the importance of active participation in community and political life within their immediate reality.

Example Activity: Assume the role of a community leader who must make decisions about initiatives such as public cleanups and protests. Choose the most relevant decisions and evaluate the impact of these actions in your simulated community.

Document the decisions made and their results on a collaborative board for collective analysis.

Critical Thinking Exercise: Reflect: What problems in your local community could be solved through teamwork? Design a strategy to mobilize citizens and address these challenges.

Call to Action: Design a community action plan by:

- Identifying a local problem and proposing strategies to solve it.
- Publishing the plan on a collaborative board.
- Providing feedback on peers' plans.

EP02 – Private Property Rights



The Story of Berta Valle

Berta Valle, a Nicaraguan broadcaster, shares her personal story about facing censorship and exile, illustrating the connection between private property rights and resistance against authoritarianism.

LESSON:

Defending private property rights in an Unjust System

Learning Outcome: Analyze how private property rights strengthen economic and social stability, evaluate scenarios where these rights are threatened and propose strategies for their protection.

Example Activity: Educational Simulation

- Assume the role of defenders in a fictional authoritarian regime.
- Balance activism with legal risks to protect private property rights .
- Decide on strategies to fight unjust expropriations and promote economic stability.

Critical Thinking Exercise:

Reflect on the testimony in a virtual discussion space, answering key questions such as:

- Why is it important to own your things, like your house or business?
- What would happen if someone took them away without justification?
- How would you protect what's yours in such a situation?

Call to Action: Create a short video on “The Social Impact of Weakening Private Property Rights” based on:

- An analysis of private property rights in your community
- A reflection on how private property rights contribute to economic freedom

EP03 – Freedom of Speech



The Story of Víctor Navarro

Víctor Navarro, a freedom of expression advocate, analyzes the role of independent journalism and the personal risks of standing up to propaganda.

LESSON:

Journalist Under Fire

Learning Outcome: Critically evaluate freedom of expression as an essential pillar of democracy, arguing its importance in diverse contexts and designing community action proposals that promote its protection and exercise.

Example Activity: Discussion Forum:

- What problems did you see in the video that could affect people's freedom?
- How do social networks influence whether people can express themselves freely or face censorship?
- What could we do to use social networks in ways that protect freedom of expression?

Critical Thinking Exercise: Question: What role do independent media and journalism play in preserving democracy? Reflect on how freedom of expression strengthens or weakens societies.

Call to Action: Students are invited to design a virtual campaign to raise awareness about the importance of freedom of expression. The campaign must address an identified freedom of expression issue and include:

- Campaign title.
- Identified problem.
- Campaign objective.
- Target audience.
- Strategies and activities.
- Tools and resources.
- Key messages.

EP04 – Limited Government and Division of Powers



The Story of Jhanisse Vaca Daza

Jhanisse Vaca Daza, a Bolivian human rights advocate, shares her perspectives on how checks and balances within government safeguard individual liberties and prevent authoritarianism.

LESSON:

A Balanced Government

Learning Outcome: Research and propose a balanced government framework that ensures accountability and protection of individual liberties through the analysis of checks and balances in a democratic context.

Example Activity: Choose a fictional case and design a table that prevents the concentration of executive, legislative, and judicial powers. The table must include the main functions of each branch of democracy. This activity is conducted interactively on the digital platform. Participants are provided different options to place within the table.

Critical Thinking Exercise:

- What could happen if a single leader made all decisions without any oversight?
- How does a country suffer when there's no balance among those who govern?
- Do you know of any case where a government abused its power and what happened to the people?

Call to Action: Write a document titled: "How to Balance Power in a Government System." The document should include:

- A three-branch system describing the checks each exercises over the others, applied to their real context.
- Address key questions such as:
 - a. Why is it important that authority isn't concentrated in a single person or group?
 - b. What rules or mechanisms could prevent someone from having too much power?
- Publish the document on the platform for peer feedback.
- Design an awareness campaign about the importance of separation of powers and democratic control mechanisms applied to their context.

EP05 - Rule of Law



A Conversation with Ana Corina Sosa and Thor Halvorsen

Ana Corina Sosa and Thor Halvorsen discuss the importance of the rule of law in ensuring justice and preventing abuses of power, drawing from their personal activism experiences.

LESSON:

Justice in an Unjust System

Learning Outcome: Design strategies to prevent power abuses in democratic systems by analyzing the rule of law as a guarantee of justice.

Example Activity: Participants assume the role of human rights defenders representing a protester accused under an unjust law. They navigate the legal system, appeal to international bodies, and design peaceful resistance strategies.

Critical Thinking Exercise:

- Why is it important that laws apply equally to everyone?
- What happens when people in power don't respect the laws?
- Do you know of any recent case where the law wasn't respected and what were the consequences?

Call to Action: Create a plan titled: "Defending Reforms in a Country in Democratic Crisis." The plan should:

- Analyze how the deterioration of the rule of law affects freedom, democracy, and individual rights.
- Design strategies to influence policy and promote changes at national or international levels.

EP06 - Voluntary Relationships and Associations



The Story of Céline Boustani

Céline Boustani shares her experience on using voluntary associations to foster grassroots change and promote peaceful transitions of power.

LESSON:

Voluntary Associations and Social Movements

Learning Outcome: Analyze the role of voluntary associations in promoting democratic movements, designing initiatives for social change.

Example Activity: Building Social Movements

Design a social organization focused on social change, defining:

- Its main priorities and objectives.
- Necessary strategic coalitions or alliances.
- Potential challenges and how to address them.

Critical Thinking Exercise:

- How do voluntary associations help freedom and democracy movements?
- Think of a time when collaboration helped achieve a shared goal. How did the power of gathering and connecting with like-minded people influence the outcome?

Call to Action: Students are invited to design a "Social Movement Proposal" using their chosen digital tool. The proposal must include:

- An initiative to address a specific social or political issue.
- Justification of the importance of voluntary relationships in generating change.

EP07 - Roundtable: Government by Consent and Representation



A Discussion with Global Leaders

This episode features Laura Chinchilla (former President of Costa Rica), Iván Duque (former President of Colombia), and Alberto Trejos (dean of a leading business school in Latin America), who debate the importance of ensuring limited government and faithful representation of citizens' interests through consent and representation.

LESSON:

Citizen Consent

Learning Outcome: Create a government reform proposal, highlighting the importance of citizen consent and liberal democratic representation.

Example Activity: Design a constitution for a fictional country that includes:

- Fundamental human rights.
- Detailed mechanisms for citizen representation (elections, popular consultations, assemblies).
- Citizen oversight system to monitor government management.

Critical Thinking and Reflection Exercise:

How can active citizen participation (through voting, protests, consultations, and other mechanisms) influence public policy?

- What role does government transparency play in creating a government accountable to its citizens?
- How can legal or constitutional reforms strengthen institutions to prevent corruption and power abuse?

Call to Action: Design an awareness campaign about the importance of citizen consent in governmental decision-making in their context to show how it is fundamental for good government functioning and how every voice counts. The campaign must include:

- Key message, target audience, and communication strategies.
- Suggest a space for socializing the campaign in your community.

Our Partners

Our Partners

At Freedom Academy, we collaborate with key partners to maximize our impact and scale our mission. These partnerships fall into two categories: Distribution Partners and Global Partnerships.

Global Partnerships

- Strategic support for the development and scaling of our curriculum and platform, and amplifying our mission globally.
- As well as our on-the-ground delivery partners, we iterate and develop our curriculum through our global collaborations.
- We work with leading experts and attract top talent and freedom fighters, to develop and implement impactful programs.

Distribution Partners

Partners that use our curriculum and platform to integrate Freedom education into their programs.

Community Partnerships:

Working with programs already excelling in sports, technology, entrepreneurship, and art to pair their activities with our Freedom Curriculum workshops.

Academic and Corporate Collaborations:

Scaling impact through partnerships with academic institutions and employee skill development programs, leveraging our digital civic education platform to provide accessible and impactful learning at scale.

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS



DISTRIBUTION PARTNERS

SPORT AND FREEDOM:



TECHNOLOGY, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND FREEDOM:



MUSIC AND FREEDOM:





✉ info@demolabcr.org

📱 (+506) 8812-9601

🌐 <https://www.demolabcr.org>