

# Encouraging Learning in Rural Mexico from a Relational Approach

The author brings forward ideas posited by Kristof and WuDunn in 2009, namely that improvements in education are critical to upholding basic human rights by breaking the cycle of poverty, achieving gender equality, combating disease, ensuring maternal and child health, as well as by challenging the power dynamics of ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, and colonization throughout the world.

This inquiry refers to inequities as a *poverty of opportunity*, and identifies them as triggers for violence globally, linking the expansion of education opportunities with achieving larger goals for humankind, such as peace, prosperity, health, universal human rights and a sustainable environment.

Specifically, the author adopts a constructionist/relational lens to find ways to encourage learning in a small, rural, coastal town in Mexico where, historically, formal education has not been well regarded or supported, especially for girls. The themes that emerge relate to disharmony between rural lifestyles and the predominant education system, the intersection of poverty and gender inequities in family decision-making, the need for curriculum reform, teacher challenges, and the importance of familial and cultural factors. Suggestions to improve education are noted.

The inquiry employs an action research methodology, documenting the actions taken to encourage a love of learning amongst scholarship students in the community. Reflections are noted and discussed throughout the text, which inform further actions. The author attempts to promote interactive and collaborative learning with the intention to: engage the students in the learning process, help them develop critical thinking, equip them better for the rapidly changing world, and thus create a more just, sustainable world.

Keywords: rural education, collaborative practice, gender inequity, poverty of opportunity, Mexico, colonization, youth, collective culture, poverty, teacher training, scholarships

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Recent sketch of the Education Foundation.







Gathering with volunteers and pictures of scholarship students (becados p. 146)

