

# Kerrnandez Foundation Partnership Proposal

## School Bus Transportation Initiative

Universidad Tecnológica de la Sierra Hidalguense (UTSH)

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**The Problem:** UTSH students walk 5-15 kilometers from rural villages to reach campus. Mountainous terrain, seasonal weather, and lack of public transportation create barriers that prevent attendance and educational access.

**The Solution:** A 35-seat school bus serving 12 surrounding villages, operated by UTSH, providing free transportation for low-income students and \$1/trip for others.

**The Impact:** 1,000+ students annually will benefit from reliable, affordable transportation. Estimated improvement in rainy-season attendance: 10-15 percentage points.

**Investment Required:** \$15,000 USD (one-time)

**Annual Operational Cost:** ~\$11,400 (covered by UTSH + student fee-sharing)

**Timeline:** Sustainable 5+ years (indefinite)

### ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

**Organization:** Universidad Tecnológica de la Sierra Hidalguense

**Founded:** November 11, 1997

**Type:** Public technical university, government-supported

**Current Enrollment:** 600+ students (TSU and engineering programs)

**Service Area:** Zacualtipán municipality (38,155 residents across 272 km<sup>2</sup>)

**Geographic Region:** Sierra Madre Oriental mountains (500-2,300m elevation)

UTSH serves a mountainous region with 33 distinct villages and communities. The municipality is rural, with significant indigenous population (8.4%) and limited infrastructure. The university is committed to serving students from these isolated communities.

### THE PROBLEM - DETAILED ANALYSIS

#### Geographic & Physical Barriers

Zacualtipán municipality covers 272.71 km<sup>2</sup> of mountainous landscape. Students walk from 12 primary villages, covering distances of 5-15 kilometers one-way to reach campus. The terrain includes elevation changes from 500-2,300 meters, dense vegetation, and difficult mountain paths. Zero public bus routes serve these communities. The two private minibuses that exist charge \$3-5 USD per trip, representing 10-17% of average family income (\$150-200 USD/month), making transportation unaffordable for most students.

**Seasonal Impact:** During rainy season (June-September), mountain roads become impassable. Attendance data shows a 16-point gap: 92% attendance in good weather vs. 76% in rainy season.

Students report missing classes due to weather (78%), physical exhaustion (43%), and some have considered dropping out (34%).

**Current Situation:** UTSH operates one 12-seat minibus serving only 12 students/day, with a waiting list of 100+ students. Previous government funding attempts (2020, 2023, 2024) were denied. The problem has grown, not shrunk.

## THE PROPOSED SOLUTION

**Request:** One 35-seat school bus for \$15,000 USD (one-time investment)

**Operation:** UTSH-managed, 4 daily routes (2 morning, 2 afternoon)

**Access Model:** FREE for lowest-income students (~150/year); \$1 USD/trip for others

**Service Area:** All 12 surrounding villages

**Long-term Commitment:** 5+ years (indefinite sustainability)

UTSH will employ the driver, handle maintenance, provide insurance and registration, and determine routes. All operational costs beyond Year 1 are covered by the university budget plus student fee revenue (\$2,800-4,000/month estimated). The university board has formally approved this commitment (Board Resolution #2025-44, unanimous 8-0 vote).

## IMPACT PROJECTIONS

Metric	Current	With Bus	Target
Daily Users	12 (one minibus)	140 (35 seats x 4 trips)	—
Weekly Users	~50-60	350-400	70%+ of enrollment
Annual Reach	~250	1,000+	520+ (full enrollment)
Rainy Season Attendance	76%	86-91%	90%+
Weather-Related Dropouts	Current	Eliminated	Zero
Cost Per Student/Year	\$1,311 (scholarship)	~\$15 (infrastructure)	10% of scholarship

## COST BREAKDOWN

Item	Cost	Notes
Bus Purchase (35-seat)	\$12,000	Used/refurbished, good condition
Transport & Delivery	\$1,000	From supplier to campus
Registration & Plates	\$800	Government requirements
Insurance (Year 1)	\$1,200	Full coverage liability
Safety Inspection	\$300	Mechanical certification
Driver Training	\$500	If needed
Route Planning System	\$700	Student registration software
Contingency	\$500	Unexpected startup costs
<b>TOTAL YEAR 1</b>	<b>\$17,000</b>	<b>UTSH covers \$2,000</b>
<b>REQUESTED FROM KERRNANDEZ</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>	—

## ONGOING ANNUAL OPERATIONS

### **Monthly Costs:** \$950/month (\$11,400/year)

- Driver salary: \$400
- Fuel: \$250
- Maintenance: \$125
- Maintenance reserve: \$50
- Insurance: \$100
- Miscellaneous: \$25

### **Revenue from Student Fees:** Estimated \$2,800-4,000/month

- 250 students × \$1/trip × 16 trips/month ≈ \$4,000
- Collection rate: ~70% = \$2,800/month
- 150 low-income students: FREE

### **Net UTSH Contribution:** ~\$150/month (\$7,400/year)

Sustainable from university operations budget (Board Resolution #2025-44 approved).

## LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY

**5+ Year Commitment:** UTSH Board formally approved indefinite operational support via Board Resolution #2025-44 (8-0 unanimous vote).

### **Financial Sustainability:**

- Year 1: University covers operational costs
- Year 2-3: Student revenue increases; university contribution decreases
- Year 3+: Goal for student fees to cover 50%+ of operational costs

### **Capital Sustainability:**

- Bus lifespan: 10-15 years with proper maintenance
- Maintenance reserve: \$50/month starting Year 2
- By Year 5: \$3,000+ accumulated for major repairs
- Replacement plan: By Year 10, fees + reserves + university budget = new bus

### **Community Support:**

- Mayor José Hernández endorsement (formal letter)
- Municipality allocated \$2,000 contingency fund
- Chamber of Commerce backing
- 312+ student petition signatures (89% parent support)
- 3 regional school districts committed to partnership

## IMPACT METRICS & ACCOUNTABILITY

**Access Metrics:** Number of students using bus weekly, trips provided monthly, geographic coverage across 12 villages. Target: 350+ students/week, all villages served.

**Attendance Metrics:** Compare attendance rates (bus users vs. non-users), rainy season improvement. Target: 10-15% improvement in rainy season; 50% reduction in weather-related absences.

**Academic Metrics:** GPA comparison, course completion rates, degree completion rates. Target: 5%+ GPA improvement for bus users.

**Equity Metrics:** % of lowest-income students using bus, outcome gap closure. Target: 40%+ of users are lowest-income students.

**Operational Metrics:** Bus operational days/month, cost per student per trip, maintenance issues, safety record. Target: 95%+ operational, zero accidents, 100% safety protocol compliance.

**Satisfaction Metrics:** Student/parent satisfaction surveys (quarterly). Target: 95%+ satisfaction rating.

**Reporting:** Monthly operations, quarterly attendance data, semi-annual academic outcomes, annual comprehensive impact report shared with community and Kernandez Foundation.

## WHY THIS PROPOSAL REPRESENTS HIGH-LEVERAGE PHILANTHROPY

**The Math:** \$15,000 investment serves 1,000+ students annually. Cost per student: ~\$15/year. Contrast: \$36,000 scholarship serves 1 student. This is 10% of the cost for 1,000% of the impact.

**Alignment with Kernandez Mission:** Removes barriers to educational access. Serves hungry students who self-select for success. Infrastructure-based model that scales. Sustainable long-term. Measurable outcomes.

**Why It Works:** Clear problem (transportation barrier), clear solution (bus), clear impact (1,000+ students), clear sustainability (UTSH operates long-term), clear community support (students, families, government, business), proven capacity (existing bus operations).

This is the exact kind of project Kernandez Foundation should fund: infrastructure that changes what's possible for hungry students in underserved communities.

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