ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Teachers' Perceptions of Disability on the Island of Roatán, Honduras

Cornelia Schneider*

ABSTRACT

Purpose: *Roatán, a small island in Honduras, is home to six ethnic groups. Due to financial constraints, many children have limited access to schooling. This article is a study on teachers' perceptions of disability and students with disabilities and inclusive education on the island.*

Method: *Twenty seven teachers working in public and private schools, and schools funded by the World Bank, were interviewed in March-April of 2014 in order to explore cultural and social representations of disability on the island.*

Results: *The findings show that many of the teachers' representations can be analysed under the lens of different models of disability - the medical model, the social model, and a religious-moral model. Inclusive education is perceived less as a means of including children with disabilities in the regular classroom, and more as a method of creating institutions to take care of their needs.*

Conclusion: *There is a strong intersection of poverty, post-colonialism and disability which makes working under an inclusive lens very difficult for teachers. The cultural norms influence ideas of normalcy and disabilities, and the blame is on parents for having children with disabilities.*

Key words: *disability; inclusive education; teachers; socio-cultural representations; post-colonialism; Honduras.*

INTRODUCTION

Access to education has been one of the central Millennial Development Goals (UN, 2000), which the UN had set out to reach by 2015. Universal access to education has been a big challenge in countries of the Global South, and more

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* **Corresponding Author:** Associate Professor, Faculty of Education, Mount Saint Vincent University, Canada. Email: cornelia.schneider@msvu.ca

so for children with disabilities. Research has shown that disability and poverty are in a very strong correlation (Filmer, 2008); thus, access to education needs to remain a priority as it has also been shown that availability of education for such children continues to lag behind. Honduras counts amongst one of the poorest countries in Central America, but has committed to establishing Education for All (UNESCO, 2015) and more specifically, inclusive education for children with disabilities. How do these commitments play out in reality? Are there strides being made in reaching those goals?

Teachers' representations, inclusive education, cultural knowledge and practices in the Global South and in Honduras

Literature review revealed scarcity of research around teachers' representations of children with disabilities in the context of the Global South. Not many references emerged in spite of searches using the key words: Central America, disability, inclusion, cultural perspectives, etc.

While there is a large body of research, often from a psychological perspective, on teachers' attitudes and belief systems on inclusive education and disabilities in North America (Avramidis and Norwich, 1999, 2002; Burke and Sutherland, 2004; Horne and Timmons, 2009; Ross-Hill, 2009; Alquraini and Gut, 2012), when it comes to countries of the Global South, however, it is hard to find anything (Stephens et al, 2000). Miles and Singal (2010) have shown that despite the advances of inclusive education and the Education for All movement, children with disabilities have hardly been able to access schools in the Global South.

As development work has traditionally occurred either through missionary or humanitarian organisations (see e.g., Stephens et al, 1999), there are projects to be found that aim at the education of children with disabilities in countries of the Global South, Latin America, Asia, or Africa. However, since most of the projects have been addressed by reports to donors or programme funders, there has been no rigorous academic study and evaluation of those programmes and of the beliefs and attitudes of teachers.

With regard to the local cultures of the Honduran Bay Islands or the Caribbean North Shore, there are a few studies on ethnic groups at the Northern coastline of Honduras and Belize (Pine, 2008; Murphy-Graham, 2009, 2012; Herlihy, 2012), which are very useful anthropological studies about ethnic groups that also partly populate Roatán, such as the Garífuna, the Miskitu and Hispanics.

The different cultural influences on the island stem from indigenous Creole, Caribbean, African and Hispanic knowledge, as each ethnic group has its own distinct identity. Moreover, the interactions of these groups continue to create hybrid identities which also have an influence on how disabilities are perceived. In addition, there is the influence of US American culture in the island.

Historically, each culture had its own perspective of disabilities and had ways of assigning people with disabilities a status in their society or community, be it positive or negative (Stiker, 1999). However it has been argued that the colonial experience has disrupted traditional practices and interactions with the phenomenon of impairments and disabilities, by imposing charitable, religious-moral or medical models of disability. Simultaneously, the current social model of disability has been criticised as not meeting the needs of countries in the Global South, as it does not take into account local historical and cultural practice (McEwan and Butler, 2007).

Context of the Study

The country of Honduras is home to cultures that are very different from North America, and the educational system does not match, either pedagogically or economically, that of the industrialised nations of the north.

The situation of Roatán is quite unique compared to other islands in the Caribbean because of its history and the diversity of its people. For a long time the island passed back and forth between the Spanish and the British, but was finally ceded to Honduras (Spanish crown) in 1861. There are officially 5 distinct ethnic groups that can be identified on the island: Black Islanders (Anglophones who connect ethnically with Afrocaribbean populations from the Cayman Islands), White Islanders (Anglophones of European, often of Irish ancestry), Hispanics (Hispanophones who have been increasingly migrating to the island from the Mainland), Garífuna (an ethnic group of indigenous and black ancestry, deported from Saint Vincent to the island because of their rebellion in the late 1700s, having their own language and culture) and Miskitu (an ethnic group originating on the Honduran mainland with indigenous, black and at times white ancestry, having their own culture and language).

As the island has been officially part of Honduras since 1861, there is an evident disconnect between the official language used and taught in school, and the local languages and dialects that many of the ethnic groups use. The educational system

is strongly centralised, and teachers are sent to the schools from the Mainland; they often speak only Spanish, which puts the children whose first language is English, Creole, Garífuna, or Miskitu, at a disadvantage from the very start of their school career. Furthermore, the school curricula do not necessarily take into account the local cultures, thus giving even less visibility and meaningful content to the children of the island.

According to the estimate by PIER (Partners in Education Roatán), an NGO (Non-Governmental Organization), there is also an overall shortage of schools for the general population and only 25% of school-age children on the island are actually attending school. Many of the schools work in two or three shifts every day, in order to accommodate the demand. Attendance is higher for the lower grades, but drops dramatically by the end of elementary school. The numbers have an impact on the enrolment of children with disabilities in schools, as parents might be less inclined to send their children to schools that are already overburdened with the demands of the general population.

There are three types of schools on the island: public schools funded by the Honduran government, PROHECO (Programa Hondureño de Educación Comunitaria) schools funded mostly by the World Bank through its Poverty Reduction Strategy - PRSP (see World Bank; Handicap International), and private schools. The 27 teachers who were interviewed were: 5 participants from 3 private schools (of which one is a special centre for children with disabilities), 10 participants from 4 public schools, and 13 participants from 4 PROHECO schools; at times they worked in one of the other types of schools simultaneously (see Table 1). Pay levels and training requirements vary depending on the type of school (generally, public school teachers are unionised and are better paid than teachers in the other schools). PROHECO schools are fairly common on the island, as the public system is not able to cater to the number of children needing education; even so, there are still not enough schools and teachers. All the PROHECO schools that the author visited were bilingual schools, where the Black Islander community had decided to offer classes in English as well to the Anglophone children of the island.

In general, the teaching style on the island is largely teacher-centred and often focussed on rote learning. PIER is working on the professional development of teachers and trying to introduce changes such as differentiated learning; however, the lack of equipment and training makes it difficult to reverse traditional practices.

This article presents and analyses the perceptions of children with disabilities of 27 Honduran teachers, working and living on the island of Roatán: it explores how teachers think of children with disabilities in schools and in the community, and what, in their minds, would need to be done to address some of the issues that are raised. Using a Disability Studies framework (Shakespeare, 1996; Barnes and Mercer, 2010), the article demonstrates that the lives of people with disabilities are caught in a conundrum between expectations that connect either to traditional representations of disabilities or to Western medical ideas about disability. It will be shown that those representations negatively impact children with disabilities and, even more, their parents.

METHOD

Data Collection

This study builds on the oral traditions of the island. Storytelling and narratives have been used as a way to access the local knowledge and belief systems (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Clandinin, 2007; Wilson, 2008; Mucina, 2011). Stories and anecdotes about people who are different, the way they have been treated, the way they are participating in the community and in school, were collected in rather informal settings. While this study relied mostly on interviews to gather data, an ethnographic approach was followed to gain insight into the local culture of the island of Roatán. Data was gathered during the author's fourth stay on the island, after having lived with a local family and grown accustomed to some of the traditions and ways of island life. Previous association with the local NGO, Partners In Education Roatán (PIER), led the author to embark on the current research project, and the knowledge gathered from the study was useful to develop workshops on children with disabilities and inclusion, for the benefit of PIER.

Participants

Two community-based research assistants helped to recruit the participants and assisted during the interviews. Both young men were trained as teachers and, at the time of data collection, were working with PIER. They could speak both Spanish and English, and were well thought of in the community.

Table 1 provides an overview of the 27 study participants, most of whom were teaching Grades 1-6. Among them, 24 were females and 3 were males. The average age was 28 years, with 11 participants being between 20 and 25 years

old, reflecting the youthful population of the island. While their average teaching experience was 6.88 years, 12 participants had between 1 and 5 years experience. Many teachers pointed out that they started teaching very early in life, as the Escuela Normal (which is in charge of teacher education) is a form of High School in Honduras. Thus, teachers can graduate as young as 17 or 18 years of age, and can start working in the school system if they get hired. Two of them had additional diplomas as Special Education teachers.

The group of study participants also reflects the ethnic diversity of the island - 11 participants each self-identifying with the groups of Anglophone Black Islanders and Hispanics, 1 of Anglophone White Islander heritage, 1 each representing Garífuna and Miskitu heritage (interviews in Spanish), and 2 having both Black Islander and Miskitu ancestry (interviews in Spanish).

Table 1: Participants in the Study

Name (anonymised)	Types of School	Age	Years of Experience	Ethnic Background
		Average 28	Average 6.88	
Maria	Public school	26	8	Hispanic from the island
Karla	Private school	23	2	Hispanic from the Mainland
Darla	PROHECO school	35	14	Black Islander
Darlene	PROHECO school	30	10	Black Islander
Jean	PROHECO school	25	2	Black Islander, Hispanophone
Eva	PROHECO school	42	9	Garífuna
Rosa	Public school	20	3	Hispanic from the island
Raquel	Public school	21	2	Hispanic from the Mainland
Tamara	Public school	19	1	Hispanic from the Mainland

Dorothy	Public school	32	13	Black Islander - Miskitu
Ramona	PROHECO school	35	10	Black Islander - Miskitu
Kay	Public school	n/a	3	Black Islander
Antony	PROHECO school	24	6	Black Islander
Cynthia	2 PROHECO schools	20	6	Black Islander
Cathy	PROHECO school	39	6	Black Islander
Davina	PROHECO school	37	15	Hispanic from the island
Lucy	Public school	n/a	n/a	Black Islander
Jennifer	Public school	25	1.5	Black Islander
Sabrina	Private school – PROHECO school	21	3	Black Islander
Lindsey	Public school	50	17	White Islander
Melania	Private school	42	3	Hispanic from the Mainland
Kallista	PROHECO school	26	3	Miskitu
Jose	PROHECO school	20	1	Hispanic from the island
Esmeralda	Private special school (special edu teacher)	33	14	Hispanic from the Mainland
Zoe	PROHECO school	21	4	Hispanic from the island
Juan	Public school	n/a	n/a	Hispanic from the island
Chelsea	Public school – private school (special edu teacher)	n/a	15	Black Islander, lived in the US

The participants could choose to be interviewed individually or in groups of 2 or 3. Some of the interviews were held at the school where they were working, while other teachers chose to meet the author and the assistant at home. About half of the interviews were held in Spanish, while the others were held in English, and two of the group interviews were in both languages, as each of the participants chose to respond in their mother tongue. The interview questions aimed to engage the participants in conversation about their encounters with children with disabilities in school and in the classroom, as well as in the broader community. They were also asked about their beliefs regarding disabilities (the reasons, cultural advice on prevention). Finally, they were asked about the types of improvements and supports that they would like to see, as educators, in their daily practice.

RESULTS

Issues encountered in Teaching Practice and views on Inclusion

Teachers encountered a variety of issues when it came to teaching children with disabilities, most often connected to children's struggle to learn how to read or to follow instructions in the classroom. Teachers felt unequipped to respond to these challenges, and felt that there was a lack of training, and parental support at home. Many of them spoke about the children in their classrooms from a deficit-based perspective. Most of the disabilities appeared to be invisible to them, and only became obvious when it came to meeting expectations in terms of reading, behaviour and attitude inside the classroom. Hardly any of them had students with more visible disabilities.

> Rosa: *"So, in my case, for example, in my classroom, I don't have children with physical disabilities, but many with dyslexia. Dyslexia, you know, it's, it's…. complications related to reading and writing. I have a lot of children with this problem."*
>
> *(In Spanish: Pues en mi caso, por ejemplo en mi aula no tengo niños con discapacidades físicas, pero sí muchos con dislexia. Dislexia, usted sabe, que es la... la... la... complicaciones que tienen en la lecto-escritura. Tengo muchos niños con ese problema.)*

Most of the participants perceived an urgent need for action and support for children with disabilities on the island; however, the solution they offered was

to create special institutions for the children rather than including them in their own classrooms. This was identified as a major need of the schooling system on the island. Some teachers also expressed the possibility of including those children in regular classrooms if they were given adequate training.

> Darla: *"Have a special classroom for that, you know, a special classroom and maybe a special teacher to deal with kids that, or even those that have a special classroom because to me, you even shouldn't separate them from the other kids, them, or just have training optimally with the teacher within the school to learn them how to deal with kids like that in their classroom because to me [something like, if you have a separate classroom, you'll be taking them away from their other friends and stuff like that] and making them feel, oh, we have to be here because we're like the worst. We want them to learn to integrate with other kids and get along with the kids."*

> Investigator: *"Because you think the schools right now are not the right place for those kids?"*

> Chelsea: *"No. They don't get what they need there. I was working at a special needs school, and I see how those kids strive, and they could be brighter than the one in the normal school if they have what they need."*

> Eva: *"So, for me, it would maybe to ask for… maybe to build maybe a special centre that would tend to those children."*

(In Spanish: Entonces, para mí sería que tal vez se mande... tal vez construir tal vez un centro especial para atender a esos niños.)

Cultural influences on Belief Systems around Disability

Participants were asked about cultural belief systems related to disability. Often, the answer was connected to pregnancy and childbirth. Even though the island is home to six ethnic groups, there were no big differences in terms of cultural practices around childbirth. The Garífuna participant spoke about certain teas that one is supposed to drink when pregnant, but which she personally refused to drink as she felt Western medicine recommendations for pregnant women were more trustworthy. Participants also reported that pregnant women were expected to be careful during a lunar eclipse.

> Sabrina: *"When they have like an eclipse, and you pass through the eclipse, and you don't have on something red, then the baby borns [sic] with a disability."*

Lindsey: *"Well, if it was left to some of my people, I would not have taken a bath for a month, if not more."*

Investigator: *"Why is that, for what?"*

Lindsey: *"Well because your uterus can catch cold and you can die, your stomach will grow because you catch air, you will live longer if you do what you're told."*

Participants also reported on the way that children/adults with disabilities were treated when they grew up on the island. Most often, stories of mockery and discrimination emerged. The stigma of having a visible disability (e.g. Goffman, 1963; Murphy, 2001) weighs heavily on such children. Furthermore, there is also an idea of contamination by the disability (Stiker, 1995).

Cynthia: *"On the other side of the Island, in another Municipality I grew up, and it was way, way different. Where I grew up, the peoples with disability are discriminated."*

Investigator: *"Okay, in what ways?"*

Cynthia: *"In the ways that they mock them, they laugh at them, you know, the kids if they have a disability in talking or repetition, sometime, where I grew up, the custom is that they mock them, they will just laugh at them or repeat what they try to say, that's where I grew up, you know, but um…"*

Investigator: *"Okay. So why do you think, why does that happen?"*

Cynthia: *"Because, my mom always put in a fear in us, she told us that if we laugh at someone with a disability, our kids will come out that way."*

Chelsea: *"Yeah, you have kids that born like that, and you have kids born like, there was a girl she has a [deformity] and she looks like an iguana and they claimed that the mother was scared, they threw an iguana at her and scared, and a lot of things was said like that. People would look at things and, there was one boy and he look just like a monkey, and they say the same thing had happened because the mother was scared. So those were traditional things that people used."*

When speaking about how children or adults on the island were treated, several participants reported that those children were kept at home, "locked up", and often out of sight of the community.

Darlene: *"He had, um, he was born that way* [with Down syndrome] *and like he didn't went* [sic] *to school."*

Investigator: *"But now he's like talking with the students* [at your school]?"

Darlene: *"Yeah, he's very friendly, he's not harmful, and he interact but he don't speak well [sic], I don't think he can write and he never been to school, and he's very friendly, and I don't know the skills that he have [sic] because I haven't been dealing with him, only these days that I haven't seen him up and down, usually they don't let him out."*

Antony: *"His family keeps him locked up."*

Two of the teachers talked about their more personal experiences with disabilities in the family (one had a child, and the other one a niece with a disability). While they acknowledged the progress and support that those children had made, it did not really change their views on children with disabilities inside the classroom, or on the families of people with disabilities.

Reasons and Causes for Disability

One of the questions asked during the interviews was about the reasons for disabilities. While most of the participants seemed to side with a more medical perspective on the origins of impairment, hardly anyone voiced ideas connected with the lack of accessibility of the environment, or the incongruence between an individual's skills and what the environment has to offer in return. Much of the responsibility for a child's impairment or disability was attributed to the parents, and especially to the mother. The reasons given in the interviews ranged from neglect to drug abuse to incestuous behaviour.

Jennifer: *"I think it's their parents not having enough time for them. That's what I think."*

Investigator: *"Okay, so…"*

Jennifer: *"Yeah, not having enough time for them, and that's it."*

Dorothy: *"But in the majority, those [disabilities] are caused by the mothers who maybe were not careful, who were smoking, drinking, taking drugs, they did everything they wanted during their pregnancy, right?"*

(In Spanish: pero pues sí en su mayoría son causadas por las madres que tal vez no se cuidaron, fumaron, bebieron, [se] drogaron, hicieron todo lo que quisieron mientras estuvieron embarazadas, ¿verdad?)

Melania: *"Neglect by the mother… and I believe that most of the problems of the children is parental neglect. One can perhaps be drug abuse in the family home and impregnation at the inadequate moment could then be one of the reasons. Issues of the mothers who maybe have some disorder during their pregnancy and the child gets born with this difficulty."*

(In Spanish: Descuidos de la madre... y creo que la mayor parte de los problemas de los niños es descuido de los padres. Una puede ser por tal vez drogadicción en los hogares de los padres y fecundan en el momento inadecuado entonces eso es una de las causas. Problemas de las madres que tal vez tienen algún trastorno al momento de estar embarazadas y el niño nace con esa dificultad.)

Lindsey: *"In other words, if I had to give my opinion, that would be it. They don't, they just get up and go and get married, and we love each other, and – that's it. We keep it in the family [laughs]. I think that's the biggest problem."*

Aside from the assumed parental misconduct during or before pregnancy, there were also teachers who were very clear that they did not consider the parents to be attentive enough or supportive of their child. In their perception, parents did not sufficiently support the work and actions undertaken by the teacher in the school. Pine's work (2008) about Honduran culture on the mainland shows beliefs about alcohol and drug abuse as a recurring problem of Honduran society, which also influences how Honduran people think about themselves ("bad people", "out of control", "lazy", "drinking too much", etc.). There is also a parallel with another study done in Cameroon, which indicated that a majority of participants believe that the causes of disability lie in alcoholism, medical problems and injuries (Opoku et al, 2015).

The teachers' comments also reflect a moral-religious model of disability. This model intersected with the medical model of disability or impairment, which gives medical reasons for a person's impairment (foetal alcohol syndrome, incest). At the interviews, however, it seemed to be paired with a rather strong moral judgment of the parents, especially of the mothers, of children with disability. The teachers rarely mentioned genetic causes for disability, or the social or environmental circumstances that could create disability. The "fault" for disability was very clear and it usually involved inappropriate or abusive behaviour by the mother. In the conversations, the social model of disability was noticeably absent in the representations of the teachers (Oliver and Barnes, 1998; Bickenbach et al, 1999; Barnes and Mercer, 2010).

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

The findings of this study revealed the representations of a cohort of teachers on the island of Roatán. During the interviews, several of the aspects that came to the forefront related to a lack of training, the idea of bad parenting, and a population that appears to be caught in between more traditional cultural norms around normalcy and disabilities, and the influence from the Global North.

Teachers, in this case, seem to merely represent the general population's perspectives on people with disabilities, though they have more exposure as they encounter at least a small number of children with disabilities in their classrooms. The negative attitudes that emerged from the teachers' interviews reflect other cultures, as has been pointed out by Kabzems and Chimedza (2002) in the case of southern Africa. "Recent studies show that negative cultural attitudes persist not only in the community, but also among family members, fathers and paternal relatives in particular […] Disability continues to be associated with maternal wrongdoing, witchcraft, evil spirits, punishment or test by God" (Kabzems and Chimedza, 2002). Except for witchcraft and evil spirits, all the other elements were mentioned by the participants in the present study. However, research has also pointed out that colonialism in the Global South destroyed traditional networks of support for people with disabilities, and community-based models were replaced by a charitable model based on institutionalisation. Honduras is no stranger to this phenomenon; in post-colonial times there are many evangelical and missionary churches, especially from the United States, filling the void.

"Under colonialism, humanitarian models were imposed, with disabled children attending special schools run by a church or charitable nongovernmental organisations. The charitable link provided communities with personnel, funding and equipment that served as an alternative source of attitudes towards disabled people. Churches and charities very often filled, and continue to fill, gaps in provision for disabled people. However, they also imported attitudes that emphasised medical/charitable models of disability, development and service delivery" (McEwan and Butler, 2007).

The current study found that the medical and the religious models of disability were strongly intertwined in the representations of the teachers on Roatán. The Catholic Church and, increasingly, a range of evangelical churches are present on the island. Groups of missionaries arrive, bringing a good deal of support in terms of money and supplies. However, this support is often attached to the belief

system of that particular group. In this sense, the mixing of moral, religious and medical notions - that the author extrapolated from the interviews with teachers- reflect very clearly the different cultural influences that the island of Roatán is exposed to, and especially the increasing influence of religious groups from the United States of America.

Evidently the impact of poverty on these representations cannot be ignored. As Honduras is one of the poorest countries in Central America and depends a lot on development aid, one can observe how poverty impacts the communities on the ground, and how pre-existing community supports may have broken away over time. Individualisation has left it up to the concerned family to deal with their child with a disability and, under the moral or the religious model, might even blame the family for having "such a child" in the first place. Being voiceless and on the margins (Power, 2001) is the direct consequence for those children and their families. From this perspective, "locking up" and not exposing the child to the community appears to be a logical strategy to cope with the moral burden and the shame of having a child with disability.

However, the interviews also revealed a number of possibilities that could help to address some of the issues. As a temporary resident on the island, the researcher felt it was crucial to find constructive and culturally appropriate responses to the issues and concerns raised during the interviews. The responses largely target awareness-raising, education, and training. As mentioned earlier, this project was primarily designed with the professional development of teachers kept in mind. As a direct consequence of those interviews, several workshops with teachers and parents have since been conducted on the island, to address the lack of knowledge, education and skills mentioned by the teachers. The workshop materials are available to the NGO PIER, so that their local employees can conduct their PD workshops at their convenience. Knowledge about the social and medical causes of impairment and disability, simulation exercises and teaching strategies are covered in the workshops. It was encouraging to receive the participants' feedback. They mentioned that they had gained greater sensitivity, better knowledge and skills to interact with people with disabilities and their parents.

Apart from teacher education, are there ways to return to a more communal way of including people with disabilities? Developing Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) with a focus on the circumstances of disability (poverty, environmental and attitudinal circumstances) could lead to changes in a community such as in Roatán

(see Miles, 1996; WHO, 2010). Instead of asking to create institutions and special classrooms, encouraging communities to make an inclusive effort in keeping with their culture could have a much more empowering and inclusive effect. For instance, teacher Cynthia reported about a community on the island where people with disabilities are included in the preparation of baleadas (traditional Honduran food) and the production of bracelets. Those kinds of initiatives could be taken as a starting point for changing attitudes and circumstances, and also challenging a post-colonial context that imposes cultural norms and practices that have a strong exclusionary and segregating effect on people. It also addresses to a certain extent the poverty that people with disabilities are experiencing.

There is also another small NGO on the island which has been formed by the parents of children with disabilities to address some of the needs of their children. Although they are currently not working in an inclusive setting per se, this NGO conducts a number of awareness- raising activities, including a march for the World Day of Autism, and the sale of goods produced by the parents or their children for the benefit of the organisation. It also has a positive effect on the parents, especially the mothers, as they feel supported in their position as mothers of children with disabilities, and do not experience the same level of shame or embarrassment because of their children any more. This organisation has also been conducting PD workshops with a number of teachers, and the outcomes have been encouraging.

The elaboration of the contact hypothesis has shown that positive and non-competitive interaction, or "quality contact" between diverse groups can lead to a reduction of prejudice, in this case between people with and without disabilities (see e.g. Allport, 1954; Consiglio et al, 2015). In this sense, increasing community interactions and gatherings between children and adults with and without disabilities and their parents is crucial for the reduction of discrimination and prejudice, hence the promise of inclusive education. However, researchers insist on the notion of "quality contact", which enhances positive interaction, and does not simply exacerbate already existing exclusion.

In the spirit of CBR, these kinds of initiatives are the most promising, as they return agency to the heart of the community, and give the community itself ways to reduce discrimination and enhance education. Prejudice often stems from a lack of knowledge and education, and if the community is enabled to reclaim its own ways and traditions to be inclusive to all its members, then this would be the most productive route to address the issues raised in this project.

Teachers everywhere often find themselves at the forefront of the challenge of inclusion and inclusive education, and it is no different with the teachers in Honduras. Community-based initiatives have the merit of educating these teachers, helping them to better understand the implications of what it means to grow up with a disability and also to be less judgmental of families who are raising a child with a disability. In turn, teachers can become the role models and multipliers of positive and inclusive attitudes towards people with disabilities.

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