



International Seminar on Collaborative Work at School

France Education International

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An abstract composition of various geometric shapes. In the top left, a green-outlined triangle points towards the top right. To its right is a solid blue circle. Below the triangle is a blue-outlined circle. In the center is a large orange semi-circle. To the right of the semi-circle are two vertical yellow dashes. In the bottom left is a large solid orange circle. Above it are three yellow dashes of varying lengths and orientations. In the bottom right is a green-outlined square.

Mexico City

Diagnosis

When looking at Mexico's education system, the picture that almost always emerges is sad. All kinds of diagnoses confirm that beyond the increase in enrollment, the school system do not fulfill the lofty purposes that society allot to it. To prepare people to be cultured, virtuous people, exemplary citizens, lovers of peace, harmony, and international solidarity, as well as responsible and productive workers to the best of their potential.


Instead, without denying that there are great advances in the coverage and growth of schooling and that many schools perform tasks of relevance, the overall system reproduces social conditions. Inequality and social inequity are transliterated in classrooms if not engendered there. Moreover, corruption and inefficiency are levers that diminish the beneficial effects of education; centralism corporatism produces poor school management.



Good practices

Although they sometimes remain invisible there are countless good school practices, sometimes against the incomprehension of authorities, and even the potential beneficiaries of a good education. Besides, they are less exceptional, although no homogeneous philosophy brings them together, offers them a doctrinal corpus, or a set of common purposes. One of the qualities of good practices is that they triumphed because they enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy from the formal system. These alternatives deserve to be known.

According to the end of the seminar, I will document five good practices that involve collaborative work at the schools and community participation before the Covid19 pandemic.



1. Rural School Vicente Guerrero

A rural teacher in a single-grade rural school in Indé, Durango, based on her diagnosis of an environment of constant quarrels among students, convened the School Council for Social Participation and thought that classrooms and school grounds needed to be improved to put values into practice. Together, all the community members improved facilities and built a new playground.

Cambio físico



2. Values through collaborative work

Only one female teacher tutors 15 students from grades first to sixth of primary schooling.

Through community and student participation, the teacher's aim is to get them to adopt the habit of practicing the values of coexistence, such as respect, dialogue, teamwork, tolerance, cooperation, solidarity, peace, and others that are intrinsic to the company.

The construction of the playground was reflected in the students' better performance through harmonious coexistence.



“Together we do more,” Aquiles Serdán junior high school in Ecatepec, State of Mexico

Ecatepec is a suburb of Mexico City. Its population is working class, service workers and informal merchants; it receives migrants from Mexico and other countries. The school’s immediate environment is crime, robbery, kidnapping, and drug trafficking. The municipality recorded more than 500 murders in 2018, including femicides.

Because of the surrounding context of violence, traditional school management was ineffective in improving school activities and students’ learning. Therefore, the School Technical Council implemented recommendations from the National School Coexistence Program.



Despite the difficulties, the school leadership mobilized parents and community organizers. Causa Ciudadana, a civil society organization, supported the Together we do more initiative. The purpose: to bring together teachers, parents, and students to improve coexistence, dialogue, and communication.

The teachers' collective launched the proposal "Conflict mediation for a harmonious school coexistence," which included workshops with the support of experts from Causa Ciudadana. It emphasized two elements to encourage parental collaboration and support children with disabilities: the importance of discipline and restorative justice.

AFTER TWO YEARS OF PRACTICE, TOGETHER WE DO MORE ERADICATED VIOLENCE AMONG STUDENTS, IMPROVED COEXISTENCE BETWEEN TEACHERS AND PARENTS, AND RECOVERED STUDENT LEARNING.

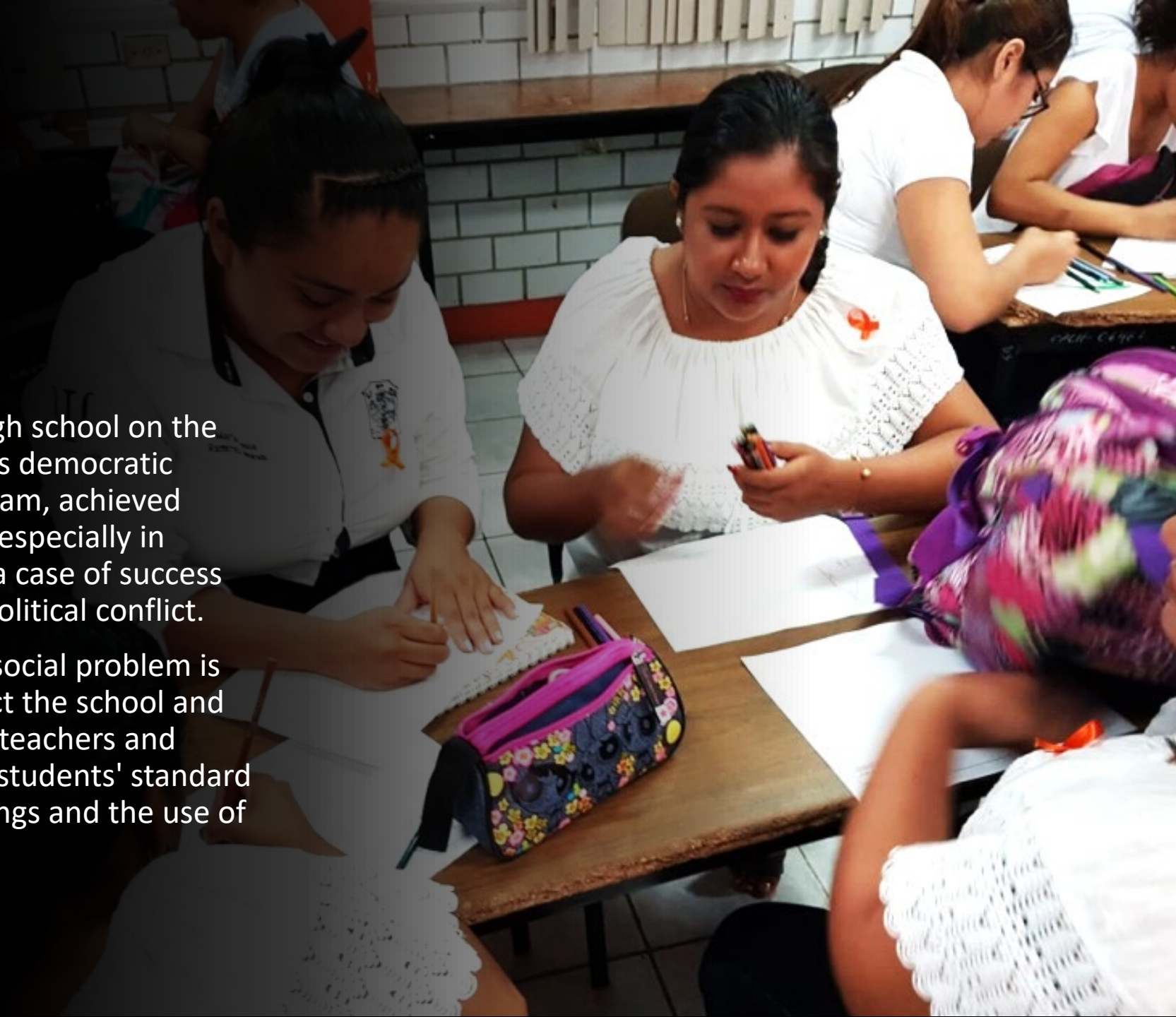




3. Technical Junior High School Committed to Improvement

A young principal of a technical junior high school on the outskirts of San Luis Potosi, who exercises democratic leadership and shares it with her work team, achieved remarkable progress in only three years, especially in infrastructure and student learning. It is a case of success amid a difficult context of violence and political conflict.

A characteristic of the environment and social problem is the existence of street gangs, which affect the school and the learning environment. The principal, teachers and parents are committed to improving the students' standard of living and keeping them away from gangs and the use of toxic substances.



After two years of effort and thanks to her leadership skills, the principal established new rules. At the beginning of the school year, the management team carries out annual planning, and during monthly the School Technical Council meetings, evaluate actions to continue or replace steps of the plan.

School improvement can be seen in hard data changes in student performance and school culture traits because, with the support of community organizations and authorities, violence in the school context decreased. The school attracts students from other barrios.

The principal's personality and objectivity in decision-making were crucial to converting from low performance to student improvement and strengthening a teaching staff committed to the school and the community.



4. The *Tetsijtsilin* project



Telesecundaria (junior high school via TV) is one modality of junior high school in Mexico; the government instituted it in 1968 to expand basic education coverage in rural areas. However, the *Panorama Indígena 2015* of the National Institute for Educational Evaluation and UNICEF indicates: “Commonly, the indigenous education services and telesecundaria are in worse conditions than general schools.”

Despite the desolate panorama, there are initiatives and educational proposals built by teachers. The experience of the *Tetsijtsilin* (which means “sounding stones,”) Telesecundaria School is an attempt to provide the people it serves with a project of formal schooling and pertinent educational processes to respond to the needs of specific local communities.

The Centro de Estudios y Promoción Educativa para el Campo (CEPEC) established The *Tetsijtsilin* School. Its productive and training projects—horticulture, rabbit breeding, carpentry, and loom weaving—created conditions for improving the standard of living of the inhabitants in San Miguel Tzinacapan. CEPEC promoted educational strategies: literacy in the mother tongue, installation of the Rural Centers for Intensive Basic Education, creation of the theater group *Ni mayana* (I am hungry), the Oral Tradition Workshop and the farm school.

That telesecundaria is the pillar for keeping alive the *Maseualmej* culture, which language was on the verge of disappearing. Teachers and the *Tetsijtsilin* school community break myths and bureaucratic habits.



5. The *Uj ja' síijo'ob* Community Center



Canicab, Yucatán, derived from three Mayan words that together mean “snake with its nose in honey,” emerged at the end of the 19th century to satisfy the demand for peasant labor for the henequen industry. However, when the factory closed, the inhabitants had no productive strategies other than backyard farming.

The *Uj ja' síijo'ob* Community Center links young university students in non-formal education initiatives with children and young people from the community. It began operations 2012 with human rights, theater, radio, and peace education workshops. The leading working group built a close bond with the local community by sharing will and knowledge that would dignify the person, revaluing the Mayan identity and the sense of belonging.



In this project, the participation of students from the University of Yucatan is voluntary; they carry out professional internships.

The Community Center project built an ethnoecological garden in 2013 that serves the education of local children and adults. The United Nations Development Program and the UADY Foundation funded this project. The university students work for six months as instructors of short workshops and support the children with their homework. Despite the high turnover of university students, the Community Center is a successful experiment in free extracurricular training and an effective way to respond to the most pressing community needs.

Source: Carlos Ornelas, Gabriela Yáñez Rivas & Luis Iván Sánchez Rodríguez (Eds.) *Arrojos contra el vendaval: Buenas prácticas de educación en México*. Ciudad Victoria: Colofón UAT, 2022.

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