

Latina/o Community Funds of Knowledge for Health and Curriculum

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Community organizing brings Latina/o families together to enhance repertoires of culturally relevant practices to promote health and curriculum. The Healthy Schools Campaign, a 4-year environmental justice partnership between public health re-

searchers and Latina/o organizations in 2 neighborhoods of Chicago, was formed to confront the epidemics of asthma and obesity in children that result in premature death. The partnership supported diverse organizing and addressed health inequity through inquiry with parents who created knowledge, took action, and reflected on outcomes in schools and in the community. Community funds of knowledge were created and exchanged through the processes of *compromiso*, *confianza*, and *colaboración*.

Key words: funds of knowledge, community organizing, parent leadership, partnerships, health inequities, dialogue

Latina/o children and families participate in a range of community activities and environments that ground learning, nutrition, and health practices, leading to a reciprocity of educational interactions and health outcomes. Urban school environments are part of this continuum; the curriculum of these dominant cultural institutions along with family values and practices are reflected in the Latina/o construct of *educación* and set the stage for learning and health throughout life (Valenzuela, 1999; Zarate & Conchas, 2010). There is growing evidence that specific efforts must be made to create spaces for dialogue with Latina/o families and to engage them as equal partners in curriculum both in and out of school (Jasis & Ordóñez-Jasis, 2004; Ordóñez-Jasis & Jasis, 2004). Without attention and material resources directed to organizing parents to create knowledge and praxis about their health concerns and practices, class inequities may be reproduced in the school and community (Gordon & Nocon, 2008).

Latina/o families are welcomed to participate in curriculum through the funds of knowledge approach (González & Moll, 2002) and through early childhood family literacy programs (Rodríguez-Brown, 2003). Olmedo (2009) described how the processes of *compromiso*, *confianza*, and *colaboración* involve sharing knowledge and power across families and schools, such that participants strive to “blend borders” in authentic learning for Latina/o children. These approaches give priority to culturally relevant agency and reflective practice as part of the repertoires necessary for Latina/o families and communities to confront the crises of Latina/o family isolation, segregation, and subtractive schooling (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003; Valenzuela, 1999).

To contest deficit views of Latina/o capability (Jimenez, Moll, Rodríguez-Brown, & Barrera, 1999), families became the center of family literacy research programs using the sociocultural approach to involve parents in home literacy activities and parent–teacher interaction, showing evidence of success for children, parents, and teachers (Rodríguez-Brown, 2003). Diverse Latina/o family experiences need to be described and analyzed because of the distinct cultures and histories of recent Latina/o immigrants compared with long-term citizens and residents (Valdés, 1998). In addition, variation among Puerto Ricans, who are U.S. citizens,

and Mexicans, Central, and South Americans, who become naturalized, are reflected in the meaning of *latinidad*, or Latina/o cross-cultural solidarity, and how *latinidad* impacts community formation and relations with schools (De Genova & Ramos-Zayas, 2003; Michelson & Pallares, 2001).

Along with concerns for the quality of the Latina/o youth school experience, there is recognition of critical health challenges, such as asthma and obesity, that take root in Latina/o children. These manifest health inequities and a need to address the social determinants of health (Kreiger et al., 2008; Murray, 2003). Community epidemiology has documented that in Chicago, children living in communities with a high Latina/o population density have higher rates of asthma and obesity (Whitman, William, & Shaw, 2004). These health outcomes involve the complex interaction of family practices, market conditions, socioeconomic factors, and racism.

Given that Latina/o families are an expanding component of school populations, one with high workforce participation yet low income, there is an important educational and public health research need to expand practical inquiry with Latina/o families to understand their dynamics regarding health and learning (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004; Hernandez, Denton, & Macartney, 2007). We use a case study approach to describe how an environmental justice partnership, the Healthy Schools Campaign (HSC), was formed between university researchers and two Latina/o community-based organizations to empower parents to learn about and address issues of asthma and obesity with their children. This partnership focused on agency and praxis in the community and with the local schools (Sokas, 2009).

COMMUNITY-BASED PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

An environmental justice approach to research seeks to directly engage community members to understand how social relations and power dynamics create inequities in local geographic areas that contribute to exposures that lead to disparate outcomes of illness and death. Environmental justice inquiry provides resources for communities to assess the nature of problems and to take action, confronting health outcomes in positive ways. Community is the unit of identity in these partnerships; an important research goal is to describe and define the community (Israel et al., 2005). Families are encouraged to participate; they develop, share, and document experiential knowledge and action that is analyzed by the partnership and used in creating public policy (Minkler, Vasquez, Tajik, & Petersen, 2008; Zarate & Conchas, 2010).

Trueba (2002) explained that Latina/o families need to take the lead in creating knowledge that can be used by themselves in relation to dominant-culture institu-

tions such as schools or with health providers, because they are the only ones who are situated to understand how to act, given their specific social history. Trueba stated, "Cultural field is equivalent to 'radical contextualization' because it takes into consideration not only the works or creation of intellectual products but the specific agents in their complex relationships in a given field within a historical context" (p. 17). This approach is simultaneously critical of the conditions that formed the current context and generative, in that it seeks to create new understanding through participant praxis and agency, impacting the field. This process mirrors Valenzuela's (1999) discussion of social capital in relation to the phenomenon of subtractive schooling for Latina/o children.

Indigenous experiential knowledge is central to community-based research in Latina/o communities; this knowledge is the epistemological energy that drives the inquiry project and the outcome of the participatory process. In describing critical race methodology, Solorzano and Yosso (2002) highlighted the experiential knowledge of marginalized peoples: "It exposes deficit-informed research and methods that silence and distort the experiences of people of color and instead focuses on their racialized, gendered, and classed experiences as sources of strength (Solorzano & Solorzano, 1995; Valencia & Solorzano, 1997)" (p. 26). An environmental justice research design encourages the examination of knowledge created by Latina/o families in their efforts to understand and act on the interaction of the health problems and educational challenges that their children experience.

Participatory action research focused on environmental justice is part of a progressive agenda to bring community voices and experience to impact curriculum and learning for Latina/o families (Pedraza, 2002). Community organizers begin by assessing the values and meanings of participants in a process that unites community members through reflection; this organizing accesses the local power/knowledge of the participants and moves them toward goals that realign their relations with the dominant culture (Foucault, 1980; Rouse, 1994). Power is reflected in the strength of the bond among participants struggling to know and accomplish goals together (Speer & Hughey, 1995). Community organizing is also a way for participants to apply the knowledge gained by action in new ways through *confianza* (trust) and supportive leadership (Rossing, 1998).

Community organizations are not bound to the politics of the school institutions but grow from the sociocultural history of struggle and support in a specific neighborhood or geographic location. Community organizations are able to potentiate the contemporary process of hybridity (Anzaldúa, see Reuman, 2000; Bhabha, 1994; Gutiérrez, Banguedano-López, & Tejeda, 1999), what Olmedo (2009) described as "border blending," to examine postcolonial power discourses (Gee, 2000; Murillo, 2004; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999) and to create a program with Latina/o parents that can problematize family rearing practices, community environmental health, and school curriculum through their unique orientations (Schubert, 1986; Watkins, 1993).

The Partnership to Reduce Disparities in Asthma and Obesity in Latino Schools (Healthy Schools Campaign, 2008) was funded to support two distinct Latina/o community organizations: Little Village Environmental Justice Organization (LVEJO) in *La Villita*, a densely populated community area that is a traditional destination for Mexican immigrants to Chicago; and West Town Leadership United (WTLU) in Humboldt Park, which has a history of Puerto Rican activism. The goals were to address the definitions of health in each community, to create inquiry through organizing in the community and schools, to develop a common language in the development of the project, and to build upon the synergy of learning emerging in each organization and for the project as a whole. The HSC partnership reflects the principles described by Israel and colleagues (2005) relating to action in environmental justice projects in local geographic areas; community building was accomplished in part through financial resources that were provided directly to each organization over the 4-year time frame.

An important outcome of the research is to demonstrate that community funds of knowledge need to be independently nurtured and sustained and that they contribute to growing meanings of *educación* developed through *colaboración*. Parents need to lead and transform discourses and practices related to the health of their children, because parents have the primary responsibility for nurturing their children's physical growth and health. A conceptual outcome of the HSC partnership is to challenge parent/school dichotomies in expressions of *educación*, such that parents concern themselves with the moral development of children while leaving the intellectual or disciplinary-specific knowledge to schoolteachers. The HSC partnership shows that Latina/o parents engaged in community organizing reflect on the reciprocal effect of practices and knowledge related to health. As Lopez (2003) stated, "Many times, however, parents' concerns are not about academic issues, but about children's health, safety, and after school hours, making it critical that organizing groups let parent voices be heard and validated first before tackling issues about classroom learning" (p. 3). Problem-posing and dialogue are central processes in this learning and reflection on the roles of family and school practices, creating the context for children's health.

The generation of these funds of knowledge reflects the agency of Latina/o parents to develop power/knowledge and have their voices heard and addressed in dominant-culture schools (Foucault, 1980). These funds of knowledge will also be expressed and reflected in the lived experience of Latina/o children and families. In this way, the community becomes a unit of analysis for educational researchers; Latina/o families and communities will be engaged in school inquiry, and community collaboration will be an important process for curriculum development and evaluation (Guajardo, Guarjardo, & Del Carmen Casaperalta, 2008; Reyes, 2003; Valadez & Snyder, 2006; Zarate & Conchas, 2010).

CASE STUDY: INTRODUCING LVEJO, WTLU, AND THE NEIGHBORHOODS

LVEJO and WTLU engaged with HSC to create a proposal for the National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences to develop environmental justice projects in each community. The organizations considered health concerns for Latina/o youth, identified research questions, sought data, and created family or school programs with support from the University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health. The outcome of this process was to implement these programs, bringing parents and school communities together to address concerns raised in the inquiry. For this case study, we outline the history and development of each organization, the communities they reflect in Latina/o Chicago, and the scope of their projects (Casuso & Camacho, 1995).

LVEJO has long been engaged with the Pilsen/Little Village/Back of the Yards Latina/o community located in the near southwest side of Chicago. This community has been the home of immigrants for many generations, first Polish and German immigrants and today many Mexicans and Central Americans who live in a dense concentration of families. The economic power of the community is reflected in major business revenue: Cermak/26th Street generates the second largest amount of sales and tax revenue in urban Chicago after the upscale, tourist-oriented Michigan Avenue.

Environmental issues impact Little Village in many ways, with coal-fired power plants, traffic, and industry contributing to the exposure burden for residents. LVEJO was organized to respond to these conditions and to create social action for change using a popular education approach developed by Paulo Freire (1970; Smith-Maddox & Soloranzo, 2002). Popular education emphasizes problem-posing learning that begins with the needs, concerns, and assets of participants and builds capacity through their critique of the root social causes and contradictions leading to health inequity; the approach promotes participant action to “teach them how to fish.” The parent community participants decided what was most important for them and what they wanted to know, and the LVEJO organizer, executive director, and university researcher met to create a program of inquiry and action to respond to the participants’ needs.

WTLU was founded in the West Town–Humboldt Park neighborhoods on the near west side of Chicago and develops leaders in these communities. Although Humboldt Park was at one time segregated from other adjacent areas, its residents and their community leaders developed positive social and economic relationships within the Puerto Rican community, with a strong presence in schools, parks, and businesses; they also created dialogue with many ethnic groups throughout the city. With a decrease in gang and crime activity, the area is now the focus of increasing gentrification, which strongly impacts families and children in the area.

WTLU has a strategy of community development through parent leadership. The organization developed a unique curriculum called “Family-Focused Leadership and Organizing” based on the social ecological model of engaging the self, family, neighbors, and community through communication, trust, and action. The curriculum was developed over years of collaboration with national community-organizing agencies; the WTLU executive director was the master teacher of this curriculum. The three-phase process begins with identifying and addressing individual and family concerns; in Phase 2 participants reach out to others, building solidarity and action. In Phase 3 participants learn to become the leaders and mentors of participants in Phase 1 and 2 and learn how to bring their action and organizing to the public policy arena.

The HSC partnership began its 4-year project by walking through each community to identify assets; develop communication; strengthen working relationships; and tour schools in which the organizations had strong and developing relations with parents, teachers, and administrators. The new school in Little Village was inspiring; it had large sunny classrooms, a beautiful tile mural in the central staircase, a large welcoming cafeteria, and a small herb and flower garden. During the tour in Humboldt Park, the partners saw the renovations that were under way at a school built around 1900. The WTLU leader showed us a green space next to the school that they had successfully transformed from a dog run to a yard for children and staff to use. Walking into the school, the group was greeted by the local state legislator, who was a leader of education initiatives, and was asked to learn about and support project progress. All around the school, properties were in the process of demolition and renovation, which added to the amount of dust children were exposed to and showed the pressure on the school communities: More development meant displacement of families and the in-migration of young, higher income couples without children.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND HEALTH INQUIRY

LVEJO began by communicating with parents and hiring an organizer to lead discussions with community participants through outreach activities. The organizer chosen was a parent with children in community schools who had excellent communication and social relation skills. Overweight and obesity in children emerged as a concern when the project coordinator and parents talked about the magnitude of these issues with their children. In the process, they discussed the conditions in the United States compared with their home countries and contrasted opportunities for physical activity, access to fruits and vegetables through home gardening, and the pace and demands of working life that limit their time to devote to family priorities. Wanting to learn more about the problem of youth obesity, they began by recording the body mass index of their school-aged children. The data they gathered

showed that many of the children were overweight or obese; in some classrooms, half or more children were affected.

The parents became interested in what children were *really* eating, both at home and at school. In discussion and reflection with the organizer and public health researcher, the parents decided to keep food diaries with their children in order to find out what kinds of foods—and how much of them—were being eaten. After approval by the University of Illinois at Chicago Institutional Review Board, the organizer and parents were trained by a university researcher to ask children questions related to daily food intake and to record responses. Parents voluntarily asked their children these questions directly, documenting results and sharing them with the project coordinator. The university researcher analyzed the diaries, looking for patterns in what the children ate, how much they ate, and where they ate.

Based on the results, which were shared with the project organizer and parents, the group decided to consider emerging solutions and developed an action plan. One idea was to request that the school offer new food options for the children's lunches (including a salad bar, fruits, and vegetables) and eliminate chocolate and whole milk. With regard to home meals, parents decided to reevaluate the way in which traditional Mexican foods were cooked and to experiment with alternative dishes that increased the amount of vegetables and fruits and decreased fat content. The popular education approach created an iterative process whereby solutions emerged from the group dialogue and reflected the authentic energy, enthusiasm, creativity, and needs of the participants.

The epidemic of asthma was being felt in West Town, where many children carried medication inhalers with them to school. WTLU decided to organize a program related to access to health that would include negotiations with a local hospital to open a school-based health center in one of the schools in their community. To develop the business plan for the operation of the health center, the hospital requested demographic data and income levels for the potential users of the clinic. Although the WTLU leader knew that changes were happening in the neighborhood because of gentrification, she consulted with the university research partner, parents, and staff to decide on the focus of inquiry.

After approval by the University of Illinois at Chicago Institutional Review Board, the university researcher presented WTLU with a block census sampling design in which parents and volunteers would lead a survey of their community area in a block-by-block manner and ask questions of each family about who lived in the house, what languages they spoke, and what their health care needs were. Although the sampling was challenging and took many months to complete in a systematic manner, WTLU accomplished the task with frequent contact with and support from the university researcher. As a result of asking about health status and physical activity, the parent participants began to explore specific health activities at the schools in which they were active. Parent participant leaders provided asthma awareness presentations for parents and teachers based on curriculum from

a local health advocacy organization; they also promoted after-school programs such as *Salsa, Sabor y Salud* (Food, Fun, and Fitness; National Latino Children's Institute, n.d.), a program for children to dance and participate in aerobic activity.

WTLU leadership and participants decided to take an active role in each school community by training and supporting parents to be elected to the local school council (LSC). Since 1988, LSCs have been engaged in oversight and approval of the Chicago Public Schools; they were initiated to enact local governance of neighborhood schools. Each school has a LSC that is democratically elected from among the local community to recruit, hire, and supervise the school principal; to approve the school budget; to monitor curriculum developments; and to propose school initiatives. WTLU provided leadership and direction for community participants and parents to raise health issues and initiatives, such as developing school wellness plans that are mandated by federal law and considering school-based health clinics and access to in-school community health programs.

THE ROLE OF THE HSC PARTNERSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY PROCESS

Central to the outcomes of the project was the vision of HSC and its responsibility to create the space for *colaboración*. The HSC partnership was coordinated by a seasoned Latino organizer with 20 years of experience leading programs in the Chicago Latina/o community. The coordinator planned and led quarterly meetings that alternated between Little Village and Humboldt Park. At the meetings, goals were set and progress was reported. There were often reports by experts, such as an epidemiologist from Sinai Health Systems who described the community health project documenting the asthma and obesity health inequities. Communication and dialogue occurred along with support for the frequent personal and community challenges that the partners faced. This process reflects Montero-Sieburth's (2007) insight that Mexican community organization leaders need support and mentoring and that blending and testing of leadership styles takes place through community-organizing praxis. A university researcher interviewed HSC partnership participants to document reflections related to health action, community change, and communalities of discourse that developed in the process.

The HSC partnership coordinator planned and implemented community events in collaboration with the praxis that emerged in each organization. WTLU initiated a community health action fair presented in Humboldt Park; the organizers brought many health-oriented programs together for community parents and children that offered healthy food, games, and activities. The event concluded with a program that highlighted the efforts and demands of the parents to Illinois education officials, Chicago Public Schools managers, and legislators. The children participated by showing what they were learning about nutrition and physical activity,

and the event was hosted by an engaged local Latino news anchor who focused community interest and support on the actions taken. These community events led to new organizing across Chicago, developed by the HSC partnership coordinator.

COMMUNITY FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE: THEORY, PRACTICE, AND IMPLICATIONS

Researchers have led curriculum inquiry in schools, inviting the participation of families to increase communication and interaction with teachers to advance shared values and meanings (Borg & Mayo, 2001; Jasis & Ordóñez-Jasis, 2004; Ordóñez-Jasis & Jasis, 2004). Parents and teachers have learned from one another, including about expectations about their respective roles; through this process, parents have developed *confianza* (mutual trust) and the confidence to dialogue with teachers. The success of these programs has inspired and stimulated much inquiry about the cultural resources that teachers leading educational programs may access in collaboration with parents and community members.

This inquiry raises important questions regarding how Latina/o families participate in schools and also highlights assumptions about approaches to cultural practices. The HSC partnership demonstrates that Latina/o families can participate beyond single families and their networks in individual classrooms as groups in dialogue to develop funds of knowledge across families and generations. The HSC partnership shows how in the process of developing community knowledge, Latina/o leaders are formed and nurtured, especially as this relates to concerns about health (Perez & Martinez, 2008). Further questions relate to the dynamic nature of cultural funds of knowledge; poststructural viewpoints emphasize change, variation, and fluidity of constructs (Lightfoot, 2006; Murillo, 2004). Rodriguez-Brown (2010) described a flexible cultural model of Mexican parents in which continuities and discontinuities exist simultaneously in home and school literacy exchanges, which encourages more research into the range and variation of family cultural expression in communities that can be used in environmental justice and curriculum projects (Reese & Gallimore, 2000).

It is clear that change is needed to address the social determinants of health inequity. HSC partnership inquiry uncovered how parents use these funds of knowledge and how they can respond to challenges faced by families confronting racism, a lack of resources, and adaptation to new home and work settings. Given the sparse resources of many schools and the critical infrastructure and environmental health improvements that are needed in communities educating Latina/o children, it seems that teachers alone would face a difficult challenge finding the time and resources to support parent activism to address asthma and obesity (Ortiz, 2004; Wakefield, 2002).

The unique aspect of this HSC partnership was the interaction of two diverse Latina/o community organizations with a statewide advocacy organization including researchers to address health issues based on social justice approaches. As Zarate and Conchas (2010) suggested, Latina/o families can develop problem solving and agency through participatory research designs that enhance their learning and practices; the praxis outcomes can be shared with, and critiqued by, others. We propose that the funds of knowledge approach may be expanded to document existing—and develop new—repertoires of knowledge and practice that are created in *communities* through participatory action research designs linking Latina/o families, teachers, and school communities in dialogue, as the HSC partnership demonstrated (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, & Maguire, 2003; Nygreen, 2006).

The interaction of Latina/o community leaders and parents within the HSC partnership created a hybrid third space in the community that led participants to raise issues of mutual interest, plan and evaluate activities, and access resources in the process of their inquiry (González, 2001; Gutiérrez et al., 1999; Olmedo, 2009). The HSC partnership challenged monolithic depictions of Latina/o communities in Chicago; during the phases of program planning, implementation, and evaluation, dialogue created a common language for the goals, change, and meanings that participants sought concerning issues of overweight, obesity, and asthma for Latina/o children (Ayers, 2001; Bakhtin, 1981; Hurtig, 2008).

Both process and outcome were important to the community-based organizations in the implementation of action plans, though not all initial goals were accomplished. LVEJO was able to preserve and bring about positive changes in school food in its community, though it had to struggle with changes in leadership at the school and shifts in the district's food planning and distribution network. Parents engaged the leaders of the LSC and the school principal in support of their efforts to hold nutrition and exercise classes in their homes, which later moved to the school grounds and public spaces. The depth of relationships that were developed and the spirit of exploration that resulted from community actions were important personal and organizational achievements. In the process of struggling, the community participants developed narratives and culturally relevant approaches that allowed them to reflect their values and reevaluate their priorities regarding their children's health to motivate continued inquiry and development (Olmedo, 1999). The narratives created through the community organizing may also be viewed as counter-stories for building community, challenging dominant belief systems, and showing new possibilities (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001).

WTLU as an organization became transformed when it came to addressing the questions and actions related to children's health. They saw the role of health and partnerships with schools gain priority in their long-term strategic planning and direction in the community. Their community census revealed an important finding: Though there were far fewer Latina/o families, and fewer children of all ethnic

groups, than they had expected, access to both quality education and health care was a fundamental goal of their members. Leaders expanded their traditional boundaries to encompass the new neighborhoods to which families had migrated. WTLU continues to organize in the ongoing struggle to maintain quality schools in their community. Their parent participant leaders are community health activists who have important roles in the LSCs, where decisions are made to redirect resources and consolidate or close school facilities (Perez & Martinez, 2008).

The ongoing community efforts in both organizations show the importance of a consistent voice and action presence in local communities during a time of rapid change due to economic and social forces (Bakhtin, 1981; Holquist, 1981). Although teachers and schools often develop individual relationships with parents, their capacity to development community-wide funds of knowledge offers teachers and school leaders synergistic opportunities to share and develop funds of knowledge between families and social groups. The locus of power needs to be examined in these interactions. Whereas Lopez (2003) suggested that parent groups develop and sustain their own power outside the approval and support of the school, Gordon and Nocon (2008) countered that parents may use power stemming from social and class positions to enact school policy favoring their children and ignoring others:

As this study shows, parent involvement initiatives that treat parents as a monolithic group without addressing the complex issues and dynamics among diverse parent constituencies, although well intended, may support the reproduction of inequalities leading to a Matthew effect whereby middle-class children disproportionately benefit. (p. 337)

Leadership of community-based health partnerships provides the space for parents to raise their voices and challenge social inequity through action that can affect the schools and community.

Community-based organizations that promote the voice and agency of parents through democratic relations provided an ongoing resource and exchange for families, schools, and teachers (Darder, 1997). In the process, Latina/o parents developed *confianza* (trust) and reciprocity through their interactions with one another and the organizers who supported their work; the development of trust has been shown to be integral to school success in Chicago during a time of reform and transition (Bryk & Schneider, 2003). The community-based organizations were able to bridge the common challenge of intermittent family participation due to the flux of caring responsibilities, work, and changing demands. The community organizations recruited and interacted with groups of families who together maintained a focus toward the development of project goals, even while individual participation changed over time. They did this first to gain knowledge, skills, and practices for

themselves and their own learning and then to enhance their school interactions and relationships.

CONCLUSION

One result of the HSC partnership is the development of a district-wide effort to enhance and promote the focus on children's health and education in the Latina/o community in Chicago. Parents United for Healthy Schools/*Padres Unidos Para Escuelas Saluables* is seeking to extend and strengthen the work of the HSC partnership with new parents in new school communities. The activists and organizers continue to meet regularly to plan new actions for parent involvement as the process of organizing wellness committees, physical activity, and healthier food are proposed and implemented in different parts of the district. The project was effective because it demonstrated practical steps recommended by Valadez and Snyder (2006) relating to school–university partnerships that may also apply to community–school relations, including appreciating and bridging cultural differences, sharing power, and planning for sustainability.

The development of community-based funds of knowledge through community organizations offers unique advantages to teachers and community leaders. When the LVEJO organizer led an exercise activity for parents in the schoolyard, a kindergarten teacher became fascinated by what she saw and invited the organizer to dialogue with her about their activities and goals. The teacher was already alarmed by the consequences of overweight and obesity for her young students and wondered about the impacts on her own daughter. This encounter led to the teacher making a commitment to address the issue, which she did in many ways: She implemented physical activity for her students, assigned homework activities based on health, and critiqued the subtle and constant references to fat and sugar in her classroom curriculum materials. Ongoing inquiry could examine the specific exploration that occurs with participants of community organizations, teachers, children, and, school leaders. Reflection on this inquiry can bring to light the kinds of support and resources that are needed to cooperatively envision and achieve goals. Evidence of *colaboración* should document the capacities and social change of participants, the methods they use for challenging health inequities, and their new meanings for *educación*.

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