

*Female Education in Honduras:  
The Creation of a Community of Congruence for Women*

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*Education is the primary method of social progress and reform.*

—*John Dewey*

### **The Educational Situation in Central America**

It is hardly arguable that in today's world, the accessibility of a good education is the most important means by which members of society can improve their socioeconomic status and by which democratic principles can flourish. While progress has been made within the last thirty years, in comparison to other Latin American countries, Central America (Guatemala, El Salvador, Belize, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama) fairs poorly in its education achievements; and falls even further behind in comparison to high-growth countries elsewhere. The countries of Central America vary in great detail in their complex histories, cultural idiosyncrasies, and widespread poverty. Three of the countries, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua have experienced bloody civil wars, and have undergone a complex peace process. This places the region at a great disadvantage in its ability to progress towards a more modern and democratic existence.

There are certain dynamics that exist within a general culture dominated by patriarchy, machismo, personalismo and elitism add to this stalemate of modernization, affecting the educational situation regionally. The Patriarch, which has strong ties to the Catholic Church, has defined for centuries the public and private sphere through traditional gender-roles. The affects that this has had on education, is significant, as the Church is one of the main providers of educational opportunities, especially in rural areas and also for the female population. While there have been situation where the church as been a catalyst in women's rights, more often than

not, it strongly affirms traditional beliefs that woman's place is in the home—with a dominant male.

Like in all of Latin America, countries in Central America are plagued by the cultural acceptance of *machismo* or maleness; which holds the power of patriarchy at the highest levels possible, when it comes to asserting power over women.<sup>1</sup> It is often the case that while, parents may send both genders to primary school; the girl children are likely the first to be pulled out, in order to help in the home and in domestic income earning work. This is further pushed with the belief that occupational opportunities resulting from education are greater for males. While gender roles for occupations have advanced to include women in predominantly male positions, women with the same level of education as men have greater difficulty in finding jobs that match their educational credentials.

Another cultural practice that affects the educational opportunities within Central America is that of elitism and personalismo. While racially the mestizo race dominates (mixed race) with indigenous peoples making up twenty-three percent of the region<sup>2</sup>, the existence of a small elite which claims majority Spanish blood, control the political, economic, and social policies within these nations. Through personalismo or personal relations, the elites maintain their dominance in the public sphere, as they promote each other into positions of power at all levels of society.<sup>3</sup> For example, if the niece of a politician needs a job, it is almost impossible for a qualified female with no personal ties to upper management to receive a job, regardless of whether her credentials exceed the credentials of the niece of the politician. Education is seen as an elite right, more than a human right and more than an elite right, a male right. Meanings that

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<sup>1</sup> Harry E. Vanden and Gary Prevost. "Society, Gender, and Political Culture." In Politics of Latin America: The Power Game (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002): 111.

<sup>2</sup> Cecilia Gallardo de Cano and Ricardo Maduro (Chairs). "Tomorrow is too Late." Task Force n Education Reform in Central America. 2000. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Vanden and Prevost, 121.

even in the upper class of society, while the gap may be smaller, there is still a discrepancy in the education of received by females compared to males.

The majority of the education systems in the Central American countries are run by the national governments, although private schools are common. However, there is a discrepancy in the way the centralized governments fund their schools, maintaining elitism at the heart of the one public service that should be bridging the gap between the rich and poor. Nicaragua, the most extreme case, spends fifteen times more on students of higher education than on primary school children.<sup>4</sup> This inequity is further augmented by the fact that majority of students in higher education are members of upper class. A common trend among elites is to send their children to private primary and secondary schools, before sending them to the public national universities, which are known for their prestige. The disproportionate spending by governments results in the funding of the education of elites rather than towards the education of those who would benefit the most; the majority, the poor.

Many Central American countries have yet to achieve universal elementary education, and coverage at the primary level is all too often inadequate (Figure 1). The affects that this has on students are detrimental concerning their ability to perform creatively and competitively in modern societies. Furthermore, it keeps the status quo of society concerning the socioeconomic gaps between rich and poor (Figure 2). This is the situation that Central America finds its self in today.

In a report by the *Task Force on Education Reform in Central America*, four key aspects define education problems in the region:

- 1) Education is managed by centralized, bureaucratic, and frequently politicized

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<sup>4</sup>Humberto Belli and Nivia Rossana Castrellón. "Time to Act: A Report Card on Education in Central America and the Dominican Republic." *Task Force on Education Reform in Central America*. 2003: 21.

government institutions that absorb significant resources and often slow down much needed innovation and reform;

2) Investment in education is inadequate and unequal. While this is due in part to widespread poverty, it also reflects a lack of serious national commitment to making education a high priority and to making it more accessible to the poor. The result is inefficient management and low coverage for indigenous populations and the rural poor;

3) The teaching profession has deteriorated, in part because of wage schemes that fail to take performance into account; and

4) Educational standards have not been put into place and assessment systems have not been consolidated, thus limiting efforts to assess quality, performance, and the real impact of policies.<sup>5</sup>

The Central American educational deficit has come to the forefront of diplomatic issues for the region, along with the reduction of poverty. There has been a proposal made by the Task Force on Education Reform in Central American, in the direction countries should be taking to improve the education systems including:

- 1) Continue to promote decentralization, and demand extensive community involvement in running schools and in the education system;
- 2) Increase and reallocate government spending on education per pupil and address the serious inequities;
- 3) Improve incentives for good teaching, and link new pay increases to the implementation of policies that recognize performance;
- 4) Ensure that standards are linked to other elements of the education system and that they are of real use; and

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<sup>5</sup> Gallardo de Cano and Maduro, 15.

5) Increase the use of national tests and take part in global tests.<sup>6</sup>

I would further include the inclusion of the implementation of alternative educational opportunities; which would include a push for the education of the female populace.

The importance of education reform within the entire region of Central America cannot be undermined or overlooked. Nevertheless, implementing a region wide reform project would be a far too complicated and lengthy; therefore, reform must be initiated in each individual country. Honduras being near the bottom of the educational spectrum is a good place for reform to be initiated. While elementary education reaches ninety percent of the population, only an estimated twenty-six percent reach secondary school, with less than sixty percent of children reach the fifth grade.<sup>7</sup> Honduras spends seven times more on students in higher education, than on primary students and five times more on secondary students.<sup>8</sup> This incongruity in spending is only a microcosm of the widening distribution gap within the country.

Undoubtedly poverty in Honduras has increased in the last decade of the twentieth century, in terms of total persons living in poverty, even though, in percentile terms it appears that there has been some decrease in the urban areas.<sup>9</sup> The augmentation of poverty has displayed a biased leaning with regards to gender. Between 1991 and 1999, rural poverty levels of the female population increased from 53.2 percent to 60.4 percent, a 7.2 percent increase.<sup>10</sup>

Correspondingly, male rural poverty levels increased 54 percent to 58.4 percent, a 4.4 percent increase, but 2.8 percent less than female poverty.<sup>11</sup> This phenomenon is further exemplified in levels of economic involvement in the formal sector, in the difference in salary between males and females, and in the levels of literacy between the genders. For women this rise in poverty is

<sup>6</sup> Belli and Castrellón, 29.

<sup>7</sup> Gallardo de Cano and Maduro,

<sup>8</sup> Belli and Castrellón, 21.

<sup>9</sup> Rocío Tábor, "El impacto de Educatorios en la vida de las mujeres: una lectura cualitativa desde la perspectiva de género." *Improving Educational Quality Project* 2002. (Translation mine.)

<sup>10</sup> Tábor, 19.

<sup>11</sup> Tábor, 19.

additionally relevant in the high-fertility levels which contribute to the cycle of poverty. On the national level the fertility rate is 5.36 children per woman reaching 4.5 children per woman in urban areas and 6.3 in the countryside.<sup>12</sup> As a consequence, close to 50 percent of the population is under the age of 18.<sup>13</sup>

Given the tendencies and reality of the key problem of female poverty, it is absolutely necessary to develop a strategy for the reduction of poverty for women and their families through education. Programs focusing on women tend to impact more directly the welfare of the family, due to the investment differential with regard to familial well being within the genders.<sup>14</sup> Women invest directly into the nutrition, health, and education of their children, while men tend to spend earnings on personal interests or spend their money outside the home. My hope is to address this problem of female poverty through the creation of a school that is specifically concerned with the continuation of the improving women's place in the socioeconomic sphere in Honduras. It is through education that women will gain their rightful place as full-fledged citizens.

Women need to take the first steps when it comes to fighting for their own human rights. What is often dismissed is the fact that a gain in women rights is a gain for all. It has been documented that female education increases the value of women's time in economic activities, enhancing their productivity and earning potential; thus contributing to better economic performances for both gender and alleviating poverty.<sup>15</sup> Research has shown that this type of education is particularly successful at the secondary level.

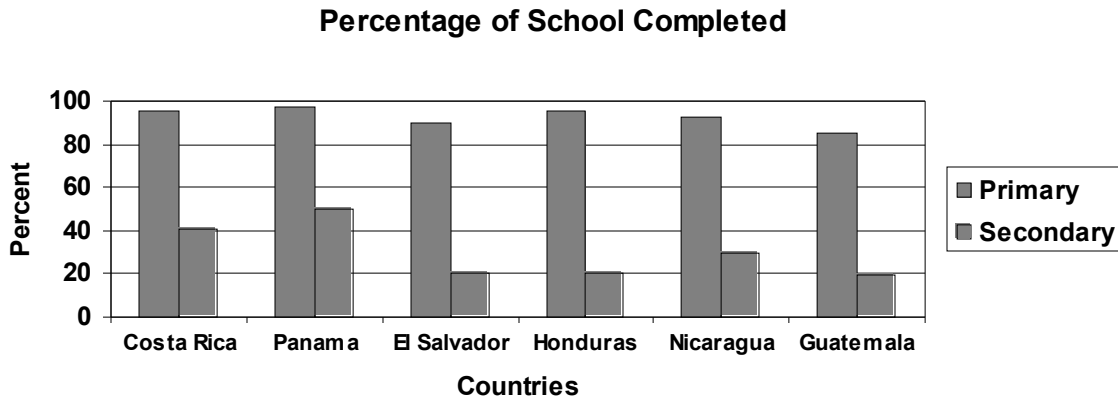
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<sup>12</sup> Gunther Hausen, "Honduras Project." Pure Water for the World (Website). 2001-2004.  
[http://www.purewaterfortheworld.org/honduras\\_project.asp](http://www.purewaterfortheworld.org/honduras_project.asp) Accessed 23 October 2004.

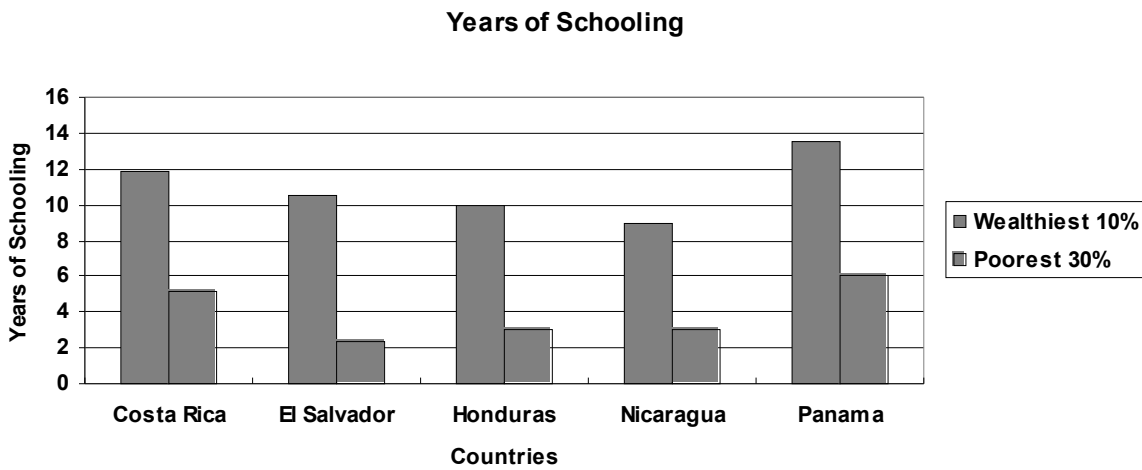
<sup>13</sup> Hausen, 2004.

<sup>14</sup> Tabora, 21.

<sup>15</sup> K. Subbarao and Laura Raney, "Social Gains from Female Education: A Cross-National Study." World Bank Discussion Papers (Washington, D.C. : The World Bank, 1993): Foreword.



**Figure 1**  
 Source: *World Education Report 1993*, UNESCO; *Statistical Yearbook 1996*, UNESCO; Wolf and Castro, “Secondary Education in Latin America and the Caribbean”. Inter-American Development Bank, 1999.



**Figure 2**  
 Source: *Economic and Social Progress 1998-99*, Inter-American Development Bank, Appendix, Table 1.2.III, Education Based on household surveys conducted between 1994 and 1996.

## Towards Alternative Education Strategies

In 2000, Improving Educational Quality Project (IEQ) began an investigation to evaluate the experience with *Proyecto Educatodos* which provides an alternative model for the implementation of basic educational services for youth and adults.<sup>16</sup> *Proyecto Educatodos* began in 1995 in coordination with the goal set by the Honduran government which hoped to reach a 70 percent literacy rate by 2015.<sup>17</sup> *Proyecto Educatodos* has been successful in providing an alternative model to the public education system and also in integrating its students into wider society economically through, its teaching of self-employment. For women, whom mostly work in the informal sector—which is often ignored—this has been particularly important, in their motivation and self-recognition of being a part of the economic sphere of society. Furthermore, alternative models like the one presented by *Proyecto Educatodos*, establish an environment for its students to continue their education, join the workforce, organize around community development issues, and generate profound sociocultural changes in gender relations, sexual health and reproduction, and work.<sup>18</sup> Projects like *Educatodos* and similar alternatives should be included as one of the central tactics in the strategy for the reduction of poverty. It is in this tradition that I propose a reform initiative that will add to the alternatives progressing education in Honduras. My reform initiative concentrates the education and progression of women in Honduran society. I propose the creation of a *community of congruence* for the young women of Honduras; beginning with those living in the providence of El Paraiso, in the city of Danli—the tenth largest city in the country with a population of 44,000.<sup>19</sup> (Map 1 and Map 2).

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<sup>16</sup> Rocío Tábora, “El impacto de *Educatodos* en la vida de las mujeres: una lectura cualitativa desde la perspectiva de género.” *Improving Educational Quality Project (IEQ)*. (Arlington: American Institutes for Research, 2002), 7.

<sup>17</sup> Tábora, 7.

<sup>18</sup> Tábora, 10.

<sup>19</sup> The World Gazetteer. Honduras 2004. [http://www.world-gazetteer.com/d/d\\_hn\\_ep.htm](http://www.world-gazetteer.com/d/d_hn_ep.htm) Accessed 20 October 2004.



Map 1



Map 2

### Reform Initiative: The Creation of a Community of Congruence

The School that I propose will target young women in grades seventh through twelve; with the objective of preparing them to pursue higher education nationally or abroad, or to enter the work force with the necessary skills. The school which would be a boarding school would create a *community of congruence*:

Communities of Congruence...first purpose is simply mutual reassurance [...] the second function of communities of congruence: to help people develop the language that can represent the movement's vision, giving that language the strength it will need to survive and thrive in the rough-and tumble of the public realm [...] a third role of communities of congruence: they provide a training ground where people living undivided lives could develop the skills and habits necessary to take their values into the larger world.<sup>20</sup>

The school system in Honduras has three levels. The first six years are spent at a primary school, the next three in a general program at the secondary level, and the last three in a specialized program at the secondary level. Hondurans who complete both secondary programs may go to university.<sup>21</sup> The school that I propose because of strategic and global aspects would run on the equivalence of the United States School system; starting September and ending in June, rather than starting in February and ending in November as is done in the Honduran system. This would allow for students to be able to participate in internships abroad and within the community (e.g. internship at an elementary school would only be possible when the Honduran schools are in session), and also allow for the student to study abroad without creating problems of re-entrance when they returned.

### **Physical Structure of School**

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<sup>20</sup> Parker J. Palmer. The Courage to Teach: Exploring The Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 172-174.

<sup>21</sup> Learning in Honduras. <http://www.settlement.org/cp/english/honduras/learning.html> Accessed 21 October 2004.

The school would be on enclosed grounds, composed of dormitories, teacher housing, a school library (with public access), a gymnasium, cafeteria, gardens, clinic, and school building where classes would be taught. The physical structure of the school could to some appear to be alienating and isolative because of the fact that it would be on enclosed grounds; however, due to the high levels of crimes in Honduran society this enclosure is necessary in order to create a secure and safe environment where students are able to focus on their academic skill rather than worry about their safety. The school would house 300 students and 30 teachers, creating a class ratio of ten to one.

The Dorms:

Two buildings composed of three stories (120' X 160') with a 40' X 80' center courtyard.

Level one

Entrance

Dorm Administration office

Lounge (entertainment room)

Laundry Facilities

Courtyard (plants and tile)

Single Teacher Living Units

Six (20' X 20') single rooms; each room would include a twin size bed, a desk, book shelf, closet and dresser.

Bathroom (five toilet stalls and five shower stalls)

Small Kitchen (Stove, refrigerator)

Living Room

### Level Two and Three

19 (20 X 20) quadruplets and 1 (10 X 20) double room for R.A.'s

Rooms would include four beds (R.A.'s room 2 beds) with bookshelf headboards, and four dressers.

20 (10' X 10') study rooms overlooking courtyard.

Four open air study lounges overlooking courtyard.

Shower facilities

Toilets

\*Dorm 1 would house 7-9<sup>th</sup> grade

\*Dorm 2 would house 10-12<sup>th</sup> grade

### Teacher Housing

- ◆ Each dormitory would house six single teachers for a total of twelve between the two buildings. These teachers would more than likely be those students whom are doing their teaching experience abroad.
- ◆ Outside the grounds but next to the school, extra housing for teachers would be available in ten, two story houses (30' X 40').

- ◆ These houses could be shared by a group of teachers, or be available for teacher with families. Housing would be included in the teachers' salary if they were to take advantage of this opportunity.
  - While it would be ideal for all teachers to be included within the ground of the schools, it would be difficult to do this with teachers with families; males would not be allowed on the grounds during night time, due to the safety and security of the large young women population.

### School Library

Like a regular library, in which the public would be allowed in during day hours. The library would be two stories with individual and group study rooms. It would also include a computer lab, and computer class room where computer based classes would be taught.

### Gymnasium

The gym would include an exercise room, a small weight room, a dance studio, and two classrooms. Locker would be on one side of the Gym with access to the outside track and field facilities. These facilities would include a rubber track around a soccer field. Physical education and Health classes would be taught in this building.

### Cafeteria

The Cafeteria would be next to the dorms, eat would serve breakfast, lunch and dinner. It would for the most part be an open air dining room, with an enclosed kitchen. The Dining room would have high slanted ceilings that would extend beyond the parameters of the eating area to protect it from weather elements. The

Cafeteria would serve breakfast, lunch, and dinner, seven days a week during the school year.

#### Gardens

The Gardens would be next to the Cafeteria, students would be in charge of planting and taking care of plants.

#### School Building

School building would be two stories high, surrounding an open air courtyard. All classes except for the computer and physical education classes would be taught here. This building would also house the admissions and registrars offices. The building would have approximately 30 classrooms, with a maximum capacity of 20 students. This building would also include the 30 teacher's offices.

#### **Staffing**

Currently in Honduras, there is a shortage of schools and teachers creating an environment where teachers may have classes with 50 students, leaving little or no time for individual attention. How do I hope to fill this shortage of teachers within the proposed school? While the school, will initially be built to house 300 students it will not be full its first couple of years, since the school will begin with only a few students starting out in the seventh grade—50 Students. That means the school will begin with approximately five teachers. It is my hope that once these students have graduated after six years at the school, that some may be trained in teaching and return to the school to teach the incoming generations. Furthermore, it is my intention to build a network with United States Institutions of Higher Education, where students in the path of receiving a World Languages: Spanish, Education Teaching license will be able to fulfill their student teaching requirement and language experience, by performing their student teaching at the school in Honduras. Because, English will also be a requirement at the school, those majoring in English with Spanish background would also be welcomed to participate at the

school. This networking between the school in Honduras and U.S. Colleges and Universities would also contribute to the funding of the school.

### **Curriculum**

The curriculum of the school would have strong feminist leanings. However, for the first two years the students will have eight core classes which they will have to take. The classes while they follow a rather rigid and conservative model are necessary in these two years, in order to get the young women at a place where, more progressive and analytical education can take place. We must also keep in mind the goal of integrating these young women into the socioeconomic society of Honduras, or to pursue higher education upon graduation; what do they need to take to become successful in a developing country?

As a part of their curriculum the young women will also be involved in physical education courses through out all their years. The courses will not be designed around a competitive atmosphere but rather upon the notion of allowing the young women to become familiar and confident with their bodies. Physical Education will involve both physical activities as well as physical health education; nutrition (difference between men's and women's bodies), healthy diets, and preventative physical diseases. Physical Education will always be taught in the morning, due to conflicts with extracurricular activities in the afternoon. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities and create clubs that suit their interests that are supervised by teachers. These activities and clubs will meet after classes on suitable days. All students will be required to participate in an after-class program. Through cooperation with High Schools in the United States and foreign exchange programs eleventh graders would have the possibility of studying abroad.

Saturdays will be Group activity days, which would include any activities which include the entire student body or split by classes, grade level, etc. Saturdays will be practical days. That is days where leaders from the community are welcome into the schools to share their perspectives and lead organizational seminars. Also, Saturdays and weekends would be field trip days, were students would visit sites like the Copan Ruins, and the Biosphere Reserve among others. In grades nine through twelve, the chosen alternative courses would be in mixed grade classes. The school would be on a semester system, with standard U.S. G.P.A. scaling. Prior to the opening of the school teachers would be trained and familiarized with this system. Below are the tentative Curriculum courses for each grade level.

### Seventh Grade

♀ 8 core subjects

- ◆ Mathematics
- ◆ Spanish (Language and Literature)
- ◆ English (Foreign Language) A and B
- ◆ Life Science
- ◆ History of Honduras
- ◆ Women's Health and Sexuality
- ◆ Latin American Art History
- ◆ Basic Computer Skills (Typing)

### Eighth Grade

♀ 8 Core subjects

- ◆ Mathematics
- ◆ Spanish (Language and Literature)
- ◆ English C and D
- ◆ Earth Sciences (Gardens)
- ◆ Intro to Latin American Women's Movements
- ◆ History of Latin America
- ◆ Basic Computer Skills (Internet and Research)
- ◆ Arts (Visual and performing arts)

### Ninth Grade

♀ 5 Core subjects

- ◆ Mathematics (Pre-Algebra, Algebra)
- ◆ Spanish (Analytical and Creative Writing)
- ◆ English E and F (Verbal emphasized)
- ◆ History of Revolutions
- ◆ Women in Global Perspective

### Tenth Grade

♀ 4 Core Subject

- ◆ Race, Class, and Society

- ◆ Mathematics (Algebra II, and Trigonometry)
- ◆ English (Writing Emphasized, prepare for TOFEL)
- ◆ Women in Spanish and Latin American Literature

#### Eleventh Grade

##### ♀ 4 Core Subjects

- ◆ Math (Pre-Calculus)
- ◆ English (Creative Writing)
- ◆ Introduction to Economics
- ◆ Feminist Theory

#### Twelve Grade

##### ♀ 4 Core Subjects

- ◆ Math (Calculus)
- ◆ English (Academic Writing)
- ◆ Honduras and Social Reform (Past to Present)
- ◆ Local Internship (various possibilities)

#### Ninth-Twelve Grade Alternative Courses\*\*

- ◆ Anatomy
- ◆ Introduction to Physics
- ◆ Introduction to Chemistry
- ◆ SAT preparatory course\*
- ◆ College Prep. (Filling out Applications, Researching Schools)\*
- ◆ Music and Dance (Latin America)
- ◆ Music and Dance (Global)
- ◆ Globalization\*
- ◆ Liberation Theology
- ◆ Arts (various courses)
- ◆ Introduction to Philosophy
- ◆ Web Page Design
- ◆ Introduction to Psychology
- ◆ Advanced Psychology

- ◆ Child Psychology
- ◆ U.S. Feminism in Comparative Perspective\*
- ◆ Home Economics

\* Indicates classes suited for Juniors and Seniors. Exceptions would be made based on Academic achievements, and personal goals.

\*\*These are of course tentative alternatives, it would be great to include more foreign languages as alternatives, and this would hopefully be a part later on as the school developed.

### Day Schedule

Monday, Wednesday and Friday

7:30-8:30am	Breakfast is served
9:00-10:30am	First Class or Physical Education
10:40-12:10pm	First Class or Physical Education
12:30-1:30 pm	Lunch
2:00-3:30pm	Second Class
6:00-7:30pm	Dinner
Lights Out by 11:00pm	

### Day Schedule

Tuesday and Thursday

7:30-8:30 am	Breakfast is served
9:00-11:00am	Third Class
12:00-1:00pm	Lunch
1:15-3:45pm	Fourth Class
6:00-7:30	Dinner
Lights out by 11:00pm	

Saturdays

Group Seminars/ Activities; Guest Speakers; Group Outings

### Likely Barriers and Visibility

A critique of this proposed plan would be the cultural acceptability of giving up one's daughter for an entire school year. Because traditionally women and girls are expected to work in the home and help with younger siblings, for some sending their female child is not a risk that they would take. However, I believe that in today's society, if the investment in women's education is painted in a positive light, sending young girls to a boarding school that will provide them with the skills to survive and flourish in today's globalizing world, most parents would, in fact take the risk. Also as Palmer points out in his discussion on communities of congruence:

“one way to plant a seed from which a community of congruence might grow: one must make visible one's decision to live divided no more. Visibility is not easy because it may bring recrimination. But when we declare our values in a visible and viable way, we will sometimes be amazed at the way allies gather round.”<sup>22</sup>

Relating this to the proposed school, there will always be those who do not agree with the vision of educating women, however there are many who are in agreement with this much needed reform. If there is never a step taken to make visible the importance and value of women's education, we will be isolated in our efforts for reform. We can't give in just because we fear *some* people may not agree with us.

The school will of course have feminist leanings. This will be problematic since many Latin Americans do not agree with feminism that arose out of the Women's movement in the United States. In this aspect cultural sensitivity must be taken into account, and the school would focus on leading feminists within Latin America, expanding in the last years to include global women's movements. This is important in that many women's movements in Latin America have formed around the traditional roles of the female, this would prevent outright criticism from members of the community, and others whom might see this as another plot by the imperialists. Furthermore, this “type” of feminism is also more practical in the lives of the young women, as it teaches empowerment without the radical destruction of traditions. This does not mean on the other hand that this type of empowerment does not lead to social progress and change of traditional gender roles; on the contrary, but the process by which reform occurs is more culturally and socially accepted—this is perceived as change from within, rather than imposed change.

Visibility will be further exemplified by the internships the students will be able to pursue in the wider local community. The overlapping of the two school years (U.S. and Honduran) would

<sup>22</sup> Palmer, 175.

allow the young women the opportunity to gain experience without the interference in their school lives. This would be beneficial to those young women, hoping to become teachers, as they would be able to internship within schools during break. The ability for young women to be involved in internships also, creates visibility for the school and its values in the wider society, forming communal relationships and networks expanding the vision of the community of congruence from the school grounds to the wider city. The importance of public visibility is lies in the opportunity to influence others with our values and also to meet challenges that compel us to check and correct our values.<sup>23</sup> The only way for the school to minimize negative views of it and maximize its positive contributions to society is to expose itself to public critique and to take the critique seriously. Local internships would be one of many ways in which this could be done. It would be my intention that the community of Danli is involved in the creation of the school from the beginning. I propose that public forums would be conducted with regards to the proposal, where public input can be gathered before moving forward with all plans. That surveys and interviews with education leaders, students, and others are conducted, and that the community is involved throughout the process and after the creation of the school.

### **Dissemination Plan**

Possible plan of action would include sending this proposal to Project Honduras.com which is an online portal for information on ways to help Honduras. It is also a network of individuals and groups working on innovative, grassroots responses to the country's social and economic needs, leveraging the information and the talent, expertise, and time within the network to serve as a catalyst for change. Many of these people are professionals and students, self-employed, working for major corporations or attending colleges and universities. It is this scattered body of people that is potentially one of Honduras' greatest assets and project Honduras tries to bring them together in practical, positive, and creative ways. By sending this reform to this group of individuals not only would I be able to get feed back but it would get out into the public; allowing for the next step to happen whether it be a reform of the reform or a plan of action to carry out the proposed reform.

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<sup>23</sup> Palmer, 175.

www.projecthonduras.com

## Annotated Bibliography

While the following resources that I have used in the creation of my reform initiative thus far are all literary sources, they have had a huge affect in the way my reform was constructed. This is due the reason that while my vision for a school for women in Honduras has always been at the back of my head, I never realized the magnitude of the educational inequalities not just in Honduras but regionally in Central America. These resources put the regional educational crisis in perspective, while also expanding my knowledge of how the Honduran system compares to the region and what is being done to tackle these deficiencies.

- ◆ Belli, Humberto and Nivia Rossana Castrellón. “Time to Act: A Report Card on Education in Central America and the Dominican Republic.” *Task Force on Education Reform in Central America*. 2003.

This Report Card on the educational systems progress in Central America outlines the deficiencies that persist in many of the Latin American Countries, after much need implemented reforms were but in place due to the 2000 report *Tomorrow is too Late*. This report strives to once more push the educational inequalities of the region at the forefront of each respective countries government agenda.

- ◆ Bulmer-Thomas, Victor and A. Douglas Kincaid. *Central America 2020: Towards a New Regional Development Model*. Hamburg: Institut für Iberoamerika-Kunde, 2000.

Any report on Central America must begin by recognizing the significant economic, social and political progress made in the last ten years. Macroeconomic stability has once again become the norm and regional economic growth in the 1990s was positive. Exports,

both inside and outside the region, have expanded and diversified. The transfer of power through the electoral process is now commonplace and demilitarization has been occurring throughout the region. Inter-state tensions may still exist, but the regional crisis of the 1980s has been left far behind. These advances are welcome, but they are insufficient for two reasons. First, Central America has yet to reverse many accumulated problems from the past. Poverty is still widespread, the distribution of income and wealth is highly unequal, and powerful interest groups frequently block essential reforms. Health and education systems in some countries remain deficient and under funded.

This report, adopts a long-term and multi-dimensional perspective in which the focus is the future of Central America – defined to include Belize and Panama - in the next two decades. The recommendations are derived from a conception of development that includes sustainable economic growth, improved social welfare and expanded citizenship. This report is highly valuable in its ability to view the regions deficiencies as intertwined and therefore, methods to tackle these deficiencies wont just attempted to solve one problem but will have wider ramifications.

- ◆ Córdova, Ricardo and Günther Maihold. *Democracia y ciudadanía en Centroamérica: Perspectivas hacia el 2020*. Hamburg: Institut für Iberoamerika-Kunde, 2000.

This study starts from the premise that the phase of *transition to democracy* has been completed in Central America. In other words, transition to a politico-institutional regime has been achieved. This phase is regarded as having been completed with the coming into force of a democratic constitution and the functioning of constitutional organs. *The process of democratic consolidation*, however, still presents a challenge to Central American societies.

The recommendation given in this report, look at the problems of the region not as isolated instances but how they are connected and there for a step to solve one problem will inevitably affect another problem. It has a strong emphasis on the creation of a solid democratic citizenry and society.

- ◆ Gallardo de Cano, Cecilia and Ricardo Maduro (Chairs). “Tomorrow is too late.” *Task Force on Education Reform in Central America*. 2000.

This report is the result of the research, deliberations, and recommendations of the members of the Task Force on Education Reform in Central America. Its content is based on a review of various studies, regional statistical data, and interviews with ministry of education officials and prominent entrepreneurs and politicians along with specialists from non-governmental organizations and universities. In this report, recommendations are given to the Central American governments as to how to improve the quality of their education systems. An important

component of this study is its emphasis on how education promotes democracy. Quality education promotes the development of human potential and helps individuals become productive members of society. Education gives individuals the ability to enrich and improve their environment and to collaborate peacefully and responsibly with others. Education reduces mortality and morbidity rates, increases adaptability, and contributes to better decision-making. Democratic stability increases as levels of education rise. The report makes four recommendations to improve the quality of education throughout the region.

- ◆ Octavio Bordón, José and John Petty. “Lagging Behind.” *Task Force on Education Reform in Central America*. 2001.

The Task Force on Education, Equity, and Economic Competitiveness in Latin America and the Caribbean is an independent non-governmental commission composed of distinguished citizens from throughout the region who are concerned about school quality. In April of 1998, the Task Force issued its first report, *The Future at Stake*. The report outlined grave deficiencies in the education being offered to children throughout Latin America and the Caribbean and made four recommendations for improvement. This report *Lagging Behind* is the first report card on the progress that is being made in education reform in Latin America and also outlines the deficiencies that still exist.

- ◆ Tábora, Rocío. “El impacto de Educados en la vida de las mujeres: una lectura cualitativa desde la perspectiva de género.” *Improving Education Quality Project*. Arlington: American Institutes for Research, 2002.

In this lengthy yet valuable report, Rocío Tábora takes a closer look at the impact the program *Educados* has had on the lives of its female participants as an alternative education program in Honduras. The study describes how the female participants gained a better understanding of the law, of family rights, and more specifically women and children’s rights; they were able to distance themselves from traditional socio cultural gender roles. The women became more critical of their environment, and more effective agents of change.

- ◆ Walter, Knut. *La educación en Centroamérica: Reflexiones en torno a sus problemas y su potencial*. Hamburg: Institut für Iberoamerika-Kunde, 2000.

This essay analyses the principal successes and the principal remaining problems of the education systems of Central America from the point of view of the requirements and demands of a globalized world which the region aspires to enter in an advantageous position. Central America has always adjusted its educational systems to the new realities emerging from its

changing relations with the outside world. Nevertheless, the present time requires a very special adaptation in education, because incorporation into dynamic chains of production favors people's *capacity* to learn more than the wealth of knowledge or skills at a given moment does.

In spite of the initiatives seeking to improve the coverage and efficiency of educational services, educational deficits are still greater than attempts to overcome them. This essay focuses on the problems that hinder improvements in the quality of education, on the premise that little is achieved by extending coverage if the levels of progress are low or if the numbers leaving school before the statutory age and of failures are high. the essay stresses that quality education is both expensive and difficult. In saying that it is expensive, nothing less is suggested than that expenditure on education must come close to the requirements of a globalized economy in which the development of learning capacity is in strict relation to the educational resources available in the classroom.