Learning from Action

The case study of CEDAIN

by

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ABSTRACT

The following study is based on my individual and collective practice as a former staff member of El Centro de Desarrollo Alternativo Indígena A.C., a non-profit who works in the Sierra Madre Occidental in the north of Mexico, and my experience as a master student in the US. I am developing this research as a reflective instrument to improve the strategies that I have been developing and implementing. To reach this goal I present the concept of praxis, which Paulo Freire and Antonio Gramsci used some years ago, as a methodology to shorten the gap between my practice and theory. Furthermore, I use the theoretical framework of popular education, and other ideas from the complementary fields of community development, and Critical Race Theory/TribalCrit, to shed light on how to improve our practice and the pedagogies we use as part of our work. The main question that is guiding this study is: What is the learning dynamic of organizations and participants who are doing community development work with Indigenous communities? To answer this, I analyze the data I collected in 2016, which includes: two months of participant observation, sixteen in-depth interviews, and one focus group with staff members. The findings of this research suggest that staff members have learned to respect time and culture of the community and to validate local knowledge; community members have shared that they have learned new agricultural practices, production of organic fertilizers and pesticides, earthworm compost, food conservation methods, communication skills and to work together. The ways identified in which participants have learned are: by doing, by observation, by dialogue, by receptivity, by recognition, through meetings and by reflection. The results of this

research are consistent with what popular educators say: neutrality is impossible. Practices of the nonprofits do not occur in a vacuum; therefore, the mechanisms of auto analysis and reflection that CEDAIN staff shared, in conjunction with the attempt of this research to unveil the hidden and explicit curriculum of the practices of CEDAIN, are great tools to trigger critical consciousness, challenge what we have taken for granted, and recreate better practices. This research is a result of the compilation and analysis of the narratives, experiences and knowledge of community and staff members who participated in this study. In this sense, these set of ideas, which place grassroots experiences as the principal source of knowledge, could be applied to plan and design future pedagogical interventions.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The romantic ideals that haunt the non-profit sector

Eight years ago, as a recent university graduate, I joined the non-profit sector for the first time. Blinded by my identities and privileges, I romantically believed that only positive impacts could result from this industry. I thought that if the staff members had a good hearts and intentions, the work of the nonprofits would always be transformative. By transformative I mean the process of achievement of justice in the world. I had idealized this sector in a way that I believed no altruistic practices could ever harm anyone and that nothing could go wrong in such a benevolent and honest job. The reflections on these ideas and the critical analysis of the possible impacts of the nonprofit sector rest at the core of this research.

I can assure the reader that my work was anchored in my truthful good intentions, however, today I question the intrinsic good outcomes that I believed my work would produce. For instance, today I know I was unconsciously part of the Non-profit Industrial Complex (NIC). As Dylan Rodriguez suggests, this concept describes an industry that is mainly controlled by the state and private sector, which uses surveillance, political, and financial technologies to control ideologies and the work activists perform (Incite!, 2007).

To illustrate the previous statement, I provide the following examples: I thought of myself as a quasi-savior, as a 'do-gooder' that was dedicating his life to improve the living conditions of those who needed it the most. Furthermore, all my energy was channeled towards achieving the goals the NIC had already compromised to the funding

agencies, while I never questioned the efficiency of such goals and projects. My responsibilities required me to have a hectic agenda without that much time for reflection, and I was convinced that as funders and nonprofits had been already conducting this type of job before me, they must know what they were doing. At the same time my first job in the NIC was a rewarding experience like no other. While I thought I was helping people who needed it the most, I also had the opportunity to travel across the magnificent Sierra Tarahumara in Chihuahua. I remember a specific conversation that a colleague and I had when we were hiking in a canyon in the forest of the Bocoyna municipality. In our conversation, while we were looking at this amazing canyon carved by the Oteros river and populated by a marvelous coniferous forest, I said that our job was amazing. I thought this because while people pay money to experience these kinds of outdoor activities, for us it was a regular day visiting the communities where we worked.

I also met new people and experienced a new indigenous culture. I was immersed in a cultural reality that was far from anything I had experienced in the city of Puebla where I grew up. I participated in traditional rituals, fainas and teswinos that were part of the everyday life of people that lived in this part of México. Even though I had explored this forest during 2005-2006 while I spent a year as a volunteer, I was still fascinated by this exceptional reality.

In addition to these benevolent and rewarding feelings that my job at the NIC provided, I was compensated with a material stipend. While I was working in something that I liked, I thought I was also an activist doing the right thing. I was indeed living the ultimate dream of any recent graduate activist who wanted to have a professional job that, at least in the discourse, helped to improve the social inequalities that Mexico was facing.

All these elements and factors illustrate how I was caught in the sweetness of the Non-profit Industrial Complex.

I would like to take a step further by elaborating on my practices during this time. As I said, I was convinced that I played a crucial role in the betterment of the inequalities that society faced across the territory of my beloved México. However, not all my practices have had a positive impact. I make this statement based on a simple analysis of my practices as a staff member of the nonprofit sector and the outcomes that communities and individuals achieved across the years.

In December 2016 I had the opportunity to go back to one of the communities where I worked as a recent graduate. In this location, I saw an abandoned construction that was built during 2011 with the objective to provide water to the community. The meter, which was supposed to measure the water the community would use, was still in the number cero. I was surprised; the community had not even consumed a liter from this structure. When I was working here I tried to do all I could to provide enough resources and technology necessary to make this project work. Unfortunately, challenges like the social context, the requirements from the geography of the water springs in the community, and the decisions made while choosing the technologies to implement, were elements that made this project unsuccessful.

In contrast, I have also been a part of initiatives that resulted in successful stories. They testify the great organization and power of community members to achieve the goals they envision. Particularly, a community in the ejido of Basihuare in the municipality of Guachochi built and ran a water system, which was powered by solar panels which provided their community with water for domestic use. This success was

triggered by the willingness and organization of the community in conjunction with the nonprofit who provided material and technological support.

In this sense, I can say that throughout my practices in the Sierra Tarahumara I have experience both failure and success. I am conscious that I have played the role of an outsider that only delivers help in a top-down approach without a fruitful participation from the community. But I also know that I have been part of initiatives that enhanced the mobilization of community members and community assets that resulted in great successes. Therefore, my narrative could be read as a contradictory statement that argues that good and bad practices coexist in the NIC.

Today I am convinced that the equation, non-profit practices equal to good work - that I believed accurate during the beginning of my career, does not draw a complete picture of the practices of the NIC. I argue this due to the complexity of the diverse practices in the NIC. This could be explained by the examples I previously explained, the idealization of the nonprofits, and the hierarchical identities like 'victims' and 'saviors', which the NIC inherently generates. In this way, I have certainly deconstructed this romantic idea of myself as a do-gooder and I have questioned my 'altruistic' practices as necessary for the betterment of the inequalities society faces in México. In fact, I am convinced that idealizing the practices of the NIC is a reductionist attitude, which leaves the status quo intact, and ironically perpetuates the same systems of oppression, which are, in the first place, the reason of existence of the non-profit sector. The reader will find a glimpse of the reasons behind this statement throughout this work.

How this research came to be

Four years ago, during March 2014, life took me back to the Sierra Tarahumara. This time I became a Food Security Coordinator at the Centro de Desarrollo Alternativo Indígena A.C. (CEDAIN).

CEDAIN was born in 2001 with the objective to provide the indigenous communities in the Sierra Tarahumara a development opportunity according to their culture. CEDAIN initiated with a project of "barter centers" which provides Tarahumara communities access to food in exchange of handcrafts (Thompson Gutiérrez, 2008).

CEDAIN has diversified their services. Today this nonprofit works in three main areas: food security which encourages families to develop innovative and traditional agricultural techniques to produce corn, beans and vegetables, and offers other services like the delivery of materials to build "Lorena stoves" and latrines; environment and territory which looks for a development where humans can mobilize the natural resources under a sustainable framework, specifically this area has reforestation projects of pines and sotol, watershed management and soil remediation; and social economy, which encompasses 12 regular barter centers and four seasonal exchange centers, the organization of community working groups that produce soaps, jams and sewing projects, and an emerging cooperative that looks for the development of skills and networks inside the territory where CEDAIN works so that the beneficiaries of this project become the leaders and owners of this social enterprise.

Additionally, CEDAIN has a program in the schools of Chihuahua City and Ciudad Juarez. They organize batter events where children bring certain food items in

exchange for handcrafts. This food is transported to the barter center in the Sierra where people who participate in the barter exchange their handcrafts for food. At the same time, in recent years the team and community members that are part of the cooperative go to handcraft fairs where they sell for money the handcrafts that were collected by all the different barter centers where CEDAIN works.

Due to the experiences and reflections that I had in my previous professional and community work, I joined CEDAIN team with a more critical perception about the positive and negative impact of the nonprofits in the population with whom we worked. I was lucky to share similar interests and concerns with the current leaders and staff members in CEDAIN who also saw the process of reflection and innovation as strategies to improve our practices.

By this time, the CEDAIN operative director among other team members had the interest to develop a local methodology, or an institutionalized method of approaching their community development work. This methodology would help to continue improving the interventions of CEDAIN's team. The team developed and ran this initiative which was later called "Diagnósticos Participativos" (DP). The DP shaped certain activities of the 2016 CEDAIN project and was the first inspiration to continue with my graduate studies and produce this research. Across this document I elaborate more on the process of this exercise, I incorporate the reflections of CEDAIN team after a year of its implementation.

After I was admitted to Arizona State University (ASU) I left CEDAIN, and I started my new journey in the academic world. After completing my course requirements, I can assure that this experience provided me with new lenses to analyze and reflect on

my previous and future practices. In this sense, I am using these new tools to develop a culminating project with two goals in mind. The first goal is to incorporate a theoretical framework to my previous practices. For this, I analyze my previous experiences as a former nonprofit staff member and the narratives of the individuals that participated in this study, under the principles and theories of popular education (PE). Additionally, I include to this theoretical framework some concepts, models and ideas from the complementary fields of community development and tribal critical race theory. For my second goal I incorporate, to this research process, thoughtful and decolonizing research methods which would transform my practice as a researcher into a meaningful action. I base these idea on the concept of praxis that scholars like Gramsci and Freire used, and the analysis of my positionality and methodology through the lenses of Indigenous Statistics (Walter & Andersen, 2013).

In this sense, I use the tools offered by popular education and community development to illustrate the educational and transformative potential of the NIC practices, provide methodological guidance on how to develop transformative practices, and to problematize the contradictions where these practices occur. For example, I utilize dialectical theory to problematize our practices and raise consciousness that contradictions exist; right and wrong coexist in all our practices in the same time and space. In this sense, I use the practice of CEDAIN as my standpoint to illustrate how reality is recreating this organization, while at the same time CEDAIN is also recreating reality. This theoretical framework allows me to develop a language of possibility and critique to analyze what I was doing as a former nonprofit staff member.

On the other hand, I use tribal critical race theory (Brayboy, 2005) to analyze my individual and collective practice from my positionality and standpoint as a chabochi (term used for mestizo and/or white in Tarahumara language) working for and with indigenous peoples. TribalCrit has helped me analyze my ordinary experiences in our racialized society in extraordinary ways. It has forced me to question my assumptions on how to approach race, class, gender, sexuality, and disability differences among my peers. I have also recognized the importance of analyzing these differences within their intersections (Hill Collins, 1990), to understand how they create regions of hegemony "in which certain political projects can take shape" (Omi & Winant, 1994). In other words, our differences are opportunities for the reproduction of privileges and oppressions that result from the structural and hierarchical organization of our current society.

Additionally, TribalCrit, like PE, allows me to deconstruct the illusion of neutrality in my practices while it also makes emphasis on the implications and outcomes of a colorblindness ideology in the Nonprofit sector. It unveils the intrinsic presence of theory in everything we do by emphasizing that theory exists in the stories of our everyday life. In Chapter two I will elaborate more on how I chose this theoretical framework and the importance of each of these disciplines to this project. The theoretical section of this study provides the reader with ideas and theories to use in their community work, while it encourages to continue "demanding the theory [we] need to effectively challenge capitalism" (Allman, 2001), patriarchy and colonialism.

For my second goal I propose two actions. The first one is the use of the concept of praxis that once was defined by Antonio Gramsci (Gramsci, Hoare, & Nowell-Smith, 1971) and Paulo Freire (Freire, 1970) to describe the unity between practice and theory.

In other words, I use praxis as a term that defines the act of being mindful of the direct and indirect outcomes of our actions. I argue that praxis constitute a technology for positive transformation. It could be applied and used in any nonprofit, enterprise, government or initiative who is using human and material resources to improve the intersecting and complex social inequalities that human beings may face at any given space and time.

To elaborate on my second goal, I first recognize the colonizing past and present of research and western educational disciplines like anthropology in the exploitation of knowledge and data of indigenous populations. With this idea in mind I want to join emancipatory research projects that look for justice and self-determination of the people participating in this research. For this goal I borrow ideas from Walter and Andersen (2013) to make explicit that the methods and methodology, which inform this study, are dictated by the theory I consciously and unconsciously chose and by the ontology, epistemology, and identity that encompass my standpoint as a researcher. In chapter three I will illustrate the methods and methodology I use to collect and analyze the data of this study. I also offer the reader a detailed description of: my changing positionality across the time of this research, the decision-making process in the research, the parameters to include and exclude participants, and the methods I used to gather and analyze the data that informs this study.

Research questions

At the end of the spring semester in 2016, I had a conversation with the guiding committee of this research to frame the questions that would guide my study. After

having a dialogue about my interests, the purpose and relevance of this research, my committee and me decided that I should answer the following overarching question: *What is the learning dynamic of organizations and participants who are doing community development work with Indigenous communities?* To fully understand the learning dynamics of CEDAIN staff members and the community in general I am using the following sub-questions:

- What have individuals learned through CEDAIN's practice?
- How do people that participate in the project of Cedain A.C learn both through CEDAIN's work and outside of CEDAIN?
- And what is the hidden and explicit curriculum of CEDAIN?
- Future questions that I could answer with the data of this study: How and where do participants apply what they learn through CEDAIN? Do development buzzwords affect the practice of Cedain; if so, how? What are the implications of CEDAIN and other development-related work for Indigenous cultural practices?

In summer 2016, after I had defined the research questions, got IRB approval, and developed a workshop for CEDAIN and communities, I departed for fieldwork to la Sierra Tarahumara. My two-month visit had the objective to share my learnings from my first year as master at ASU, foment dialogue to discuss these ideas, and gather the information that I would use to answer the research questions. The methods I used to share and collect information were,

a) I facilitated four workshops, which illustrated my learnings at ASU and continue the DP exercise that CEDAIN had developed. The workshops were intended to be

for two audiences: one workshop was facilitated for CEDAIN staff and three workshops were offered in communities where CEDAIN was working.

b) I joined CEDAIN's team in their everyday activities during the two months of participant observation and I kept a field note diary.

c) I conducted sixteen in-depth interviews with both CEDAIN staff and community members. I interviewed two participants during one interview because They suggested so and I thought that it would be good to include an extra point of view. Overall 53% of participants were community members (9) while the rest were CEDAIN's staff (8)

d) I facilitated a focus group with 12 CEDAIN staff members that represent 80% of the operative team during 2016.

In Chapter four, I present an overview of what CEDAIN is based on the narratives of the participants of this research and I elaborate on the major themes that respond to the guiding questions of this research. Finally, in Chapter five, I conclude this study.

Why is this research important?

I would like to finish this introduction by describing why this research is important. The idealization of the work the non-profits perform is precisely the justification of this research. I hope that through the language of critique and possibility, exposed through this work, the reader challenges and deconstructs the romanticism that haunts the so-called Non-Profit Industrial Complex (NPIC). My wish is that this work serves as an inspiration for other activists and non-profit members to challenge what we have taken for granted and find new possibilities for action. This work sheds light for

students, activists and/or scholars who, as myself, are interested in creating mechanisms to be mindful of the positive and negative impacts that coexist in our work. This awareness could reshape and calibrate our practice to achieve better outcomes. Additionally, this research is important for individuals that are in the quest for ideas, theories and concepts that could help improve the job that we perform as part of the NIC.

Additionally, the conclusions and ideas of this study could be put into action if the reader or practitioner decide. In this sense, this research would help inform a new standpoint for the next practices and research cycle. However, this study does not pretend to universalize strategies or to provide a strict "to-do list" to put in practice. In the contrary, I provide evidence of the complexity of the work the non-profits perform and the multiplicity of possibilities for action that we have.

On the other hand, this qualitative research actively joins academic efforts in the quest for transformative practices. It is inspired by scholarly activists who have previously constructed research as a political tool to transform reality. It acknowledges that the individuals who participated in this research "play a central role, not as "informants" or "data sources," but as knowledgeable, empowered participants in the entire research process" (Hale & ebrary, 2008). It joins the compilation of articles in the "The Revolution will not be funded" (Incite!, 2007) that relate the story of activists as they reflect on their practices in the NIC. Furthermore, the positionality and personal world view of the researcher, stand out as a political statement that enriches the complexity of the work that is produced in the academy, while "rejecting the assertion that this would somehow determine scholarly rigor" (Hale & ebrary, 2008).

It is important to clarify that this work is an academic exercise that neither pretends to be an evaluation of CEDAIN work, nor a systematization of experiences. By evaluation I mean: the exercise that measures the results of an intervention and compares it with the initial goals (Jara, 1994); while by systematization of experiences I refer to a critical interpretation of one or several experiences, that through their ordinance and reconstruction, make explicit: the logic of the lived experience, the factors that intervened in such process, how they have been relating to each other and why it has been done in such way (Jara, 1994). In fact, as Oscar Jara says, this research is a theoretical exercise that allows the reader and researcher to understand the historical moment and the social structure where the process of intervention occurs, and it could enrich the process of systematization and evaluation (Jara, 1994). I use the foundations of theory, methodology and positionality as tools to analyze the practice of CEDAIN to find guidance on how to improve what we do.

Finally, I am convinced that the work of the nonprofits requires the incorporation of theory and reflection to be mindful of the positive and negative impacts of our practice. In other words, practice and theory are two elements necessary for social transformation. However, this is not often recognized. Theory for certain sectors might be useless. This conception might recreate an "ongoing tension in practice that emphasizes doing at the expense of thinking" (Ledwith et al., 2011). For example, a common narrative in the nonprofit world where CEDAIN exists is that the real learning comes from doing. Academics only theorize, and they never ground their thoughts in real things. This creates an idea that the formal education system is incompatible with the 'on the ground' practices. Despite these critiques, I argue that theory helps to delineate and guide

our practice and provides the platform to avoid ‘actionless thought’ and / or ‘thoughtless action’ ((Ledwith & Springett, 2010; Ledwith et al., 2011).

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this section I give a comprehensive review of the theoretical framework that informs this study. I first describe the process I experienced while choosing this framework. Second, I proceed to illustrate my experiences with popular education (PE) and provide a list of the founding principles that I considered part of this field. I complement this framework with ideas that come from the field of community development, specifically I use the model of critical praxis elaborated by Margaret Ledwith (Ledwith et al., 2011) p.41 and ideas from Indigenous statistics: A quantitative research methodologies (Walter & Andersen, 2013) to provide methodological guidance on how to envision transformative practices. Then, I introduce tribal critical race theory and I elaborate on its relevance to the practices of nonprofits like CEDAIN who work with indigenous populations. Finally, I offer a summary of the key elements of the theories that inform this study. However, first I must offer some terms of clarification before proceeding, including how I understand community, development, and community development.

What is Community?

Community is a powerful and dangerous word. Throughout my experience in the non-profit sector, I have noticed that community is a term that has been constantly used by development agencies, Non-profits, churches, the state and community members. It normally has positive connotations that illustrate resistance. For a lot of us, the concept of community has its foundations in an imaginary that existed before capitalism, before the European conquest of the American Continent. It encompasses imaginary images of the past, which remind us the importance of equality, cooperation, indigenous cultures,

organizational knowledge, freedom and human values. However, due to its inherent positive and quasi-universal meaning, the term *community* is not often critically discussed. I argue like (Creed, 2006; Joseph, 2002; Moseley, 1995; Shah, 1998) that if we take for granted a positive meaning of community and if organizations and individuals assume that by its mere use would cast positive impacts in our practices, we will be then actively collaborating to reproduce the inequalities inherent to the antonym of the term. In other words, "when notions acquire such an aura of facility, their uncritical use can reproduce "reality" they supposedly just describe or, in the case of community, aspire to supersede" (Creed, 2006).

Under this critical approach I understand community as "a complex system of interrelationships woven across social difference, diverse histories and cultures, and determined in the present by political and social trends" (Ledwith et al., 2011). I also consider important to acknowledge that a community is formed by individuals with different experiences and subjectivities, all valid and by default different from each other. In this sense the feminist idea that the personal is political enriches the meaning of community.

What is Development?

As McMichael illustrates, the idea of development has its roots in the colonial era. As colonies were exposed to the European hegemony, philosophically speaking, they become underdeveloped (McMichel, 2008). In fact, knowledge building, technological change, and wealth accumulation were the European norms that set development as a destiny; as the improvement of human kind (McMichel, 2008). European elites designed policies that let development to be a tool for industrialization but also a form of

regulation of social instabilities(McMichel, 2008). The differences in power between European and Native peoples encouraged racist ideologies exemplified in the poem “the white man’s burden”.

The US has played a significant role in the construction of the Development Project. On 20 January 1949, Harry S. Truman, at that time president of the United States, delivered his first presidential speech by addressing four ideas. The first three “constituted the solidification of America´s postwar military alliances against the Soviet Union”(Esteva, Babones, & Babcicky, 2013) throughout the expansion of the UN, the reconstruction of Europe, and the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The fourth point was about the creation of the development project, which shaped and encouraged the rest of the world where the scientific advances.

The ideological domination that the development project and western thought has caused is a terrain of contestation for CD and PE. The western dominant worldview suggests, from the work of Plato, Aristotle through Newton and Descartes, that “the notion of reality can ultimately be explained in terms of basic laws, discovered only through precise measurement” (Ledwith & Springett, 2010, p. 60). This idea acknowledges the facts and “truths” that could be understood by some individuals as neutral elements, which do not need interpretation but ignores the feeling of human beings and their experiences with meaning. However, Ledwith and Springett argue that “to really understand nature, we need to look at the world in an integrative way, combining different perspectives and knowledge, including science” (2010, p.60).

Objective Scientific methods have been of great importance in the history of humanity in terms of medical innovations and technical development, but they have also

generated other social, health and environmental problems ((Ledwith & Springett, 2010). Therefore, they agree on the importance of such body of thought but emphasize in the importance of complement it by "ecological, holistic, systemic or integrative thinking, focusing on relationships between objects, the connections between objects, rather than the objects itself" (Ledwith & Springett, 2010, p. 64).

What is Community Development?

For Ledwith, "Community development begins in the everyday lives of local people" (Ledwith et al., 2011). It is concern with the empowerment processes, participation and the questioning of the reality participants face. Action and reflection are anchor elements for collective action. It requires an analysis of the context that links local experiences with global contexts that systematically oppress social life. Fruitful community development initiatives as pointed out by English and Mayo are "grounded in working with the co-learner/s so that our goals become mutually designed and delivered (English, 2012). In this sense, according to these authors, the role of the facilitator is to cultivate knowledge, skills and values through collaboration with learners that trigger systemic transformation and personal growth.

To explain a comprehensive model of community development I will utilize two structures. The first is a conceptualization of a Research Methodology presented by Walter and Andersen (2013); he argues that the methods and theoretical framework of every research, regardless of the qualitative or quantitative approach, is influenced by a standing point of the researcher. This includes Ontology, Axiology, Social Position, and Epistemology. The second structure is the Model of Critical Praxis of Ledwith (2011); this model provides a simplification of the complex reality where community

development occurs and shows a logic of how to trigger critical consciousness to inform the praxis and policies in the community. I am merging these two structures (Figure 1) to illustrate the framework of this research in an image. This simplification provides a map of elements that must be read as part of one system that can be transformed through the analysis of the praxis, the development of policies and through questioning common sense. The purpose is to "gain additional understanding by virtue of the whole being greater than the sum of its parts" (Thompson, 2003), in this sense, this section will attempt to provide the definitions of the elements as part of a system to reflect on two things: this research project and CEDAIN's practice. I understand community development as a method and theory to plan, implement, evaluate and reflect on the social intervention generated through an external agency or community driven initiatives that aim to recreate a just reality.

The process of choosing theory

The theories that inform this study were selected through an iterative process across the time I have spent as a master student at ASU. When I started this degree, I was not fully aware of what was the use of theory and its impact in my practice. However, today I am convinced that all our practices, for example: our job, what we write or say, our conversations, our stories, how we develop the NIC projects, the way we act in the world, etc., have a theory attached regardless of our awareness. In other words, once I understood that theory has the potential to guide our political practices and activism, it became important for this research.

I chose Popular Education (PE) as one of the funding theories for this research for two reasons. The fist is my background and previous experiences practicing and learning about PE in México. The second is the context created by the xenophobic and anti-Mexican discourse with which Donald J. Trump opened his presidential campaign on June 16, 2015. My attempt is to present a counter narrative to the essentializing discourse of the current US president, by illustrating my experiences and background, and a discipline that has been in recreation ever since the end of the XX century in popular schools in el Salvador, Perú, and México (Marco Raúl Mejía J., 2013).

Additionally, through the courses I took during my master's degree, I was introduced to the field of community development (CD). Specifically, I have found the comprehensive work of Margaret Ledwith (Ledwith et al., 2011) inspiring and pertinent to complement my previous work with PE and CEDAIN. While Margaret's words profoundly resonated with me, she also introduced me to ideas of Gramsci and Foucault, which I have found useful in the development of the argument of this work. In this sense I am incorporating ideas of CD to complement the field of PE.

Finally, I decided to use Tribal Critical Race Theory, to question colorblindness strategies that prevail the nonprofit sector where CEDAIN exists. For instance, in one of the class discussions I had in my first semester at ASU, I said that the idea of colorblindness could be a valid strategy to overcome racism. I believed that by consciously avoiding looking at race, or differences among peers around us, our practices would recreate a just world. This idea is similar to what some participants in this research shared during the interviews I conducted. CEDAIN's leaders and staff shared that neutrality or colorblindness was the strategy CEDAIN uses to approach race and ethnic

differences internally and with the indigenous communities that participate in their project. In this sense, I decided to include this theoretical framework to shed light on how colorblindness ideals could maintain hegemony and the status quo intact, and with this, problematize and re-think our strategies in the NIC.

I am convinced that the unity of practice and theory is an activist strategy to overcome the structural problems we face in society. This section will provide the reader ideas that are coming from practitioners and academics that would potentially inspire our future practices to transform our present and advance in the agenda of social and environment justice, and antiracist practices.

Popular education

Instead of giving a universal definition of Popular Education (PE), my attempt is to present different ideas of authors who have been writing about this discipline. I illustrate the richness of PE and what it has to offer to educational strategies, the non-profit sector or any other community process that is looking for ideas and methodologies for citizen mobilization that aim to achieve social justice. Popular education in Latin America has a long history. Authors like Soethe trace the roots of PE to 1789 when the ideas about a universal, free and compulsory education traveled from France to Latin America (1994). Nuñez goes back to the educational experiences developed by Augusto Cesar Sandino in Nicaragua as a founding moment for PE, while he names José Carlos Mariátegui as the precursor of PE (1996). For Gómez & Puiggrós, early PE movements could be traced since 1890-1920 with the Workers' Education Movement in Chile and the 1920 'Plan of the 5,000 million' in Argentina; and as mentioned earlier, popular

schools from El Salvador, Perú and México gained popularity in mid-1920 (Gómez & Puiggrós, 1986). By 1960 these movements and ideas were denominated popular education, liberating pedagogy, critical-social pedagogies, pedagogy of the oppressed, or community pedagogy (Marco Raúl Mejía J., 2013)

PE's history in Latin America is generally divided in three stages of development Kane (2001). "The first began in Brazil, in the late 1950 and early 1960" (Kane, 2001, p.27). During this time and until the end of the 60s, educational programs focused in the rural and urban poor; this has special relevance because the vote in Brazil was denied to illiterate individuals until 1983. This stage is characterized by the Cuban revolution in 1959 and the emerging liberation theology movement. Additionally, in 1967 the revolutionary book "Pedagogy Of the oppressed" (Freire, 1970) was published and his ideas started to gain momentum. For example, the term 'concientization' was in vogue to refer to the hope for action (Kane, 2001).

Popular education experienced a boom period during the second stage 1970-1980. This period is also characterized by the expansion of capitalism and modernization (Kane, 2001) as well as "repression and dictatorship" (Kane, 2001, p.28). Despite the harsh context, the consejo de educación popular de America Latina y el Caribe (CEAAL) and the red mesoamericana de educación popular Alforja were born. Action was now leading to education, Marxism became a big influence (Gutiérrez Pérez & Prieto Castillo, 1994; H. Núñez, 1996), and the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua was an action lab for PE (Kane, 2001).

From late 1980 to the end of the century constitutes the third stage (Kane, 2001). At this moment PE is no longer considered subversive and a new relationship between

the state and PE is emerging (Kane, 2001) an example is the acquisition of popular education state schools for children (Do Vale, 1992; Gadotti, 1994). A crisis has been identified by certain authors during this stage, for instance, Núñez and Castañeda identify the fall of Berlin wall and the electoral defeat of sandinismo as events that triggered the crisis of ideas for PE (Castañeda, 1993; C. Núñez, 2005). This represents challenges like the idea that Marxism is "spent force and the influence of post-modernism is increasingly evident" (Kane, 2001, p.28).

Definitions.

'Popular' in Spanish means: "of the people, 'the people' being the working class, the unemployed, 'peasants' the 'poor' and sometimes even the lower middle class: it excludes and stands in contradiction to the well-off middle class and the rich" (Kane, 2001, p.28). Based on concepts from (Gallardo, 2006) Jara mentioned that "'popular' education refers to those political–pedagogical processes that seek to overcome relationships of domination, oppression, discrimination, exploitation, inequality and exclusion" (Jara, 2010, p.290). Núñez (1996) understands PE as a systematic and ongoing process, that requires moments of reflection and the study of the practice of the group or organization; it is the confrontation of the systematized practice, with interpretative and informative elements that allow to take the conscious practice to new levels of comprehension. PE is the theory developed from practice and not theory upon practice (H. Núñez, 1996, p.55). EP is a current of thought located within the social sciences specifically in the pedagogy that works in the sector known as popular (C. Núñez, 2005).

For some people, PE is mere 'participatory techniques' that facilitate the pedagogical process of teaching and learning (C. Núñez, 2005). These participatory

techniques were designed from a Latin-American grassroots practices during the 60's and 70's (Bustillos de Nuñez & Vargas, 2013) and since that time, they have been used in different organizations and by popular educators in diverse practices and contexts in México and Latin America. For others, PE is a form of adult education that is practiced in informal environments with a goal to compensate the deficits of the formal educational system (C. Núñez, 2005). At the same time, others see it in the spectrum of other educational strategies like distance or special education. What most of the practitioners of PE may agree is that, as Núñez (2005) said, it is formed by informal practices at small scale in informal environments and for marginalized communities.

For Jara "popular education is an educational trend characterized by being a sociocultural phenomenon and an educational conception at the same time" (Jara, 2010, p.290). He refers to sociocultural phenomenon to formal and informal forms of education with a transforming intentionality, and to a conception of an education that challenges the dominant ideologies and pays attention to the need of unity between practice and theory.

Principles.

Jara mentioned that PE is "based on ethical–political principles for the construction of egalitarian and fair human relationships in different spheres of life" (Jara, 2010, p. 290). In this section I present a list of principles from PE that I consider fundamental to apply in my work. However, I am not pretending that this is a definitive list of principles that define PE; in fact, these could be a source of debate and can always be enriched.

PE is a formative process, which originates from the perspective and interest of the 'people': the working class, neighbors, students, women, etc. (Bustillos de Nuñez & Vargas, 2013). PE is founded in the idea that "the ethics of solidarity and the possibility of a new world only make sense and becomes feasible if they emerge from those excluded people" (Jara, 2010, p.288). In Freire's words, "the great humanistic and historical task of the oppressed: to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well" (1970, p.44). "It is only the oppressed who, by freeing themselves, can free their oppressors." (Freire, 1970, p.56). PE looks reality from the standing point of the marginalized and excluded and works in function to their liberation (C. Núñez, 2005). PE is based on the idea that education must lead political action for social change. "The aim of popular education is to help the popular classes liberate themselves from oppression, it is inextricably link to political action for change" (Kane, 2001, p.10). "Action or 'social practice' is the primary concern of popular education" (Kane, 2001, p.10).

Praxis is at the core of PE. After action, "people are encouraged to step back, metaphorically, from their practice, examine it objectively and then, strengthened by this reflective process, re-engage in action" (Kane, 2001, p.10). This is exactly what borrowing form Marx and others, Freire and Gramsci referred as 'praxis'. Jara (1994) also talks about theory as something flexible and in constant critical recreation that allows the contraction of transformative practice (p.65).

Further, the objective of PE is *embedded in dialogue and reflection*, under an understanding of education as a liberating, transformative, and counter-systemic process (Zapata, 2013). Everyone auto-educates each other and collectively generate popular knowledge, that allows raising consciousness of personal experiences that problematize

the social relationships and the practices of power in the world (Zapata, 2013). In this sense, Zapata argues that the objective of PE is to provide the oppressed a platform to discover themselves and to look at themselves in this process, as subjects with agency to change their own historic context and transform the world (Zapata, 2013). This dialectical position rejects the old, traditional and yet "glorified" positivist framework" (C. Núñez, 2005). Education must include feelings and thoughts as part of the pedagogical process; it is a "senti-pensante" practice.

Utopia also rests at the heart of PE. A "political commitment of popular education is a radical vision, or a dream, of a much better world," (Kane, 2001) and *neutrality is impossible*. "Education can never be politically neutral" (Kane, 2001, p.9). PE "is inextricably linked to political action for change" (Kane, 2001, p.10). The pedagogies of liberation also recognize that the educational act is never neutral (Marco Raúl Mejía J., 2013, p.112). It has a precise orientation in the practical way in which the educational action is resolved (Marco Raúl Mejía J., 2013, p.108). Additionally, Freire suggested that educational practices could be at the service and the possible premaintenance of unjust structures (2001). In this sense, if we proclaim neutrality in our pedagogical interventions, we might be subject to support hegemonic projects. For example, the workshops and exercises like the DP that are part of the educational practice of CEDAIN cannot claim to be neutral because they are leading the "boat" towards a certain goal. Examples of these goals in the non-profits could be the activities and outcomes we compromise to the fundraisers, or an ideal to overcome hegemony and the structural problems in our society. With this ideas in mind I argue that, as Peter Mayo suggests, social institutions such as the educational system and the non-profit sector "are

not ‘neutral’; rather they serve to cement the existing hegemony and are therefore intimately tied to the interest of the most powerful groups, especially the bourgeoisie” (Mayo, 1999, p.39).

Individual actions need to be collectively driven. “The process of concientization, or becoming critical is not liberating until it becomes a collective process” (Ledwith & Springett, 2010, p. 214). As Freire said, “if you are not able to use your recent freedom to help others to be free by transforming the totality of society, then you are exercising only an individualist attitude towards empowerment” (Shor & Freire, 1987, p.23). Theory of knowledge or epistemology is a crucial element for PE. PE has been underpinned by a dialectical theory of knowledge which describes “the belief that knowledge is not acquired merely through abstract, rational thought (‘idealism’) but by experiencing, interacting with and reflecting on the material world in which we live” (Kane, 2001, p.13). In other words, knowledge is a social construction; for Freire Knowledge “constitutes a process of discursive production and not merely an end product consisting of an accumulated cluster of information or facts” (C. A. Torres, 1992). Therefore, individuals with different experiences will produce different types of knowledge. “Consequently, the way in which each social class theorizes – i.e. learns about and explains social events – is also different” (Costa, 1982, p.14). PE “is concerned with the ways in which this different, socially-produced types of knowledge interact and how this affects the ability of the ‘oppressed’ to work for social change” (Kane, 2001, p.13). PE is also concerned with the dialogue between these knowledges and recognizes their potential of complement each other (C. Núñez, 2005). Hence, PE understands that knowledge should never be used and understood as domination or an alienating

technology (C. Núñez, 2005). This theory is important to answer the research questions of this research.

PE "is concerned with exploring, understanding and systematizing what is described as *'popular' knowledge and culture*" (Kane, 2001, p.15). While PE acknowledges the complexity of valuing specific types of knowledge more than others bad dichotomies and the determinism that could result, PE recognized this phenomenon as part of the dominant ideologies and problematizes this contradiction (C. Núñez, 1995) to avoid basism. By basism I mean a generalization of all culture that is not popular as "bad" or vice versa (Kane, 2001).

PE also involves theory on learning: double loop learning and reflection. According to Ledwith and Springett (2010), the idea of reflective practice that was first introduced by Schön (1983), and ever since, it has been mainstreamed in contemporary professional higher education. It has been used to describe learning organizations and action learning, however, this has limited "its potential for transformation" (Ledwith & Springett, 2010, p. 156). For example:

> Shön was highly critical of what he saw as the dominant rational/experimental model of learning, seeing such approaches as severely limited situations of social change. Such approaches are also profoundly hegemonic, serving the purpose of maintaining the status quo in the interests of the powerful and privileged (Ledwith & Springett, 2010, p. 156).

The double-loop learning proposed by Schön could be defined as a reflection that "takes place not only on specific actions but on the broader context of the action, that is, why are we doing this in this way and what are the assumptions implicit in it?" (Ledwith

& Springett, 2010, p. 156) They call it epistemological reflexivity to the action of challenging what is taken for granted in our everyday life, to deepen our understanding about certain problem and one's role on it. This help us understand how our worldview influences our actions, but more importantly they argue that in the core of this process is the feasibility of changing the world by opening new possibilities of action. "This process is a result of engaging in critical praxis, that is, combining theory with practice, with action." (Ledwith & Springett, 2010, p. 158)

Anti-hegemonic culture is at the core of PE. PE aims to "challenge the prevalence of the ideas championed by the dominant classes" (Kane, 2001, p.15). "Dominant classes achieve what Gramsci calls 'hegemony' – domination by consent – over other classes" (Kane, 2001, p.15). Gramsci developed hegemony as,

> the way that a dominant group asserts control over other social groups, to address not only coercion, the state exercising control through the law, the police and the armed forces, but also ideological persuasion as a force that persuades people to consent to the dominant social order exercised through cultural institutions such as schools, the family, mass media and churches. His emphasis was on the subtle and powerful nature of persuasion, reaching inside our minds to convince us to consent to life as it is and so slot into our prescribed place in social order. Dominant attitudes are sold to us as common sense, and we internalize these attitudes, even though they may not act in our interests. (Ledwith & Springett, 2010, p. 160)

PE is also founded in the ontological principle of a 'Conception of a Dialectical Methodology'(CDM). CDM could be defined as a specific manner to understand reality

to find ways to approach it, act on it and transform it (Jara, 2003). There are four principles fundamental to dialectical understanding: Totality where nothing happens in isolation from everything else; mediation where all elements in this totality will influence each other; change where these elements are in constant evolution; and contradiction (Rees, 1998, p.3-10). For example: Totality refers to the fact that nothing happens in a vacuum, every element in society is part of a whole, and it is all interconnected. In this sense we cannot isolate a food security problem or 'poverty' in the Sierra Tarahumara from other social issues like: the gender inequalities, the auto-censorship of the civil society and journalist due to the violent context created by policies and the way the government is solving narcotraffic, the high demand of opioids in the US and the need of people in la Sierra Tarahumara to find ways of income to have food on their tables, etc.; we must approach these issues as a 'whole'. Mediation is the fact that all the elements in society affect each other, for example, the Mexican war on drugs that was initiated by Felipe Calderón in 2006 has affected the levels of violence that communities face all over México, at the same time this violent context has affected the economy of our country and the way we citizens use the public places due to security issues.

In other words, a political decision has an impact in multiple spheres of our society. Change refers to the fact that our present is in constant evolution; social phenomena occur and change the context, while each of these changes will have a mediating effect on each other. Finally, contradiction is based on the idea of the German philosopher Fredrich Hegel. While he was trying to understand the evolution of ideas, he identified that every argument or a thesis will have a counterargument or an antithesis.

The tension that these opposite ideas create will produce a synthesis. This new argument will then become a new thesis and the cycle will repeat.

Jara suggests that CDM is also a way to understand reality as a historical process where 'us' the humans in this earth, with our feelings, thoughts, and actions transform the world of nature, construct history and we give it a meaning (2003). Alfonso Torres Carrillo argues that beyond the laws CDM proposes, CDM contributes to understanding the social phenomena as changing totalities, as a synthesis of the relationships, and to recognize its contradictions (2009). At the same time, Torres Carrillo suggests that concepts like modes of production, social class, consciousness of class, dominant ideology, hegemony and the state are important elements that complement this analysis (2009).

Areas of specialization in PE.

PE specializes in certain areas. Systematization is one area of specialization of PE (Kane, 2001, p.20). Oscar Jara describes this as the critical interpretation of one or several experiences, that through their ordinance and reconstruction, make explicit: the logic of the lived experience, the factors that intervened in such process, how they have been relating to each other and why it has been done in such way (1994). Jara also emphasizes on the importance of interpretation during the systematization process (1994). As part of the intervention of IMDEC with CEDAIN I also came across the process of systematization that PE offers. In my own experience this exercise is crucial to collectively analyze the process that the organization and individuals have performed. This is important to take distance to the practice, reflect and to open the possibility of another starting point for action.

Participatory action research (PAR) is another specialization area of PE. Orlando Fals Borda is one of the pioneers that started using PAR methods. PAR is both offered as part of PE principles while is also one of the things that PE is currently demanding from practitioners.

My own experience with Popular Education in Latin America.

I was first introduced to popular education during my undergraduate education when I took a class on Intercultural Education and Human Rights at the Universidad de las Américas Puebla (UDLAP). I remember an assignment for this course where my classmates and I shared and discussed our identities. This activity made me reflect on how influenced I was by my previous experiences with different cultures in México, and by my family and close friends of different national identities with whom I shared my life at the time. Also, I came to know about the concept of praxis (Freire, 1970) I understood it as a cycle of action and reflection and I thought of it as a key element to implement in any project that aims for social transformation.

Even though I knew about popular education, it was not until I participated in the IMDEC's School of Methodology 2015 or "Escuela Metodológica Nacional" that I became more familiar with PE. During my first years at the NIC, I did not consciously choose any PE techniques and methodologies. In fact, it was when I joined CEDAIN that I started to consciously start to practice it.

In my own experience, la Escuela Methodological Nacional encouraged me to apply the methodologies and participatory techniques of popular education in my own practice. I also read and applied the publications of IMDEC on participatory techniques. Specifically, in CEDAIN my team and I started using these participatory techniques in

our regular meetings with the community members. I was convinced that this type of activities can provide a fun environment for people to participate, open dialogue, exchange assumptions and open a chance to "extraordinarily re-experiencing the ordinary" (Shor, 1992, p.122). In this sense, they allow the representation of familiar situations to encourage a critical debate of our everyday life and problematize what we take for granted in society.

The methodology of the 'Triple Self-Diagnosis' (Kane, 2001) (TSD) was also of great influence on my work. El Instituto Mexicano de Desarrollo Comunitario (IMDEC), who are one of the popular education centers affiliated to the Alforja and CEAAL networks, has developed an exercise named 'triple self-diagnosis' (TSD). The objective of TSD is to confront "(a) what the organization thinks it is doing (its conception of its practice) (b) what the organization actually does do (its practice) and (c) the circumstances in which it is operating (the context of its practice)" (Kane, 2001, p.73). The goal is to allocate consistencies, inconsistencies and knots around the three elements. In 2015 I participated in a TSD and I analyzed my practice with CEDAIN. This exercise allowed me to be mindful of the contradiction between the hierarchical identities that CEDAIN creates inside the team and our discourse of an 'equal and non-hierarchical development' of the communities where we worked. In this way, Kane argues that the TSD allows participants to find the standing point or in other words 'were people are at', in all its variety and contradictions" (Kane, 2001, p.76).

I also participated in the exercise of the 'Diagnósticos Participativos' (DP) that CEDAIN developed thanks to an IMDEC intervention. IMDEC gave an in-situ training to CEDAIN founded in PE principles. This intervention was materialized in the DP: five

workshops that CEDAIN designed, applied and ran in 24 communities during 2014. DP were created as part of the organization's plan to design the future projects, know the communities better while promoting a bottom up method or approach to improve CEDAIN's project. Finally, as part of my master studies I have been immersed in the literature that the academics and practitioners have written about PE. I now have a better understanding of the history of the discipline, its principles and methodologies it offers to practitioners.

Popular education today.

PE is in constant re-definition. Mejía mentions that all the individuals that today use PE to guide their practices are recreating it and redefining it, in this sense PE "vive en multitud" (2009, p.2). In this way I am aware that the way I present PE in this document is just another example of how PE is informed by the experiences, positionality and practices of their users. This study testifies how PE is in current evolution and re-definition. The following lines are a summary of the definition and uses of PE.

Even though PE is considered founded in Latin America, in its social movements, organizations, networks, and in the countermovement to the hegemonic projects of this geographic location, PE is also found in different parts of the world. For example, in North America we find it in form of critical pedagogy like the work of Henry Giroux (1983) and (McLaren, 2015); popular education with an emphasis on gender is found in Kenya (Cutcher, 2013) and Scotland (Crowther, Martin, & Shaw, 1999), to name a few. At the same time Kane sees it as a potential source of "inspiration and practical assistance for European organizations" (Kane, 2001). For instance, the terrain of popular education has been interpreted from a Scotland perspective as the "educational processes of a

formal, non-formal or informal nature, both to understand their communities better and to learn how to change them" (Kane, 2010, p.277).

Today popular education in México is practiced and shared in popular schools like the Instituto Mexicano de Desarrollo Comunitario A. C. (IMDEC). For example, every year IMDEC "brings together a group of 30-40 activist from a variety of popular organizations around the country" (Kane, 2001, p.73) to share knowledge, experiences, and to learn collectively on how to practice Popular Education. This course, as described by (Kane, 2001), is a set of four workshops of four days long each, organized in intervals of three months. The format that Kane describes has changed in recent years, but it is still a good approximation of the training course.

To finalize, the current secretary of el CEAAL Elva Zuñiga shared in la carta 590 that el CEAAL in June 2016 opted for a feminist PE strategy. Hence, the ideas from feminist theories are currently the strategy that popular educators are using in Latin America to overcome the current patriarchal system that is oppressing in our society.

Community Development: Model of critical praxis

This section does not pretend to be a comprehensive recapitulation of the history and foundations of community development (CD); in fact, I will briefly use ideas that are emerging form this field to explain a model of critical praxis that will be used to summarize the concepts of this study. I understand community development as a method and theory to plan, implement, evaluate and reflect on the social intervention generated through an external agency or community members that aim to recreate a just reality. In this field I found a model that helped me understand different components of my

positionality and practice that could help in the planning of new strategies that aim for justice. Here, I first provide a definition and a critique of the terms community and development separately. I give some definitions of what CD is and what it means to the researcher. I also present the Model of critical praxis of Margaret Ledwith (2011) to summarize the different components of this study and create a visual map of the ideas presented and their relationships or links within each other.

Model of Critical Praxis

Inspired in Ledwith's model of critical praxis (Ledwith et al., 2011), this section summarizes the different concepts that I use in this study and creates a visual map that shows the relationships or links within each other. The elements include: the individual standing point of the researcher/practitioner; theory that informs this model; the practice of CEDAIN as a case study; the unity of practice and theory as a central component in the quest of critical consciousness; the hegemony and policy as elements that recreate our community; our individual differences or identities; social and political characteristics; and the context and community assets.

The elements that Walter and Anderson conceptualize in their research methodology are: Research Standpoint, Theoretical Frame and Methods. First, I will explain the Stand Point of the Research Methodology that they (2013) present, which is constituted by four elements: Ontology, Axiology, Epistemology and Social position. The definition of each element will illustrate, in a holistic approach, how these elements are influencing the theoretical framework and methods for any research. I want to take this argument further, I argue that this first standpoint will affect all decisions and actions

indiviuals perform in the world; in other words, it is not limited only to the way we do research.

With regards to ontology— "It is concern with the concept of being and the categories that we use to make sense of reality" (Walter & Andersen, 2013, p. 52). The authors also emphasize that if we take for granted the nature of reality, then it would be difficult to understand this term. They argue ontology will influence on how research is perceived, conceptualized and practiced. I see this element as an opportunity to create "new ways of being and acting in the world" (Ledwith & Springett, 2010, p. 23). The potential of understanding ontology will allow practitioners to deconstruct what we take for granted. Sometimes we never question the contradictions of life because they look like unbreakable rules. In other words:

> this false consciousness sells us a common sense that is nonsense. We internalize the contradictions of life as a natural state of affairs and so are persuaded not to challenge what is unjust but simply to accept it as a given order, as inevitable. In this way people are persuaded to their own oppression. (Ledwith & Springett, 2010, p. 22)

With regards to epistemology, it refers to the study or the theories of knowledge and their role in research. In other words, epistemology is about the ways of knowing and their validations: "the epistemology of methodology is about whose voices of knowledges are validated and prioritized and perhaps even more decisively, whose are not" (Walter & Andersen, 2013, p. 49). Walter and Andersen argue that the epistemic validation and prioritization, their absences and presences, exist during the whole research, from beginning to end.

In this sense, Epistemology and Ontology are great tools to improve the practices in the NIC. Inspired by Skolimowsky (1994) and Ledwith (2010), I argue that popular educators, community organizers, and community members must continuously challenge the way we look at the word to be able to change it. Skolimowsky presents two interrelated theories: "Ontology, the theory of being, is concerned with various forms of being and their specific manifestations…[and] Epistemology, the theory of knowledge, concerns itself with the ways in which we know" (Skolimowski, 1994, p. 75). These two elements are of great use to problematize our life experiences and to guide our practices for social transformation. Of ontology and epistemology,

> these two concepts are important to practitioners because they capture the connection between the way that we make sense of the world (epistemology) and how this influences the way we act in the world (ontology). In other words, how we see the world affect our behavior. This notion leads us to understand that if we alter the way we see the world, in turn our behavior will change. (Ledwith & Springett, 2010, p. 212)

Ontology and Epistemology are concepts that explain how the way we make sense of the world influence our actions. When we challenge or recreate both concepts, they offer a theoretical possibility of change. In other words, if we change the way we see the world, our attitudes will change as well. Ledwith and Springett, explain in this way: "epistemologies and ontologies are part of a living theory, or practical theory that evolves from everyday life in order to transform the way things are for the better" (2010, p. 158).

With regards to Axiology, it "refers to the theory of extrinsic and intrinsic values, concepts that are palpably part of methodology, all methodology" (Walter & Andersen,

2013, p. 49). Walter and Andersen argue that all research happens in the social world, where moral, political and cultural values are an intrinsic part of it. Therefore, any research will reflect those values on it. They claim that all decisions made during research, will be influenced by the values of the researcher, even the research questions. To understand other practical application of how this element works, we can use the idea that "narratives express the values of the narrator; they also develop and create values in the telling" (Bolton, 2005, p. 104).

Finally, the last element is Social Position: "it comprises and reflects much of who we are socially, economically, culturally, and racially" (Walter & Andersen, 2013, p. 46). Personally, I understand this concept as our 'identity'.

As a second stage for the Research Methodology presented by Walter and Andersen (2013), we find the "Stand Point Influenced". This concept refers to the theoretical framework that one chooses to navigate the world, do research or practice community development. Therefore, in this conceptualization, theory will be directly influenced by our first standing point. In this sense they argue that theory is never neutral either, it is connected to the social world and it is ideologically coherent with it.

The next illustration (Figure 1) exemplifies the elements that I described in this section. The principal idea in this model, is that our standing point will always be informed by our experiences. If we are critical about our reality, this reflection will inform a new standing point. Therefore, this new standing point will inform our theories and practices. This new intervention will have the potential to transform the context and elements in our community.

The model shows how Hegemony is connected to the reproduction of privileges and inequalities in our communities and contexts. Therefore, it must be challenged. A local to global analysis of the practices of the NIC is also important to recreate emancipatory practices. Policies are also elements that can be recreated to transform our realities.

Finally, the arrow that goes from the community to our standing point lists some ideas and activities that can trigger critical consciousness. These are: Participation in local issues, dialogue, question what we have taken for granted, storytelling, plays, reflection, systematization, codification, etc. I understand this model as a never-ending process or cycle that will always leave room to learn new things.

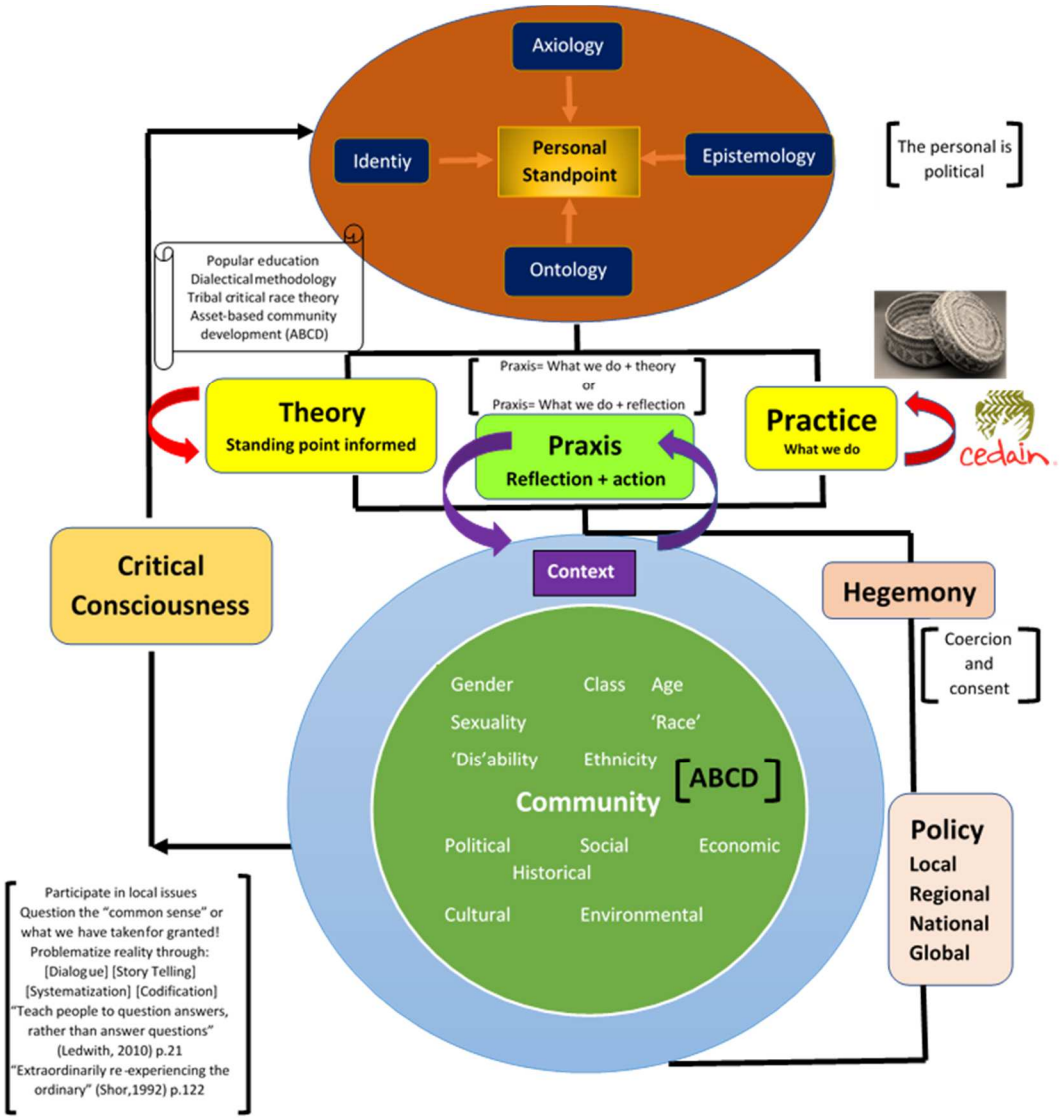

Figure 1. Model for critical praxis (adapted from Ledwith et al., 2011, p.41 and Walter & Andersen, 2013, p.45)

Critical race theories to analyze Nonprofit practices

To complement the theoretical frameworks I have discussed, I introduce the principles of Tribal critical race theory or TribalCrit. I elaborate on the importance of this theory to the NIC specially to discuss and challenge the way we approach identity elements like race, class, gender, ethnicity, language, accent, sexual orientation, etc. to understand their effects in the reproduction of social injustices and oppression throughout the practice of the non-profits.

Initially I doubted the compatibility to incorporate a theory that has its roots in scholarly work developed by legal studies in the US, to analyze the Mexican context. First, I questioned the compatibility of both matters given the historical and abysmal differences between Mexico and the US and the clear power differences between both nation-states. Second, I hesitated about the compatibility to talk about race in Mexico since there is an informal dialogue about how mestizo is a 'non-racialized' identity, which stands in opposition to the homogeneity of the US race categories. I then came to know that "Latin American ideas about race were developed in direct conversation with the US empire and US racial politics" (Hooker, 2014, p.1). A consistent number of participants in my research shared how in Mexico certain bodies claim to be superior to others in the same logic of white supremacy in the US. Therefore, I could not agree more to incorporate this framework to analyze the work of the NIC under matters of difference. I am convinced that If we are aware of theory, and if we chose to use it as a guide, it will make us act differently in the world therefore this would represent a technology for transformation.

Critical Race Theories

Critical race theory (CRT) developed from the critical legal studies and in the recent years have been influencing other fields like education, sociology, women studies among others. I am particularly inspired by the body of scholarship developed in the US regarding CRT and education. This fascinating theory allows my work to have a political statement within itself.

Five themes constitute the research methods, pedagogies and perspectives of Critical Race Theory in education: race and racism are embedded in society, the dominant ideology must be challenged, social justice is important, experiential knowledge that people of color hold is valid and important for research, and LatCrit validates the importance of interdisciplinary research (Yosso, Villalpando, Delgado Bernal, & Solórzano, 2011). To enrich this perspective, I incorporate a sister theory that is emerging from the "multiple, nuanced, and historically- and geographically-located epistemologies and ontologies found in Indigenous communities" (Brayboy, 2005, p.427). CRT provides a great framework, but "it does not address the specific needs of tribal peoples because it does not address American Indians' liminality as both legal/political and racialized beings or the experience of colonization" (Brayboy, 2005, p.429). To challenge common sense, the social oppression, racist race systems, colonization, etc., I incorporate CRT and Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit) to analyze this research. As I read about TribalCrit, I saw a lot of intersections with PE and community development. For example, they all understand that neutrality is not an opportunity for change, in the contrary it maintains the status quo intact.

Critical race theories question the way knowledge is produced and materialized under power structures. In this sense I argue that users of these theories recognize and encourage the reflection on how academia has an inherited power, which is transformed into certain privileges inside their communities. An example of these privileges is the illusion that knowledge in the academia is more valuable than the popular knowledge.

In popular knowledge, stories are a source of knowledge and theories. They are founded in a dialectical thinking; therefore, they think power as a process that reproduce social injustices, but also as an empowerment process that leads to emancipation; they are interested in counternarratives, local stories, and generative themes as places that illustrate the reality of the voices that are silenced in the current system as strategies that create resistance; and they believe that racism and colonization has been recreating oppressive agendas in our society. But, what interests me the most, it is how they see the unity of practice and theory as a feasible technology for change. I argue that if our theories provide ontology founded in social justice, and an epistemology that validates all types of knowledges, our practice will be driven by an emancipatory engine. In this sense, I believe that this a compatible framework to reflect on how to improve any community development practice.

TribalCrit principles

I present the nine tenets that Brayboy uses to summarize TribalCrit:

1. Colonization is endemic to society.

2. U.S. policies toward Indigenous peoples are rooted in imperialism, White supremacy, and a desire for material gain.

3. Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space that accounts for both the political and racialized natures of our identities.

4. Indigenous peoples have a desire to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification.

5. The concepts of culture, knowledge, and power take on new meaning when examined through an Indigenous lens.

6. Governmental policies and educational policies toward Indigenous peoples are intimately linked around the problematic goal of assimilation.

7. Tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future are central to understanding the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, but they also illustrate the differences and adaptability among individuals and groups.

8. Stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being.

9. Theory and practice are connected in deep and explicit ways such that scholars must work towards social change. (2005, p.429-430)

In this study I focus my attention to the tenet number three: Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space that accounts for both the political and racialized natures of our identities. I present the definition of Mestizo because it is what I have been told I represent inside the Mexican society. I try to problematize it under the idea of how it is erasing the indigenous identities in Mexico. I also question the idea of equality that the mestizo identity casts, because it is only making us think that the use of mestizo identities is what could make ourselves anti-racists. In opposition, we have normalized it to the point that some of us might agree that Mexico can be defined as a mestizo country for its mixed

population within itself. I find it interesting that if you are indigenous you cannot be mestizo unless you declare you are mestizo. I am not opposed to anything in terms of identities; each one of us must chose independently who they are because we are unique. But in the current Mexican territory, we have people who hold indigenous identities who existed even before the social construction of mestizaje. My own identity and the narratives and stories of this study show the importance of this problematization.

Racism and México.

Here I think it is important to discuss racism in the context of why theories like TribalCrit are so useful to this study. To define racism, I use the definition of racism developed by Omi and Winant (1994). They use racial formation theory to illustrate a clear distinction between race and racism. Correspondingly, I suggest that the difference between ethnic and racial identities in the Mexican society like mestizo, chabochi, indigenous, gringo, etc. should be read as races even though they could fit other identity categories but they all encompass biological features and phenotypes in individual and cultural expressions and folklore. Therefore, I suggest that in México we could be recreating a racist racial project that is reproducing "structures of domination based on essentialist categories of [these] race[s]" (Omi & Winant, 1994, p.71). By essentialist I mean the "belief in real, true human, essences, existing outside or impervious to social and historical context" (Omi & Winant, 1994, p.181).

In any discussion of race in Latin America, we need to unpack the notion of *mestizo*. Mestizo can be a powerful concept to reclaim a mixed-heritage. Mestizo can also mean the mestizo that erases our indigenous roots by building on it a more powerful Mexican identity linked with economic dominance in country. Mestizo is the norm; it

can mean every mix you could think while it also provides an idea of community, of belonging, which ideally furthers the notion of equality, with the same rights and obligations than any individual. By calling ourselves Mexicans we think we are all treated equally by the state, or the markets or our privileges. Academics like Juliet Hooker (2017) who through the juxtaposition of influential thinkers across the continent prove that race was a social construct developed in in different latitudes and in conversation within each other. Therefore, the concept of race is not only of one country and not the other. We all live under the same system that segregates us. Who has which jobs? That is a trigger question to start.

No racial category is universal; these categories have been changing throughout time. Phenotypes and sociocultural constructs define what a society is willing to embrace as a racial category, but they will always depend on the collective subjectivity of each society. Race is socially constructed, and it is powerful label that is collaborating in the reproduction of social oppression, identities and privileges of certain racial groups. One clear example is social class and its correlation with European phenotypes in México and in Latin-America, "the richest, and the most powerful sectors are still dominated by individuals exhibiting predominantly European phenotypes" (Nitini, 1997). In other words, the power European bodies had during colonial times has been kept in the same racial categories and spaces which has been reproducing racial inequalities that overlap with other forms of oppression.

Mestizaje has also been used "by conservative elites to simultaneously defend the region's standing in light of scientific racism, legitimize their rule over racially diverse populations, and obscure the reality of racism in their countries" (Hooker, 2014, p.2).

Mestizaje also defines what I have been told I am. A mestizo, a body that encompasses both the indigenous and the Spanish blood. This is ambiguous because embedded is the idea that Mexican society is far from racialized, but on the process of becoming what José Vasconcelos named as the Cosmic Race. The race that Anzaldúa portraits beautifully the resistance of the mestiza identity; she talks about how "the new mestiza copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity. She learns to be Indian in Mexican culture, to be Mexican from Anglo point of view" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p.101).

My personal experience, as mestizo working in the non-profit sector in an indigenous territory, has been a great opportunity for reflection about the social construction of race in México. It has allowed me to question my own actions and my practice as an individual who holds unearned privileges only by my own mestizaje, phenotype, accent, and other categories that project certain conception of myself to others. This might have been developed in a negotiation between my own likes and interests and the impact of those in the perception of other people. This exercise has also allowed me to analyze the post-colonial repercussions we face in societies like México today. In certain spheres in Mexico, we believe that we were decolonized when we became an independent state form Spain. However, the same structured remind. Therefore, colonization is still happening in our everyday life. That is why I think decolonization must be defined as a never-ending process.

We might have gained independence as a sovereign nation form our colonizers, but the Mexican society is really segregated. Kummels talked once about how in Mexico, specifically in Chihuahua, we can find "an ethnic ideology with "roots in the colonial

period [which] divides the Chihuahua society into the bipartite categories 'White' and 'Indian'. It legitimates the inequality of economic and political opportunities" (Kummels, 2001, p.76). That is one of the reasons I was interested in having a conversation with participants of this research about the conception of race in the area and I utilized both labels, Chabochi as white and/or mestizo, and Indian. I agree with Kummels in his idea that for "Mestizos the 'Indian' factor is crucial in establishing their otherness vis-à-vis central and southern Mexicans, who invoke Spanish and Indian ancestry" (Kummels, 2001) p.76

Privileges.

I do not believe we can talk about race without talking about privilege. Today I acknowledge that I am not fully aware of the invisible knapsack (McIntosh, 1988) that I have always carried with me. I have realized the importance of acknowledging that we are not always right. There will always be room to learn. No matter how far we have traveled, how many degrees we hold, languages we speak, or how diverse our circle of friends is, our privileges and disadvantages will always blind us form understanding or even considering possible other realities.

I acknowledge one of my privileges by saying that I was never told that I need to go back to my hometown and work there. In the contrary, I was told that I should explore the world and succeed doing what I want to do! I consider myself Mexican as part of the whole territory, so I feel welcome everywhere. It is my right. However not everyone in Mexico have the same freedoms. I say this because. In the opposite of this idea lies the conservative thought that indigenous peoples could go outside, study and do whatever they want, however they are always required to come back, to work in something that is

directly related to what their traditional cultures did in the past. Something that is too innovative is considered far from the tradition and unacceptable. In this sense I feel I have similarities with mestizos serranos of young age, who have been exposed to this type of narratives and who question their indigeneity the same way I question my mestizaje.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

In the following sections, I elaborate on how I developed and conducted this research. To be honest with both participants and the reader, I first disclose my identity and positionality across the process of this investigation. To describe the first element, I briefly introduce a couple of ideas from Stuart Hall to start the conversation about the complexity in the construction of our identities, then I disclose some personal elements that I consider relevant for the veracity of this research. Likewise, I use the "continuum and impact of positionality" presented by Herr and Anderson to discuss possible "issues of research validity as well as research ethics" (Herr, 2005, p.29) across the research. I also illustrate the decision-making process of this research; I elaborate on who was involved in delimiting the scope, topics and the guiding questions of this investigation. Finally, I present the research methods I used to both collect and analyze the data that informs this research.

Positionality across the research process

> Precisely because identities are constructed within, not outside, discourse, we need to understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies. Moreover, they emerge within the play of specific modalities of power, and thus are more the product of the marking of difference and exclusion, than they are the sign of an identical, naturally-constituted unity - an 'identity' in its traditional meaning (that is,

> an all-inclusive sameness, seamless, without internal differentiation) (Hall, 1996, p.4)
>
> Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a 'production', which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation. This view problematizes the very authority and authenticity to which the term, 'cultural identity', lays claim. (Hall, 1990, p.222)

Both quotes from Hall illustrate how identities are subject to power structures and discourses, how they intrinsically need the meaning of difference to exists, and how they are always in recreation and constant evolution. I use these ideas to rethink my identity and how it was dialectically reproduced by my experiences, social groups and environment. Then, for me the question is; what does identity mean and how does it behave? In the following lines, I will try to briefly explain this concept to highlight the importance of this element in our everyday interaction with other human beings.

Identity is neither a static nor a finished element; on the contrary, it is in constant change and construction. For Stuart Hall (1990) identity is not a transparent element, it has a great complexity. Hall's argument suggests that due to its unfixed meaning and the endless production of the term, we should doubt of the authenticity of the term specially when it is unifying a "cultural identity". Therefore, by definition, identity can never universal but fragmentary.

A "homogenous community" is an illusion that identities might recreate. The way in which a person perceives the world thorough his/her senses and subjectivity, play vital

role in the recreation and differentiation of identity. My argument goes against the idea that cultural identity is defined by one homogenous illusion of one collective truth. This definition is often used in postcolonial societies where that imaginary past is an unreachable fantasy that everyone is yearning for. For me, the constitution of identity is never universal nor similar, in this sense what Hall calls the vector of similarity and continuity (1990) represents a myth that feeds the idea of both, a romanticized community and a homogenous cultural identity. Identity is important to become self-critical,"In fact, we would argue that understanding our own identity, and the history that constructed it, is key to becoming self –critical, and therefore the basis of engaging critically within what we loosely term 'identity groups." (Ledwith & Springett, 2010, p. 105).

I argue that with a conscious identity-politics as an asset, it will be easier to find 'intersections' or common threads with other individuals. However, for me, understanding identity in a "difference-based approach" is the starting point to build new relationships with other human beings.

To exemplify the complexity of the elements that constitute any identity and how they position ourselves in different power relations, I want to bring two final thoughts: "Class, race and gender are major social divisions, and are compounded by age, 'disability, sexual orientation, religion and ethnicity. (Ledwith & Springett, 2010, p. 22). And "no one experiences identity in isolation: race is lived through modalities of class, gender, sexuality, and citizenship." (Vargas, 2006, p. 16)

My identity

I was born 31 years ago in the city of Puebla, México. My dad grew up in the mountains in the state of Puebla and my mother in the state of San Luis Potosí and Veracruz. Even though I grew up in Puebla I also feel a strong disconnection to this magnificent city because none of my parents are from Puebla either. Throughout the movement of my family within the Mexican territory and my experience working in Chihuahua, I could experiment the construction of social space and the immigration phenomena that happens inside the contemporary Mexican country.

I had been working in the la sierra madre for about five years, though, I feel a disconnection with the territory of Chihuahua. Even today I still feel like I am an outsider. I have an accent that is considered chilango, I do not know how to dance to banda music, and I have never owned a pair of boots. At the same time, I have identified with certain things from Chihuahua that I love that I miss or that I have incorporated into what I am. I do know some words in rarámuri, I love to wear Tarahumara sandals, I love burritos de chicharron verde, I am fascinated by their chile colorado and occasionally, I use the "ai ai" phrase that people in Chihuahua use.

I could also assure that I have indigenous blood in me. However, I have never considered myself as indigenous. When I lived in Puebla my parents never talked about indigenous heritage in our family. In la Sierra I have always been called chabochi, mestizo or even sometimes gringo. In this sense have always believed I was a mestizo and I had never had intentions to challenge that identity. At the same time, I considered myself mestizo I guess I thought of it as too "mixed" that I had not "real" culture whatsoever. This situation, when I analyze it, is problematic. It makes me think about how race/ethnic identities are developed under the construction of the social space and

kinship inside Mexico. The logic behind my analysis of identity involved a certain understanding of space where modernity and traditions are like water and oil. And this logic repeats across other identities like the mestiza/o or the chabochi, female or male and goes even to special terms like the city or the rural town. I am convinced that this only reproduces erroneous arguments about how the indigenous identities only see nature and avoids modernity.

My always-changing mestizo identity has been a source of privileges from which I have been consciously and unconsciously benefiting all my life. I have always had access to food, house, clothes and education, which has kept me, at least until now, in a middle-class position. The fact that I have had all these privileges makes me have a "historical guilt". I somehow thought of myself as the embodied colonizer who represented the Spanish blood that hurt my own nation. This situation has made me feel accountable to resist the social oppressions and injustices that we have been reproducing for generations. This is one of the reasons why I made the decision to work in this part of the world. Now that I reflect on all these elements, I can tell that I believed I was literally saving others from colonization.

This research is done form a *chabochi and/or mestizo perspective*. It is not an attempt to describe a culture that is different form mine. I will simply describe my experience in the nonprofit sector from my own identity as a graduate student, male, homosexual, outsider/insider, mestizo, middle class, etc.

I am convinced that our epistemology or the way that we make sense of the world plays a crucial role in the reproduction of inequalities in this planet. As part of this exercise and the dialogue that I have established with my chair Elizabeth Sumida

Huaman, has made me reflect on the ways my identity has been constructed by and for the perpetuation of the social system where I come from. I remember when I expressed my ideas and doubts that I had before leaving ASU for my fieldwork, she told me something that I never expected to listen. She challenged my own assumptions by opening the possibility in myself to find indigeneity in my own identities.

This dialogue changed my whole perspective of myself and that is how I started the field trip for this research. In summary, despite the complexity of my identities, and the context, I currently identify as an indigenous ally who wants to focus my practices to achieve social and environmental justice.

Before becoming a researcher.

This study has been a hard but fruitful journey with clear and substantial changes in my own positionality along the way. For instance, when I first thought about the possibility of this research, I was coordinating the food security area in CEDAIN. In this moment I could say that was an "insider in Collaboration with other Insiders". However, my positionality was more complex than simply a staff member working with other staff members. Due to the culture inside the organization and the cultural context in the Sierra Tarahumara, I was also considered an outsider. CEDAIN's culture made a clear difference between "insiders" or people that were born and raised in the Sierra; this category would include indigenous and non-indigenous individuals, and "outsiders" or people that were coming from outside this geographical area.

Another component important to disclose to analyze positionality are the power relations among team members. Even though I questioned and tried to decrease the disparity of power in the hierarchy of the organization, the interactions I experienced with

my team and others were sensitive to the power hierarchy each of us hold as per our job descriptions. A clear example of how the team was using the hierarchy of the organization was the process of creation of the DP.

As previously described, CEDAIN team underwent a course in PE that encouraged us to design the DP. Even though that all the team received this course, the operative director along with the three area coordinators designed and planned the DP. The other staff members were only passive participants in the planning stage of the DP. This experience testifies that, despite my will to break the hierarchy in the organization, I still hold and used power in unequal ways during the decision-making process of the project.

Becoming a researcher.

After I left CEDAIN, I officially became an "outsider in collaboration with insiders". When I conducted the fieldwork for this research, I was no longer part of the organization. During this time, I was a grad student conducting a research project about the organization. I certainly engaged with my ex-colleagues in a different way, I felt that I could speak more honestly and freely since I did not hold a position in the existing hierarchical structures. I felt, however, that I was perceived as a threat by some of my former colleagues, given my new role as a researcher. I could have easily been perceived as an outsider inspecting their work, though that was never my intention. I hope to prove throughout this work that the main goal in this research is to improve the practice of the nonprofit to have a better impact in the communities where they work.

Finally, this dichotomy insider/outsider is also subject to power differences resulting from the intersections with race and ethnicity like mestiza/o or indigenous,

gender, class, sexual orientation etc., while at the same time these intersecting differences change across time.

The research and fieldwork.

Five months after CEDAIN concluded the first cycle of DP workshops, I started graduate school. Throughout my first year at Arizona State University (ASU), I utilized the ideas I came across about community development to create the framework that I was going to use for this research. Also, as part of one course I designed one educational workshop that I later shared with CEDAIN and three other communities during the field work. The facilitation of this workshop allowed CEDAIN's team and me to reflect more in our previous experience with the Diagnósticos Participativos; it was also an exercise that allowed me to share new popular education tools and relevant information about the literature that I encountered during my courses at graduate school. I was mostly influenced by the asset-based community development work of John McKnight and Jody Kretzmann and by a book titled From Clients to Citizens (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003).

I conduced two months of qualitative research through fieldwork that included semiformal interviews and participatory observation during the summer of 2016. I participated in two monthly meetings of the organization and in the everyday activities the operative team had in the offices and the communities. I also fit my schedule so that I could spend certain days participating in the everyday activities of community members in two communities where I conducted the workshop previously explained. I visited the houses of community members, and I participated also in everyday activities like fainas, fishing in the river, teswinadas, hiking activities, etc. where I tried to encouraged dialogue about everyday life. During fieldwork it was clear to me the differentiation in

the power structure and how I may have abused of this power without noticing. For example, in the interviews of this study I corroborated a big mistake that my team and I did in the development of the DP; we did not include all the voices possible in the final construction of the DP exercise. I do not remember quite well, but I think this decision was made due to the suggestion of other team members and the time we had to have the plan and budget ready for the funding agencies. I will come back to this point during the development of the findings of this study.

Data analysis methods

The semester after I came back from fieldwork, I transcribed the interviews myself. After having transcribed the interviews I tried different methods of analysis until I found one with which I felt comfortable. For example, I first tried to code the data by hand in a physical paper, however, I felt I couldn't synthesize the information the way I wanted. I then tried to work in an Excel sheet. I liked how I could manage the data and how Excel allowed me to arrange the information in charts. I thought it could be useful for me and the reader to visualize and understand who said what and what were the topics that were emerging form this set of data. Therefore, I decided that I was going to code the information in an Excel spreadsheet. The charts I include in this thesis detail how I arranged and divided the data I collected. To interpret these charts, I clarify two things:

- The unit of analysis I am using to 'quantify' the information inside this qualitative analysis, is a code. Each code contains one piece of information, which has been classified under a topic or idea. The name of the code describes the topic of that list of codes. In the findings of this research I then tell a story that I reconstructed based on the information of the lists of codes provide.

- I also arranged the codes based on who said what information. First, I assigned pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants. The code also shows the list of characteristics that describes each participant. In other words, I included in the codes the characteristics that participants shared during our conversations in the interviews. For the case of participants that only participated in the focus group I assigned an identity based on our everyday conversation that were captured in my field notes. I am utilizing binaries like insider/outsider, male/female, indigenous/mestizo, CEDAIN staff/community members, etc., to describe the characteristics of that person.

I decided to arrange the information in this way because it allows the reader to have a sense of the richness and multiplicity of identities that communities encompass in this region of the world. However, I am also aware that this classification recreates a static picture that must be criticized. I elaborate more on this in the "learning" section. In summary, a code is the unit of analysis I am utilizing in this study. Each code is part of a group with a topic in common. I am counting the codes to produce a visual chart that show the diversity of identities and the ideas they shared. This is the structure I am using to recreate the stories that answer the questions in the finding section.

Data overview

I conducted sixteen in-depth interviews with both CEDAIN staff and community members. I included or excluded participants based on the timings I was going to spend in the communities were CEDAIN works and the relationship I had with those community members, for example all the people that I interviewed were either my former colleagues or they were community members who lived in the places where CEDAIN

works. I also need to clarify that I facilitated an interview with two individuals. This was proposed by the participants and I thought that it would be a good idea to include an extra point of view. Overall 9 participants were community members which represent the 53%, and 8 participants were CEDAIN's staff.

Additionally, at the end of my field trip I facilitated a focus group with 12 CEDAIN staff members who represented around 80% of the operative team during 2016. In the focus group we discussed the practice of CEDAIN and I tried to develop similar topics that were part of the interviews.

Figure 2. Overview participants: gender, CEDAIN/Community and insider/outsider

In the interviews, 35% of the participants were females and the rest were males; in the focus group 50% were both male and females. Figure 2 (above) shows who participated in interviews and focus group that I facilitated. Figure 3 shows the total of codes

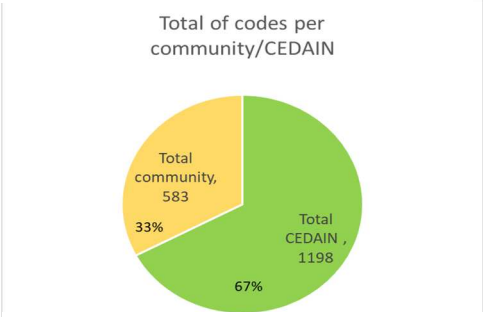

Figure 3. Total codes per Community/CEDAIN

that I identified per community members in relation to CEDAIN staff.

Finally, Figure 4 (below) shows an overview of the codes arranged by themes and differentiated by the different identities of the participants.

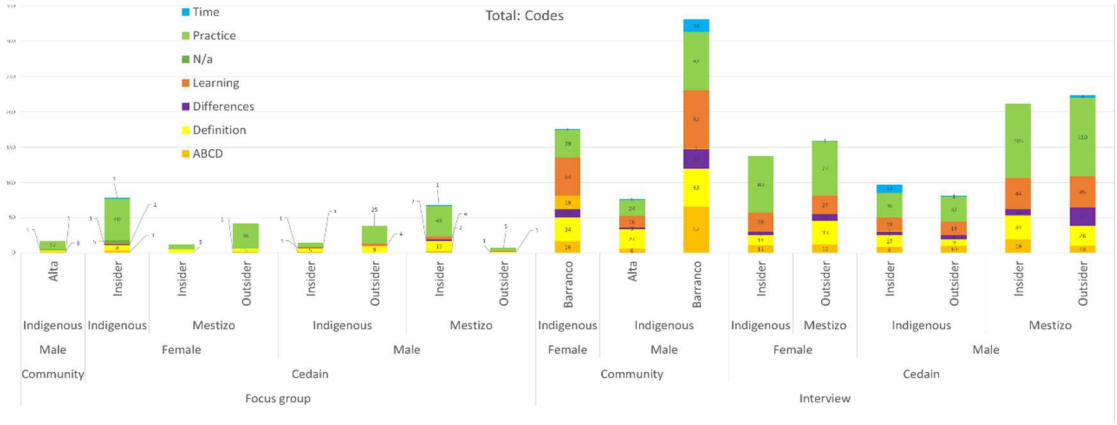

Figure 4. Data overview

Limitations but not necessarily "big mistakes"

All data that informs this research was coded and interpreted by the researcher. Therefore, my subjectivity is involved in this analysis. To be honest with the reader and participants I tried to be as explicit as possible of my stand point and identities.

Due to the time constraints I couldn't make a synthesis of the 100 percent of the data that was collected. I will continue this work in the future in other publications. However, I tried to incorporate the main themes that I considered crucial to understand the learning experiences of participants.

In terms of gender and participation there were constraints that I should disclose. It was hard for me to include at least 50% participation of women and men due to my male identity. Even though I tried to include more female voices, the result shows a higher participation of men. Additionally, I decided to conduct the interviews with participants that were living in the communities where I collaborated during the time I was officially part of CEDAIN. Hence, this sample was limited to my own experiences in the organization and does not represent all communities that participate in CEDAIN's practices.

Finally, as I visited the communities with CEDAIN's staff, community members saw myself as part of the organization. This might have been a factor that influenced the answers of community members during the interviews.

CHAPTER 4

LEARNING FROM CEDAIN PRACTICE

At the start of this thesis, I described the project of CEDAIN in a general manner. In this section I use the narratives of participants of this study to construct a picture of the practice of the organization. This section will complement the official stories about CEDAIN that we can find in their public documents like their website or YouTube channel. To draw an image of the practice of CEDAIN I make use of the following guiding question: What is the learning dynamic of organizations and participants who are doing community development work with Indigenous communities?

To begin answering this question, I first explain some of the characteristics and practices of CEDAIN. Then, I introduce the explicit curriculum of CEDAIN; in other words, I present the knowledge that people have been gained inside the organization. I also add to the discussion other learnings that individuals have experienced outside the organization. I then present actions or discourses that I have identified that shows how CEDAIN is teaching beyond the explicit learnings that participants shared.

Background: Who is CEDAIN?

According to their mission: CEDAIN is an organization that contributes to the access and production of food, and in the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources for the wellbeing of the communities of the Sierra Tarahumara, according to their culture (CEDAIN). The vision for 2020 entails the following: CEDAIN in conjunction with the communities that they serve in the Sierra Tarahumara have achieved food self-sufficiency, autonomy and sustainable management of the natural resources (CEDAIN).

CEDAIN started working in the Sierra Tarahumara in 2001. According to four members of the team, the creation of CEDAIN was triggered by the food security emergency in the region. Santiago, the operative director at the time of this research, stated that "CEDAIN started with the objective to provide food to the communities who were lagging behind" in light of this emergency.

Other members of the team also shared that CEDAIN was born with a non-paternalistic approach which encourages community members to work and develop new skills. For example, Alondra, a mestiza from outside la Sierra, mentioned that "CEDAIN started with a barter center project" which "values the work of artisans and community members, and encourages the development of those skills". She mentioned that this characteristic was one of the aspects that she liked the most about CEDAIN. Currently these barter centers are places where people can exchange their traditional handcrafts for food items. CEDAIN's bartering program offers the opportunity to communities to overcome the food insecurity they are facing by acknowledging and retributing the work of traditional rarámuri artisans.

CEDAIN has since diversified their services. Alondra mentioned CEDAIN has changed the services they offered based on the funding opportunities available. For example, CEDAIN worked for some years with The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger in the Special Program for Food Security (PESA). Alondra added that despite these changes within the funding agencies, "people who participate in CEDAIN are still interested in the work and development opportunities [CEDAIN] offers". Additionally, Graciela, a newly hired member in the team mentioned that as CEDAIN

has been “immersed in the communities, they identified other needs that people face, like housing.”

CEDAIN is also considered to be a school, a place where both community and staff members learn. For Ramiro, a rarámuri man who is active in the project, CEDAIN is a place where he learns new things and meets new people: “CEDAIN for me is like a teacher, it is there where I am learning new things, new jobs, all of that, I am learning new words that I have never heard, I am learning and meeting new people”. For staff members (Alberto Alejandra, Alondra, and Aurelio) CEDAIN is also like a school or a place where they are learning. Alberto, a mestizo serrano who has been working for CEDAIN for more than 3 years, mentioned: “It is like a little school that teaches us” for Alejandra, a mestiza and outsider who is a new staff member, CEDAIN is a school because it is an institution that is in constant recreation and this requires of a deep auto analysis to re-think how you do things.

CEDAIN is a job opportunity for staff and community members. For example, Hortencia a rarámuri woman and community member that has participated in CEDAIN’s project shared how in her community they build a working group that currently produces jam and that is a source of income for their families. The group started by identifying the assets in the community and mobilizing them to get a better income “we do not sell the fruit in the community because people buy it in really cheap, we thought of making jam with it so we could get extra money to support our family, and that is how we started, we liked the project that CEDAIN was offering”. Alberto shared that CEDAIN is a job that is helping staff economically “it is a job that is helping us with something … it is where we work, develop skills and support others.”

CEDAIN is a nongovernmental organization; staff members differentiate their work from the government, they explicitly state that CEDAIN listens to the people and they build trust with community members. Ángeles, a staff member that has worked in CEDAIN for several years, mentioned: "we say in the office that we are going to work differently, we are not going to work like the government, we are going to have DPs, so people develop their own projects. We are going to ask what they need. …We are going to share time with them". Furthermore, Alberto said that CEDAIN uses narratives that describe how the governmental programs are creating a dependency; in contrast, CEDAIN is encouraging the communities to work for themselves. Alberto stated: "sometimes we say that the government is not going to come and help us, we need to do it ourselves."

CEDAIN has also a good reputation in the region among community members. For instance, Ernesto, a community member that participates in CEDAIN's activities, shared that in his community: "the government offices are close by, but they never visit us at home. It seems that they only visit us when they are looking for votes. The election were recently and now we don't see them often. Instead, the people in CEDAIN are the only ones in the communities, they are the only ones talking to people, about how to work, delivering materials, organizing meetings, and people are learning already."

Most staff members shared that their job in CEDAIN is a rewarding experience that goes beyond the salary or the material compensation they could get. For example, during the focus group of this research, Aurelio, a mestizo serrano who has been working for CEDAIN for few years described his experience working for CEDAIN in this way: "We work in the most beautiful place that one could find around here, the Sierra, with all

its strong roots, the culture, we value that. I mean in few places you can see as much cultural wealth as in here, those traditions, when you come back from [the communities/field work] you are marveled, even if you had a bad month, or the work or whatever, you feel complete because you were there with the people and willing to do a positive change, and well, why would we want more?

CEDAIN is also a hierarchical organization. For example, Santiago mentioned that "the highest authority we know is the board". The operative and administrative coordinator positions are situated below the board. Then each of these areas might have area coordinators and community facilitators in Ángeles words: "CEDAIN is the administrative and operative teams and then the board, it is like a little staircase" Since this is a structural organization Santiago mentions that CEDAIN's administrative and operative teams are sensible to the leadership of the board and vice versa. In other words, if the board is working correctly then the rest of the team will work well as well in a trickle-down effect: "according to how the board is working, organizing and looking after the administrative and operative team, is how we perform our work in la Sierra.

The hierarchy in CEDAIN affects how the project is implemented but also the relationships among staff. For example, throughout the narratives staff members shared with me, I identified, that regardless of the hierarchical position you hold inside the organization, staff generally feels that they need to mediate between two publics or two entities. These publics have different interests or opinions. Arturo, a rarámuri man who has been working in CEDAIN for more than five years, feel that they need to mediate the interests of the community and the results that your boss wants "I feel in between two places, the project is like that, you need to have results for your bosses while you also

need to be with the people in the communities and their interests". Others like Ángeles feel that they need to work separately with your close team and then mediate the interests or behavior of other people with higher positions in the structure of the organization: "sometimes you do not know how to act or what to do so people in your team do not feel bad when they are not taken into consideration for something, but we work together as a team, we have dialogue and we focus on our duties." Furthermore, Santiago shared that at an institutional level, CEDAIN has to mediate the interests between the communities and the funding agencies: "CEDAIN is like an institution that is in the middle. It is always uncomfortable when you are in the middle, CEDAIN needs to start form the needs of the people, but you need to collaborate with the system, I mean you need to follow the instructions of the agencies that are funding your project. They [the agencies] also have their place in the system and they are ruled by that as well". In this way, I could say that CEDAIN is aware that a fruitful practice comes only after a good performance of all the areas in the organization and through a good mediation of the interests of the community and the interests of the funding agencies of the project.

The CEDAIN team sees itself as a diverse group. Five participants mentioned that the team is diverse and they value this diversity (e.g. schooling, ethnicity, origin). For example, Arturo said: "there [are] people in the administration that [are] well trained, the board also sheds light on where to focus the project, and there is a lot of diversity in the team, we are from different places and have different points of view." He added that if CEDAIN did not have that much diversity, the exchange of knowledge and experiences that the organization prides itself on would be weaker. At the time I collected the data of this research CEDAIN was indeed a diverse group; among the staff members who

participated in this research included the following characteristics: 18% had completed high school, 64% were university graduates, and 8% had a master's degree; in terms of race or ethnicity 42% of staff members identify as indigenous; additionally, 28% of participants identified as outsiders while 71% identified as insiders or from the Sierra. It should be noted that all members are Mexican citizens.

What does CEDAIN do?

I now proceed to describe the activities that I identified in the narratives from community members and staff, which describe the practice of CEDAIN.

Meetings/Workshops.

One activity that was mentioned by most of the community members and staff was the meetings and/or workshops that CEDAIN organizes. Five community members (Ernesto, Miguel, Jonás, and Luis) said that CEDAIN organizes meetings every month or two in their communities. In these spaces community members and CEDAIN organize the work in the community, share ideas, have dialogue, and find ways to improve their work. For example, Miguel, rarámuri man and active community member who is also a health promotor in his community, shared that normally in his community CEDAIN organizes meetings "each month." Luis, an active indigenous community member that recently started participating with CEDAIN, and Jonás, an indigenous community member who is CEDAIN's promotor, mentioned that CEDAIN facilitates lessons or courses during these meetings. Miguel shared that during a family garden project CEDAIN had a meeting with community members where they organized their work: "we met, we talked, and then the

next day we went working house by house, that is how we built the family gardens, it as a collaborative work".

Community members also shared that during the meetings participants make agreements, share knowledge and ask each other questions. For example, Hortensia, an indigenous woman who has been an active community member in CEDAIN's project and a health promotor in her community, said that during these meetings people make agreements and learn new things to improve the production of handcrafts: "when we meet, we talk and then we say who agrees on working as a group. … CEDAIN also comes and facilitates workshops so we improve our work". Ramiro, an indigenous community member who is the leader of the cooperative of artisans in CEDAIN, and Miguel mentioned that during the meetings CEDAIN shares knowledge. Ramiro "I see that CEDAIN wants to work with us, with the community. They also share good experiences and workshops that teach how to plant corps, they bring the knowledge of family gardens, organic fertilizers, and other things". Miguel mentioned that CEDAIN "is training people so [they] know more", and Ernesto mentioned that they ask each other questions: "we organize a meeting every two month, they ask questions to the community and the community ask them questions too."

In the other side, Santiago and Octavio mentioned that the meetings are places were CEDAIN and the community have dialogue to organize, reflect, find alternative solutions and take decisions. Santiago said, "CEDAIN encourages dialogue to generate alternative solutions. Our work is focused on informal talk with people or consultation". Octavio, an indigenous staff member said, "in the community meetings, we can organize ourselves, it is where we can take decisions together, the communities are not large, so it

is easy to work with them". Additionally, Alberto mentioned that CEDAIN develops the projects based on what community members say in the meetings, however he also said that the projects are approved based on the funder agencies: "[during the meetings] you guide the community to demand the project that was approved here. Then we develop the project with them, you see how they implement it and if it is possible they have to do them themselves." This contradiction is what happens during the DP.

Additionally, during the meetings staff also encourages refection among community members and encourages them to realize of all the wealth they have in their communities. For example, Aurelio said that during the meetings he encourages community members to make the best use of the resources they have; and that communities have taken those resources for granted and his job is to encourage the communities to see what they have but with fresh eyes. Aurelio mentioned, our job "is to gather people, it is to look for a reason that people remains together, …I like meet with the people and encourage them to see new things, so they realize that they have forgotten about certain things or assets in the community. Then we think on how to mobilize those assets, so we move forward with the community as well".

During the community meetings staff shared that CEDAIN teaches the community about diverse topics, while CEDAIN also learns from the community. Octavio shared that the topics that they develop during the meetings are: "workshops about organic fertilizers, pests management; we do not need to kill them all but to control the pest, family gardens, fruit tree trimming" Ángeles added that during the community meetings CEDAIN teaches the community and the community teaches CEDAIN: "we

teach them, imagine it is as if they were my students, we learn from each other. We are teaching how to write, or to lose fear to talk in front of people, it is beautiful."

In addition to the community meetings, CEDAIN staff attends a monthly meeting where they discuss ideas, ask for guidance, and leaders encourage them to acknowledge that CEDAIN is learning from the community. Aurelio commented that when he sees something interesting when he is in the field, he immediately thinks of sharing it in the next meeting: "one tries to share all the information that you find in your field trip to enrich it, make it stronger, and more importantly be honest with the team. We say, 'Look this is what is going on, please give me an advice.' In the same way we offer advice to others when we know". Also, Santiago shared that during the meetings he encourages staff to acknowledge that CEDAIN is learning form the community: "in the monthly meetings we constantly say that we go to learn from the communities, that is something that we share during these meetings"

Meetings have helped CEDAIN to motivate the group of community leaders and to have a closer relationship with the board. For the last four years, CEDAIN has been organizing meetings with a group of promotors. Aurelio mentioned that these meetings have helped this group of leaders to be motivated to continue working with CEDAIN: "I am surprised that the promotors that we met three years ago, today are really motivated, they asked about the activities they will develop, or they share the work they have developed in their communities". Additionally, Santiago mentioned that meetings, that CEDAIN staff and the board attend, have helped the board to understand the project better and be closer to the team: "when the board visits the project we have noticed that

thanks to these meetings, there is more engagement with the board, they call us to see if we need something, we see how we are closer."

Visit communities, spend time in the community and preserve Rarámuri culture.

CEDAIN staff visits the community members and spend time with them. They participate in the everyday life of the community and in traditional rituals. For Santiago the principal role of CEDAIN is to be "walking" with the people, I asked what he meant by walking, and he answered that "it is to be together, to visit, to listen, they tell you a dream, I see how we can push it forward, for me it is to be walking with the people". In this same way, Ángeles mentioned that CEDAIN builds community when they spend time in the community: "I think that we build community when we are involved in the everyday life of the community, like participating in agriculture practices, collecting water, grinding grains, making tortillas, drinking teswino, dancing pascol, etc. it is to be part of the activities of the community."

Additionally, Ángeles, Octavio, Alondra, and Arturo mentioned that CEDAIN looks for the preservation of the rarámuri culture. For example: Arturo said that "The goal is to preserve the culture, it is changing, but the idea is to keep it for more time, all what is the culture, the language, the agriculture, everything. We also need certain techniques that are not foreign, and we are mixing other techniques from other cultures, which are good for this area as well. We are not causing any harm. The communities are asking for them and we are also preserving the culture.

Community members also expressed that CEDAIN looks after the preservation of culture and CEDAIN is also trying to stop migration. For example, Ramiro shared this:

"CEDAIN is taking us back to where we were, it is like we are losing, as if we were walking on other roads and CEDAIN is then telling us to come back to where we were …CEDAIN is taking us back to our towns because there is a lot of migration here. Everyone is leaving the community for the cities, they are leaving their fields. CEDAIN is taking us back, they say that we should not go outside for the money, that they say that we better produce our own food, that is what they say, that is the objective of CEDAIN for me"

Deliver materials and food during workshops.

CEDAIN also offers food during some workshops and they deliver materials for the construction of projects like: Family gardens, agriculture protection, water projects, bathrooms, water harvesting, construction buildings for workshops for working groups. For example, Julio, a rarámuri man who has been collaborating with CEDAIN as a community promotor for more than ten years, mentioned that CEDAIN shares food during the workshops: "in the meetings we had, CEDAIN brought food for the participants". Ernesto mentioned that CEDAIN delivered materials to build family gardens, to protect their fields from animals, and to build water networks in the community. Hortensia also shared that CEDAIN delivers materials for a water harvesting project, in fact, she was in charge to make sure that this aid reached the people who need it the most in her community: "first I talked with the women in the community, I asked them if they wanted to have a water harvesting system. They said that the water springs, that are close, run out of water, so they need to find other springs that were farther away. So, it is difficult for them to get water for home use and to wash clothes. Instead, if we have a water container for rain water it makes it easy for us, they said."

Additionally, CEDAIN staff said that they also help delivering the materials. Arturo mentioned: “CEDAIN helps delivering materials to develop the projects” and Alejandra said that CEDAIN “participates by delivering materials in the community”

Trainings.

Santiago and Aurelio shared that CEDAIN offers opportunities for trainings that would help staff improve their work and they encourage participants to take courses based on their interests. Santiago: “CEDAIN’s team is in constant trainings. CEDAIN is an institution that looks after the continuous training for the project. We encourage staff to find a training about a topic that they like and that could be useful for the project” Aurelio elaborates more on this: “we have the opportunity to learn, to receive a training. This is something that I really like, because we do not stay in the same place, if we want to go to a training, we can.”

Reflection

CEDAIN members shared that reflection on their practices and the facilitation of activities that encourage reflection among community members is part of their practices. For example, Ángeles shared that she likes to use popular education techniques because they help communication among CEDAIN and community members: “I like the techniques for reflection, we all have a communication problem in the communities and in CEDAIN. These techniques could provoke doubts and questions” Additionally Alberto said that as part of his job he reflects on why CEDAIN is doing things the way they do: “I also reflect on how we are doing things. It is an opportunity to grow.” In this same way, Alondra shared how CEDAIN has questioned itself, staff has been reflecting on the

impact it was having in the communities. According to Alondra, this made the team more critical and aware of how thigs were done: “we questioned the impact that we were having, we were analyzing what we wanted to do in the communities, we visualized tools for evaluation... this all made the team more critical, at least we were questioning our practice.”

Finally, for Alejandra, CEDAIN is an institution has reflected on how the barter center project must be recreated to avoid dependency: “CEDAIN started with the objective of delivering food in exchange of handcrafts, CEDAIN achieved this, but CEDAIN also realized that the solution is not only about providing food, it is about the communities themselves producing their own food and being sustainable. This is when the auto analysis of the organization becomes important.”

What have CEDAIN (and community members) learned though CEDAIN’s practice?

Participants in this research shared that they have learned multiple things throughout the practice of CEDAIN. In this section I present the main themes that I have identified which describe the main learnings of CEDAIN staff and community members.

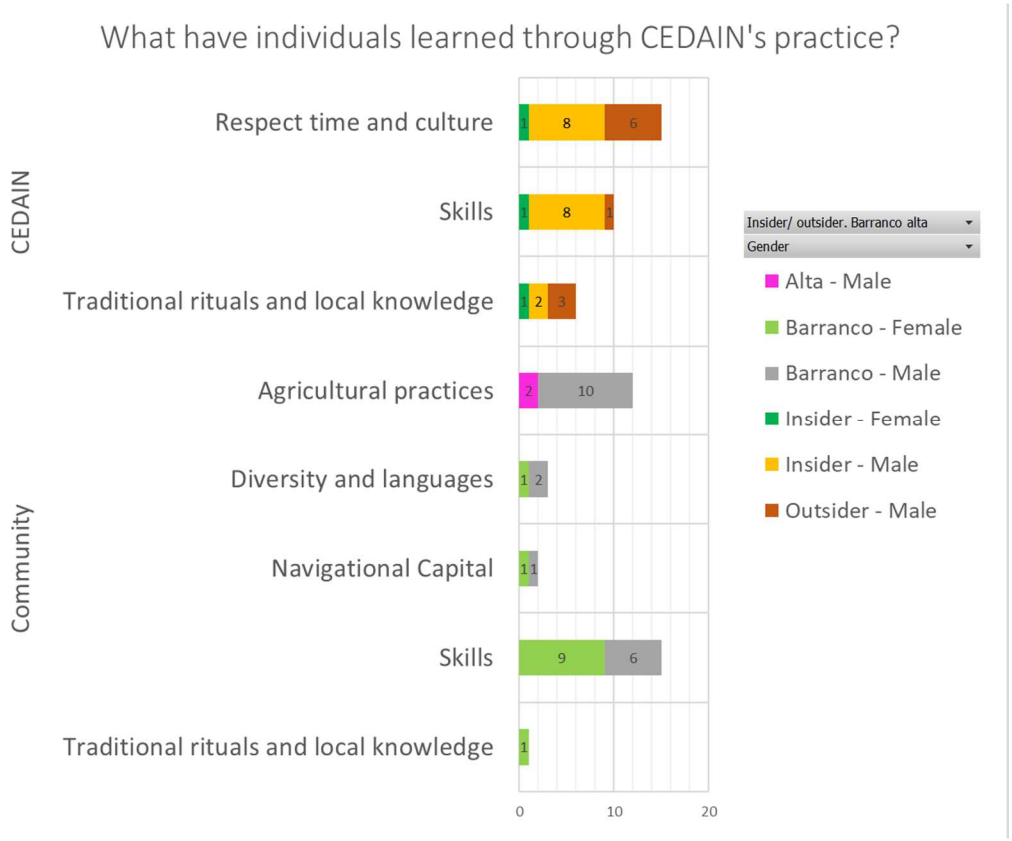

Figure 5.What CEDAIN and community members learn

Respect the time and culture of the community.

CEDAIN has learned to respect the time and culture of the community. For example, Alberto, Aurelio, and Octavio shared that CEDAIN has learned that the project must respect the time of the community. This learning was triggered through the implementation of the PESA. Arturo mentioned that the theory/method the program presents was great "They had a nice method, it sounded great, but in practice the things were different". CEDAIN experienced time constraints between the budget and delivery of materials with the time the communities had to complete the activities. In other words, they mentioned that the administrative side of the project was not consistent with the

interests and the cultural and agricultural cycles in the communities. To illustrate this, I use Alberto's words, "they delivered the materials in the last stage of the project, and CEDAIN learned that we have to respect the time of the communities. …My peers say that they all were in a hurry, they had to go here and there, they did not even have time to talk with the communities and that is not the right way. Well that is what I have seen and that is why CEDAIN left el PESA."

In this sense Aurelio and Santiago shared that a fruitful practice must be designed based on the time and the perspective of the community. Aurelio shared that he learned from his colleagues this lesson: "first of all, we need to take in consideration the time of the people, if we do not respect it we are wrong from the very beginning." Additionally, Santiago mentioned that CEDAIN must "learn about the timing in the community, the cultural expressions. It is all part of how communities live, they have an agricultural cycle, and a calendar of traditional rituals and fiestas across the year."

Staff members like Octavio shared that they have also learned to be patient and to respect the time of the community. He explained how in his previous job he was in a hurry all the time, and when he arrived to CEDAIN he realized he needed to change the way he was working because community members might not follow a time schedule in a strict way: "I used to arrive to a community and they were not there, it was 9 o'clock and no one was there, I used to start my meetings on time. However, Aurelio told me, take it easy, they will meet soon". In this way Octavio learned that "community members do not live against the clock, so I had to learn to be patient". At the same time, he also acknowledged that thought community members arrive late, this situation does not mean that CEDAIN will also be late; in the contrary, he said that CEDAIN hast to be honest

and punctual: “we must clarify that not because the community is not punctual CEDAIN will not be punctual either. Even if I know the community members arrive around 11 or 12pm I arrive at the time I told the community.”

Traditional rituals and local knowledge.

Community members and staff have learned about traditional rituals like offerings to water springs. For example, Aurelio and Octavio learned about a traditional water spring ritual during a meeting from CEDAIN’s promotors, they shared their traditions. Aurelio said: “we had a meeting with the promotors, we were talking about water springs. We all went to visit the water spring and we made an offering. Everyone was excited about sharing these experiences with their communities, everyone went home with the idea to re-make these types of rituals and we organized the work they had to do in the communities.” In this case traditional water rituals have helped community members to organize to accomplish projects that work to tackle the problems like “lack of water” that were identified by community members during the DP.

Arturo, Octavio, Santiago and Ángles mentioned they have learned to recognize the value of local knowledge. For example: Arturo said, “More than anything I think we learn to value the wisdom of people. It is during the meetings where this knowledge is exchanged, and we are organizing continuously organizing this kind of events”. In the same way Ángeles, who is a mestiza from la Sierra, mentioned: “I have learned to value what community members have, their thoughts, their own individuality; I value them a lot.” Octavio said, “You could come with a master’s degree, you can say that you studied abroad, but it is worthless. Once you are in the community you start learning from them. That is what I love”. Additionally, Santiago mentioned that CEDAIN learns about the

local culture to respect it: “at the same time, knowing about the culture is knowledge that you acquire. Those are learnings”.

Alberto mentioned that working in CEDAIN made him realized about the importance of the knowledge of community members. He shared that before he was part of CEDAIN staff, he was a community member participating in the project. He detailed his experience at a meeting. He told his family members that they should not give their opinion because CEDAIN staff were the ones who knew about the project. He explains it in this way: “I have had the opportunity to learn new things, and I have realized that the opinion of community members is more valuable than the voices from outside. When they first came to my community and I was a beneficiary, I used to say that they were superior, that they were people who knew a lot. Today I am in the other side and it is when I valued the knowledge of the community”. Alberto has also realized about the importance of including local knowledge and opinions in the practice of CEDAIN.

Diversity and languages across communities.

Elena, a rarámuri woman and community member who recently started working in CEDAIN’s project, and Ernesto shared how they have learned about the diversity we can find across the communities in la Sierra. Elena shared that they learned that people live differently in each community who attended the workshop: “we learned new things, in each community we live differently”; and Ernesto learned new Tarahumara words that are form other regions, he explains how this diversity is found across the Tarahumara territory: “What we speak here is a language form the Baja, for example there in Bocoyna they speak the language from the Alta … here the way we speak is different to the one

they speak in the Alta" and "during the meetings one listen to how others talk and sometimes I use those words in my community."

New agricultural practices and specific environmental strategies.

Community members Jonás, Julio, Miguel and Ramiro mentioned that, during the workshops that CEDAIN facilitates, they have learned about alternative agricultural practices like: tree trimming, production of vegetables in family gardens, and how to take care of soil. For example, Jonás mentioned that he learned about tree trimming techniques in CEDAIN's workshops: "I like the workshops very much, I attended one that was about tree trimming, we got to know about how to trim the trees, so they bloom faster". Ramiro learned "how to plant vegetables in a family garden" and Miguel shared that during these workshops he has learned: "how to plant, how to take care of soil and about the importance of a clean house for our health, I like it a lot". Additionally, Julio mentioned that he learned: "how to produce food so people are not hungry, we also want to avoid transgenic food."

Community members also shared that they learned through CEDAIN's meetings and workshops about the production of organic fertilizers, earthworm composts, pesticides, fruit jam and food conservation. For instance, Alicia said, "I went to the meeting, there where the people of CEDAIN is. If I did not go, I wouldn't have known how to conserve nopalitos, or to produce papaya and mango jam." In the same way, five male participants: Ramiro, Julio, Ernesto José and Luis shared they had learned about organic fertilizers and pesticides. Some of them emphasized that these elements were produced with local and natural materials to avoid the use of chemicals that harm our health. Jonás: "when I went to a workshop, we learned how to make fertilizer, I have that

written down in a piece of paper." Julio values this kind of information because they used natural materials: "I like that very much, it is really good that what we did does not have chemicals components, it is all natural." Ernesto also shared that he "learned to produce pesticide and that fertilizer, and how to plant corn and beans so we do not lose water", he also made an emphasis on the fact that they used local materials to produce all these products. Finally, Luis mentioned that he learned "the importance of avoiding the use of chemicals for our health, we used only plants that are form here, all natural." I argue that these practices and learnings could also be improving the health of the community members.

Navigational capital.

Hortensia and Ernesto shared how, through the practice of CEDAIN, they have learned how to navigate other parts of the Sierra and cities and towns outside their state. Hortensia mentioned that before she participated with CEDAIN "[she] had not traveled anywhere outside [her] community." Ernesto describes his experience visiting other places as: "I have learned how to navigate other places, it's been a while that I have been going out with them. I have gone to four municipalities Urique, Bocoyna, Batopilas and Guachochi, I have learned a lot with them". Another example about how CEDAIN offers an opportunity for community members to visit other places, Alicia and Julio shared that they had the opportunity to go to Chihuahua city and meet people from CEDAIN and other agencies. Julio said: "that day we had an invitation to go to Chihuahua to meet with people form CEDAIN and others who came from Mexico City."

Skills (hands-on, communication, and interpersonal).

Hortensia and Elena have learned how to communicate ideas throughout the practice of CEDAIN. They mentioned that communication is an activity that can increase the self-esteem of participants. For instance, Hortensia said that before participating with CEDAIN, she was only at home, but now she has learned how to communicate with others during the meetings. Additionally, she has shared her work and visits to other places with the community: "I have learned how to communicate with people and to have more communication. For example, when we go to the meetings, we must participate. We have to share the problems we face in our communities and our work". Elena also mentioned that during the workshops participants learn to share ideas and communicate: "there we learn to communicate with others, to give opinions of what we know. Additionally, Miguel shared that he has practiced his writing skills and he has received "trainings, [where] they make us write."

Ernesto, Julio and Miguel shared they have learned engineering skills like the construction of ferrocisternas and watershed management. Julio mentioned that he learned the basics of construction techniques when he was 15 years old. He went to work to the city of Cuauhtémoc: "I went to Cuauhtémoc, I worked there for 3 years, I worked in construction; there I learned about construction for the first time". Then he shared that with CEDAIN he as "learned to build ferrocisternas". Ernesto shared that his community has learned about watershed and natural resources management: "I think that this is what the community has learned: how to stop soil erosion, how to take care of the soil in the hills, about how to take care of the forest, to avoid the exploitation of wood."

Ernesto, Luis and Elena also shared that they have learned how to work in teams during the workshops. Elena: “we learned to work together, … they assigned me as the leader of a group, and everyone asked me, what are we doing? Even though [the people in her team] did not know me, they trusted me. They asked me instructions about how to do the activity.” In addition, Luis shared that he “learned in a workshop to work together: Ernesto, Elena and I worked together. Even though we had worked in other groups before, we had never worked together; almost all our community worked together.”

How do people learn through CEDAIN’s practice?

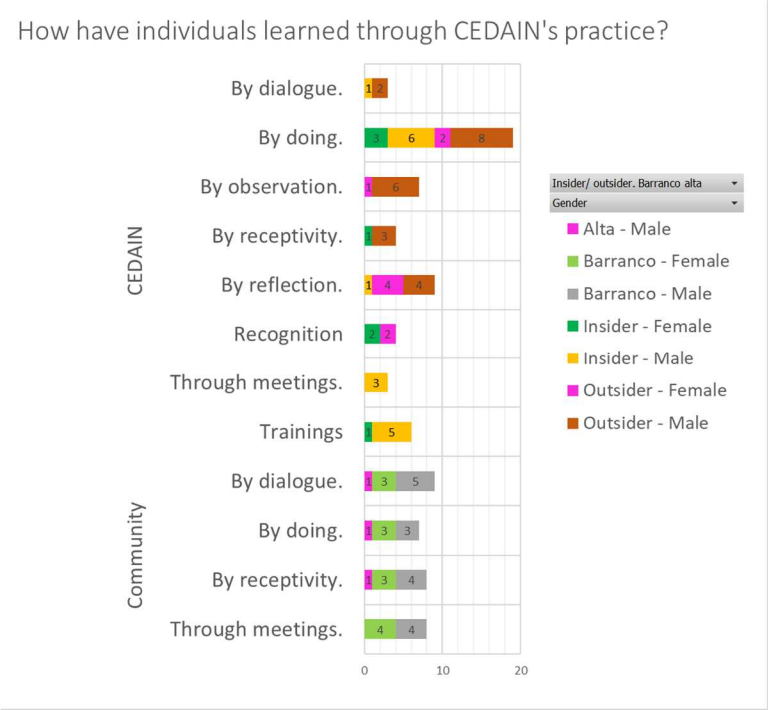

Figure 6. How have CEDAIN and community members learned?

By doing.

Santiago, Ángeles, Alondra and Aurelio mentioned that they learned when they put ideas into action. For example, Ángles learned how to build a solar dehydrator: “I was leading

a team and I had this idea, so I told the team that we were going to try to make it. I did not know how to build it, but I downloaded a manual from the internet. I bought the materials, and we built it. The result was good, we just needed few modifications. We learned by doing, the internet has everything, if you want you can learn it all." In this same way, Alondra also mentioned that CEDAIN learned by doing, when the operative team decided to work per regions instead as per projects or areas (food security, social economy and environment). They realized that this decision was erroneous because it increased the high workload that staff members faced. Aurelio complements Alondra's idea when he mentioned that CEDAIN learns "by mistakes, by trial and error, because no one is born knowing all, you have to try until you reach the objective."

CEDAIN staff learn through facilitation. Alberto clarified that, through the exercise of facilitating meetings and workshops in the community, he learned about the importance of including knowledge of community members in the practice of CEDAIN: "when I was in front of the group I realized about the importance to listen what people think. I noticed this because, after I talked all I could, the communication ended. Instead, I think that knowledge is created when we share ideas" … "when I was writing the reports, I was feeling I was not accomplishing anything because I did not know what people thought. Now I use the narratives of people or the dialogue we had as indicators for my facilitation."

Community members and CEDAIN staff mentioned that they have learned new things by visiting other places. For example, Ángeles mentioned that CEDAIN's practice offers an opportunity for staff and community members to visit new places and meet new people. In her experience these spaces allowed her to understand other ways of looking at

the world while also she got to know about other initiatives from other organizations in a national level: “It is like you, you change your worldview, you are no longer in the same place. That is why I like to go out. You meet other people, you get to know other ways of thinking, you see that you are not alone, you meet other organizations that also want to support our country where we live.” Hortensia shared that by visiting other places she learned how people were organizing in other places: “I have learned new things that people do in other communities, I have learned how to organize.” Additionally, Ramiro shared that he learned how other cooperatives worked when he “went to meet other people and other cooperatives,” he shared he learned how “to administrate money and to organize.”

Arturo and Ángeles shared that they learn by visiting the communities. Arturo mentioned that by spending time in the community he realized about the different points of view that people have inside the community: “when [you] visit the community, you get to see other view points and you start to analyze how people see things.” Additionally, Ángeles also mentioned that by visiting the communities she has learned that community members need help beyond projects of ‘infrastructure’: “by living in the communities I have seen that there is a need of support that goes beyond infrastructure, it is like a moral support to face the problems they have.”

CEDAIN staff also learns by running or implementing the project. For instance, Arturo mentioned that working under pressure taught him to have more discipline and to demand more from the communities that participate in the projects. However, Arturo also mentioned that through this exercise he realized about the contradiction between the community times and the times of the fundraisers: “When you work under pressure, you

at the same time learn how to demand more to the community and get the projects done in a faster peace. …but working under pressure also is bad for the community. It is good to have funds to run the projects, however at the same time it is not good because you do not respect the time of the community". In this sense Arturo learned, by implementing the projects, that CEDAIN faces a contradiction between the interests of the community versus the interests of the funder agencies.

Community members shared that they learned by producing jam, making organic fertilizers and by working together. Julio said, "We were doing this job for the first time, we were producing organic fertilizers, we are doing it. Maybe we still do not how to make it, but we are working together, when we get results, then we will share it with others." During the organic fertilizer workshop, Elena said that she listened an individual in her community who said: "well, the way to make [the organic fertilizer] is easy and all the materials are in the community, why don't we do it?" Elena thinks "that is what the community learned that day". Hortensia mentioned that the working group did not know how to produce jam when they started in 2010. It was only when they started making jam that they learned this: "we put things in practice to see if we could make it, we all new about food conservation and jams but we had never done it before". Today this working group of women produce jam and other products like soaps and sell them outside their community. They have found new ways of trade and mobilization of capitals between communities. Additionally, Luis mentioned that he has learned by working with others "I have learned how to work as a team, …I learned this by working with people in the community."

By observation.

CEDAIN staff members shared that they have learned through observation. For example, Octavio mentioned that CEDAIN learns by observing if the projects are appropriated or successfully ran by the community: CEDAIN "observes if the project was appropriated by the community, then they reflect if the projects was implemented only because they were offering a salary. If so, they started to see that something was wrong. This is what I think based on what I have listened." In this same way, Alondra understood if a project was successful or not through observation. She mentioned: "I see if [community members] participate, how they decide to participate and if they participate for individual or community purposes. That is what I have observed for the development of the cooperative and in the DP. That is where we see these things". Additionally, Santiago said that observation is important to be mindful and respectful of cultural traditions of the community. He mentioned that CEDAIN developed their social enterprise or cooperative under the previous premise. Santiago mentioned that CEDAIN has mimic cultural expressions to encourage participation. For example, fainas are similar to the 'servicio solidario' that is part of the activities of the cooperative. Santiago shared they use the barter as a traditional element that was present in the community as well: "in the culture, there are certain practices that you can implement in the project. So [CEDAIN] mimics the culture instead of taking everything in another direction". In this way CEDAIN has incorporated traditional ritual, parties and other local expressions in their practices. One example is the annual traditional party that they have been celebrating for the past 4 years across the four municipalities where they work.

By dialogue.

Alberto and Santiago mentioned that the process of learning also occurs through dialogue. For example, Alberto said that both learning, and knowledge are created by dialogue, by gathering ideas, but also by doing or putting these ideas into action: "I would see if as a conjunction of ideas, then make an objective to do or apply what you want." Additionally, Santiago said that the dialogue that CEDAIN stablishes with the community is what makes CEDAIN realize about mistakes: "I think the community is the one who demands a change, they will lead you, they make you fall and help you stand up. You reach to this point through dialogue." Santiago also shared an example of how dialogue has helped him to share the goals of the cooperative with a community members who is now an active leader: "we have shared a lot, we have dreamed. I share my thoughts, and I see the future in this person, [he] is now interested. He has the same vision, he is discovering and confronting, but I see he is exited and interested. He is leading his people."

By answering questions and sharing ideas

Luis, Hortensia, Elena and Ernesto said that they have learned by answering questions and sharing ideas. For instance, Luis said he worked with his community and shared his experiences with others: "they invited us to answer three questions, we had to answer these questions as a team. In the team all members were from my community." Likewise, Hortensia shared how, in CEDAIN's meetings, participants share their opinions about how they are working in their communities: "everyone gives their opinion, about how they are working in their communities, if they are doing well or bad." Additionally, Ernesto emphasized that in spaces where people exchange ideas is where knowledge is

shared, and people learn: “this is what we have done: if someone does not know something, others may know about it, if they share this, you learn what you do not know. It is beautiful to know and to share.” Finally, Elena mentioned that, in opposition to the idea that everyone in a community lives organizally and in constant communication, Elena mentioned that the meetings that CEDAIN organizes are opportunities for dialogue. Elena explains it in this way: “sometimes we do not talk to each other, even if we live close by, sometimes we do not visit each other, but in the meetings, we have the opportunity to talk to each other and CEDAIN likes to spend time with us as well.” Additionally, Elena said that, during the exercised where people answer questions, she realized how diverse the answers were. In this sense this dialogue helped Elena realized about the diversity that exists among communities, additionally, she also acknowledges that communities were working towards a similar goal “everyone thinks differently, each one of us answered the questions. Maybe we answer the same, but with different words, there is when we realized that each community thinks differently and maybe some wrote less or words, but we all were moving towards the same goal.”

By explanations and listening

Ramiro, Miguel and Luis shared that they have learned through explanation or by listening to others. For example, Luis said that through explanations the community have learned about the benefits of producing organic fertilizers: “they used to use chemicals to fertilize plants, CEDAIN came and explained that it should be done with organic materials that do not harm our families and health, I think that is something that the community is learning, they do not use that much pesticide or fertilizers”. Miguel mentioned that he learned how to plant vegetables through remembering the words of

CEDAIN's explanations, Miguel said that he learned "because [he] paid close attention, that is why [he] learned how to grow vegetables". Finally, Ramiro explained that he learned how to administrate money and to organize the community through an explanation in one of the workshops in the trainings that CEDAIN provides. Ramiro said: in the workshop "they explained how to administrate, they said that we have to have communication among the members of the cooperative, we need to be together, to have meetings and administer the money well."

By receptivity.

This theme refers to the idea that learning occurs when individuals are interested in something. For example, Santiago, Octavio and Ángeles mentioned that they learned because they were interested in that topic or activity. Santiago shared that his 'learning experience' in the Sierra Tarahumara has been driven by the fact that he likes this part of Mexico, this allowed him to learn new things and open possibilities for re-invention: "I was offered to work in the communities in the Sierra, that was something that caught my attention, everything was new to me, this allowed me to learn new things. … and it was something that I liked, I have always liked to look for solutions and find new things." Octavio learned to be patient because he was interested in improving his work: "I have learned this because of my job, because of my affection for people. If I was not interested, if I did not feel affection for people, I would have left already. I came here because I wanted to be with these people, I want to learn from them". Finally, Ángeles shared that if you want to learn something, you do not need to go for a training outside. If you are interested you can always learn through the internet "I think that when we want

to learn to do something, we do not necessarily need to go outside for a training, the internet has it all."

Alicia, Luis, Julio, Miguel and Ramiro shared that normally they learn if they are willing or interested in learning, Alicia, Miguel and Julio said that they learned because they were willing to learn new things". Ramiro said that he is learning because he is "working on building a cooperative and [he] was really interested in that." Luis mentioned that he learned how to produce fertilizers because he is interested in "avoiding the use of fertilizers and those liquids that are bad for our health."

By recognition.

This theme refers to the idea that people learn because they realize that there is a need for a change. For Alejandra, CEDAIN has learned by recognizing that there is a situation to overcome. The excess of merchandise in the warehouse and the low level of sales are a challenge that staff wants to overcome: "CEDAIN realized last year that they needed to do something with the merchandise in the warehouse. They said, we do not have money, we need to start selling … so this crisis is what has triggered that CEDAIN realizes about this situation." Alondra mentioned that she learned because she recognized the mistakes she was making in her practices "I saw my work and I saw how I was hitting the wall. I couldn't explain this by blaming others, instead I saw it and I confronted it." Ángeles mentioned that CEDAIN learns by recognizing and being honest about the good and bad elements in our practices: "It is like what I was telling you the other day, we need to be honest about our work. We need to see the good and bad things that we have in the community. We cannot only focus on the good things that we are doing, we need to share everything, so we can offer a solution, we need to learn from our mistakes."

Through meetings.

Elena, Julio, Miguel and Hortensia shared that, in the meetings and workshops that CEDAIN facilitates, they learn about how to organize and improve their work. Hortensia mentioned that through the meetings: "we have learned to improve our work, we have been improving little by little, we have also learned from other groups and by sharing our opinions". Elena said, in the meetings, "[CEDAIN] talks about how we can work in the community, they share the projects that could be developed in the community, and you also get to know new things …and that motivates you to keep attending". I think that, in this example, Elena describes really well the DP meetings. She also makes a good point to reproduce strategies that encourage community member's attendance: Community members are motivated to attend the meetings if they are learning new things.

Julio shared that in the meetings of CEDAIN participants learn how to work in their communities: "when they organize a workshop they teach us how to work in our communities." Miguel shares that in these meetings participants learn on how to work in their communities in projects like the family gardens, or how to take care of their crops: "we meet each moth and they tell us how to work…in the family gardens, how to grow vegetables, how to take care of the soil."

Community members Ernesto, Elena, and Miguel mentioned that during the meetings participants share experiences and knowledge. For example, Elena mentioned that people who attended a workshop shared what they learned during the last meeting they had before I conducted the interview: "the day of the meeting, on Monday, we shared with the community what we learned in the workshop. There were like three individuals that did not go, and they were asking about that event." Additionally, Ernesto

said that during the meetings community members and CEDAIN exchange knowledge: "we learn what [CEDAIN] learns in other places, and what [CEDAIN] does not know about here we explain for them". Elena elaborated more on this by saying that "with that, with all the information that is shared in the meetings we make one single information. We discuss what we are going to do, how people live in the community and what we need". This last statement also describes the DP. Finally, Miguel shared that through meetings he has learned about family gardens as well. Miguel said that in the meetings of other nonprofit in the area he learned about how to grow a family gardens: "few years ago, I attended a meeting where I learned about family gardens, …we were a lot of people and we build several beds."

Elena and Ernesto said that CEDAIN shares what they know through the meetings: "Now that they share information about the organic fertilizers, CEDAIN must have got a training somewhere and they are sharing what they learned. I think the same happened about the food conservation". Ernesto said something similar, "I think CEDAIN is receiving trainings there in their offices, and then they come and share those courses with us. They come and teach us, and we also teach them the few things we know, it is like an exchange"

Arturo explains how meetings are important for CEDAIN because they share information that is important to community members: "We are giving trainings to community members." At the same time, Arturo also said that CEDAIN learns during the meetings when community members expose their ideas: the communities are the principal actors, CEDAIN has to learn from them and not in the other way around." Additionally, Arturo mentioned that during the monthly meetings CEDAIN's staff share

knowledge and they learn from each other: “the monthly meetings that we have help because we share ideas and experiences and questions emerge about how we are doing things. It is helpful because it makes us think as a group.”

Julio mentioned that during the meetings the attendance of community members is important. Julio has experience facilitating CEDAIN meetings, this is one of his responsibilities as a promotor in his community. In this sense he knows that the attendance of community members during meetings is crucial for CEDAIN’s work: “if I organize a meeting, I need people, I cannot work alone, I need people to get the work done… even if I have a lot of energy, I need people to attend.”

By reflection.

This theme represents narratives that describe how reflection has helped CEDAIN’s team to re-create the project. For instance, Alejandra and Aurelio shared that CEDAIN has a clear objective: to avoid dependency. However, this is not an easy task. Staff looks to find new alternatives through the reflection on how things are done. Alejandra mentioned that staff members have been reflecting about the development of the projects and how they can trigger processes that encourage participants to lead their own projects: “staff members have shared with me their reflections on how to encourage communities to lead their own processes; this has been the intention of the cooperative. CEDAIN looks to reinforce sustainable projects by the production of food through projects like family gardens. This has been a reflection inside the organization”. In this way, Aurelio mentioned that CEDAIN aims to create community processes that are different from the current governmental programs; CEDAIN wants people to be the subjects of their own change. Aurelio said: “we do not want to be like a paternalistic government. We do not

want to have that same method of 'you ask / I give', instead, we want people to make their own effort".

Santiago shared that, through reflection, he realized about the importance of rethinking or question our assumptions when we do community work. He shared how the community challenged his assumptions when they wanted to hire someone who did not know how to drive. The individual that the community hired had a good reputation, he was responsible, and community members thought that this characteristic was more important because he could easily learn how to drive, and it is more difficult to teach someone how to be responsible. Santiago then shared: "You need to break the stereotypes that you have, you need to realize that your own parameters might not work here. For example, I could have taken an authoritarian attitude in the previous example, like no, we need someone who knows how to drive already, but maybe he was going to be an irresponsible and drunk guy. That is what I want to say, break your stereotypes and open yourself to new ones". This reflection is like what Ledwith proposes in her model of critical praxis (2011), question everything that you have taken for granted.

Finally, Alondra learned that community work is complex, she is aware that it is a job at the end, we are not saving the word, we make mistakes and that we sometimes do not see ourselves as part of the reality you are trying to change. Alondra said: "I learned that things can be more complex in the community, or in terms of development. …I feel that we do not need to save the world, what you propose is not always the correct answer, and the problems might not be solved in the way you were planning. You sometimes think that you do not represent anything in the process, as if you were not there, as if your presence had no impact in the community, you do not critique it. We need to

acknowledge that our intervention is part of the process." For me, this analysis is crucial and important to discuss in any type of project, especially if they are about community development and education. Whit this example I finalize to answer the question: how do people learn through the practice of CEDAIN?

Hidden curriculum of CEDAIN

The following ideas are a compilation of themes that may be indicators of positive and negative learnings that are not explicit at first glance, but that occur as part of CEDAIN's project. In other words, I will try to illustrate what I consider as the hidden curriculum of CEDAIN. This exercise will have the potential to trigger new reflections, and it could allow CEDAIN to re-create strategies that avoid the burdens that could be unconsciously created due to their current intervention. This is proposed with the goal to improve the practices of CEDAIN and in the NIC. I before presenting this elements I consider important to

Creation of identities.

CEDAIN creates an identity that unifies people across communities. For example, Hortensia shared that "we are a lot of people that are part of one group, we are all working together. Even though we are in different communities we all feel part of a group". Santiago also shared that "the experience of these years that we have been waking with the communities, we can say that we have a shared identity. We are sharing this wealth with the people that is walking with us and learning together."

CEDAIN creates community leaders like promotors or committees who support CEDAIN's practice. Ángeles shared: "we have a support in the committee, we form

community promotors that important people for the project". Additionally, Aurelio mentioned "I have seen that the committees from the communities have been a good element for the project". In this way, CEDAIN creates an identity in both community members that participate in the project and in staff members.

CEDAIN talks about identity in the community but it does not often look at the identities that are created inside the organization. For example, Alondra mentioned: "in CEDAIN we talk a lot about identity towards the community, but we never think about it inside the organization. We never question the identities that are generated when you belong to CEDAIN. We do not have a dialogue about these identities. We take that for granted, we do not see that we are creating new identities". Alondra added, "we work for CEDAIN, we collaborate with them, this is a mini-community… when community members become part of CEDAIN, it sometimes separates them from their community. I feel that CEDAIN does not realize that it promotes these changes. It represents a strong identity that is causing those changes... I feel that CEDAIN does not wat to recognize that it is an intervention, it causes an impact in the community and this impact is done by the team."

People who collaborate with CEDAIN, and people who do not

CEDAIN creates an identity inside the community that could be defined as 'people who collaborate with CEDAIN and people who do not.' For example, community members like Alicia stated: "people who do not attend the meetings, people who do not participate, they do not know how CEDAIN is working, and they do not work the way CEDAIN does. People who is interested in CEDAIN, they work for them…same happens with women, there are some that come to the meetings and others that do not. …For example,

like, someone that does not come to meet us here, well they are separate." Julio added: "there are people that do not come to the meetings, even though we call them, but they never come. Only the people that like CEDAIN come, that is how people is working". Additionally, staff members like Alondra said: "you realize that CEDAIN is building community with only some community members, so it becomes a community of CEDAIN inside the community, people who is with CEDAIN, people who collaborate with the organization."

Not everyone in the community participate with CEDAIN. Miguel stated that some community members do not attend CEDAIN's meetings "because they do not want to learn, or because of jealousy, maybe they do not like the promotor or they want to change him, that is why a lot of people do not participate. It could be because they do not like to learn. But it is not everyone, only the few who do not participate." I find important to mention that there is a lack of participation of youth in CEDAIN's meetings. Jonás mentioned that, "most people attend the meetings, …but young people, they do not attend, yesterday they did not come, they left."

Additionally, people that are part of the committees that CEDAIN creates might face problems like 'jealousy' in their communities. During the focus group, while staff members were illustrating the positive impact that CEDAIN has had in the communities, Amelia, a rarámuri woman that has been working for CEDAIN almost the entire lifetime of the organization, expressed a counterargument. She mentioned: "I cannot say the same because in the barter centers we have problems. There is always one person that gossips, or one who does not like the committee. That happens all the time, it happens in all the communities. … in other places the women who are part of the committee do not come to

work because their husband does not allow them, there are always problems." Ángeles added, "it also happened in [name of a community] they were fighting because they wanted to be promotors, they were fighting for that role. There were two sides…

Artisans/non-artisans.

Some community members might see CEDAIN as an 'exclusive' group of artisans, hence, other community members who do not produce handcrafts could feel excluded. Ramiro mentioned: "people that are not artisans, people who do not know how to weave wares and the youth, they say no, why would I go to the meetings if I am not an artisan, that is what they say." Alondra took this argument further through a learning form a workshop, she explained: "we have to realize that the community goes beyond the scope of CEDAIN. … we reflected during that workshop, how did we invite people? did we invite only the artisans? Because that is a community inside the community."

Another differentiation among the groups CEDAIN creates are the working groups who are already stablished. Some of this working groups might not want to be part of the larger cooperative. Alondra explained this: "one of the strongest groups of artisans in CEDAIN, they have created a community among them, when I tried to express how the cooperative might look like, they did not like it. I think it was because if all working groups become one, they might lose some things. I mean they were conscious that they were a community inside CEDAIN."

The chabochis vs the Tarahumara.

CEDAIN focuses on indigenous population in the Sierra, however, CEDAIN also works in communities where indigenous and mestizos share the same community and physical

territory. I argue that this differentiation of 'who is eligible to work with CEDAIN' could reinforce the divisions between indigenous and chabochi identities among community members. For example, Luis explained the differences that exist in the territory of his community in terms of identities: "here in the community, it is really rare that people who live in the street come to the meetings. Only people that live from this place to this other are the ones that come to the meetings. …this happens because of lack of communication, but here we make a strong difference between the Tarahumara and the chabochi, this is a characteristic of the community." Ángeles adds this: "we are dividing, we are putting people aside. We are causing conflicts in the same situation. … for example, a Rarámuri tells a mestizo, 'no you cannot come to the community because we only want indigenous or something like that.' So, the other person feels excluded". Additionally, Aurelio stated that CEDAIN excludes people and communities from joining their project based on their indigenous identities: "there are a lot of communities with a lot of potential to work, however, only because they are close to the municipality or because they do not know how to speak Rarámuri, no you are mixed, you are not rarámuri, then you are not an eligible community."

The previous examples on how CEDAIN's project might be reinforcing current divisions across ethnic and racial groups, and the possible creation of new identities inside the communities are important factors to debrief with staff members. I argue this because CEDAIN uses a narrative of 'culture preservation' that could be in contradiction with these indirect outcomes and experiences explained lines above. My recommendation is that these ideas must be debriefed by the operative team to find new strategies that overcome these possible burdens.

Banking education / control.

Another indirect lesson that CEDAIN might be teaching is the idea that CEDAIN works well, yet the community does not. I found this idea based on these following narratives. Ramiro said, "yes, CEDAIN is doing their work well, they ask what the community wants, but people are the ones who do not understand, there are different people. They need a closer leader that explains them how we are going to work." Complicating this is that *promotores* enter CEDAIN without knowing anything, CEDAIN then fills promotors with knowledge. As Arturo said, "when the promotors enter, they enter without knowing. So, they start learning to organize meetings, to be leading a team. They start really sad, they feel shy, then after five months they organize meetings that develops their skills". In some places people are more open because they have access to media and other services Aurelio "where the civilization is, or where there is access to media, you have people in [name of a community] they, you talk to them and they say 'yes, I saw it in the TV', you are surprised because they participate as if they were any of us, a close dialogue."

There were several other themes relevant to discuss the hidden curriculum in CEDAIN's practice. These included: perceptions that community cannot learn on their own; that there is no real knowledge or ideas in the community that can drive them forward; that community members are "slow learners" due to lack of schooling and that communities also learn slowly; that adults cannot learn easily. These are areas for future research.

What and how people learn in their everyday lives

My research did also focus on interviews with community members, Tarahumara peoples involved in CEDAINs work, and I was interested particularly on how they learn in community (not in context with CEDAIN or its programs). I would be remiss to not provide some data and explanation of these experiences. However, what I offer is only a small piece of insight into their lives in community, and in no way, I do their learning backgrounds and current ideologies any justice here. The work I did with CEDAIN was intended to focus primarily on CEDAIN and is not ethnography of Tarahumara communities. As such, what I provide here is merely a snapshot of the recollections of indigenous community members regarding their own community learning processes. For future research, it would be important to specifically work with community members and to perhaps not only examine their community learning, but to also compare how their community learning styles and content aligns (or does not) with CEDAIN and the NIC work in those Mexican regions.

Family: Agricultural practices, discipline, remekes and wares, values, and traditions like fainas.

This theme details how agricultural practices have been transmitted through family across generations. Of family knowledge transmitted: Jonás, Julio, Luis and Ramiro shared that they learned agricultural practices through family members like grandparents and parents. This learning happened through explanations, three of the four male individuals (Julio, Jonás, Ramiro with exception of Luis) responded that they learned about agricultural practices like planting/harvesting corn and beans through conversations and by looking at how older family members did it. For Luis and Jonás, Ramiro this learning occurred

through conversations and by looking at how his grandmother/family in general did it. Additionally, the reason of learning is also repeated across participants: “to have enough food” or “to not suffer hunger”.

Discipline to work and shared work.

Julio's father also taught him discipline to work every day, so he would know how to work when he became adult. This learning/experience is important to build a counter narrative in opposition to the idea staff members said about how Tarahumara people were not people that like to work hard, or how they do not think ahead of time to overcome future challenges. Tarahumaras are normally portrayed as people with a static culture that does not like modernity or material wealth. In the contrary, this narrative proves how all families are worried to bring enough food to their tables. Julio said, “I would weed the corn…working like that. [My father] would say, ‘we have to work, like this, daily, so that you learn to work. Because if you’re only going to work for a little bit, no one will put you to work…so when I was older, I was already accustomed to work like that.”

Alicia’s mom taught her to make wares and foods: Alicia said, “well, my mom taught me to make the tortillas when I was young, well, when my mom was making tortillas, I was watching closely, and she would…have me make the little balls to put into the [tortilla] press.”

Additionally, faenas is a tradition that has been transmitted though family as well. This consists in providing food and goods to the community in exchange of labor. Miguel said, “Our fathers and grandfathers taught us…to work together to make the work finish faster.”

Family knowledge Community.

Explanations were important in the process of learning agricultural practices for Jonás, Julio and Luis. Julio stated, “For example, how is the plough and how works with the bulls; then we plan and then we harvest. My father would teach me, and so then it’s like a story.” Luis stated that he also learned with explanations from his father: “When I learned I was just a little boy. How to plant squash, tomato, onion.”

Volunteering.

The theme describes the narratives of the learning experiences of community members in a volunteer job. These were: indigenous governor, health promotor, and education programs. Hortensia learned about family planning as volunteer when she joins the clinic as a health promotor. Hortensia applied what she is learning as a health promotor in her home in this way: when people ask her why she had a big family, she answers that "before people did not use ‘family planning.’" She is aware she had a lot of kids, but she shared that she knew about these methods after she had her children. She said that young generations have things easier: now if you get married, you have the chance to plan how many kids you want to have. In the past it was not the case: “little by little I have realized about this knowledge that I am acquiring as a health promotor. If we had had this in the past, there would be a lot of improvement now. We wouldn't be as sick as we are now." Additionally, Hortensia has learned that it is important to be involved in other types of jobs or public charges outside CEDAIN, like to be health promotor. She has learned how to have relationships with others, even though she does not get a payment for this job; she loves it.

This story is important because in the focus group CEDAIN's staff said that maybe Rarámuri people liked to have a lot of family, as if they were fully conscious about the possibilities available and the choices they make. More information about persona experiences like Hortencia are important to be shared with CEDAIN team to break stereotypes. This might be the core problem with any generalization; in this sense I argue that no matter how accurate the statistical data is for a given project, there will always be room for exceptions and those exceptions, for matters of justice, are as important as the generalization. Hence, I reached the conclusion that we cannot generalized the characteristics of any racial group because there always will be exceptions.

Meetings to share what community members learned.

In addition, it is important to also point out the relationship between community members, what they learned through CEDAIN, and how this translates back to their own communities. Again, I only offer a small glimpse here of this process.

A big part of CEDAIN's practice with community members is how knowledge is shared or taught, and how it is applied in communities. Hortensia mentioned that she shares the information about the meetings that she attends: "Well, when I return [to community], I have to give them this information to all of my fellow community members." Miguel said, "With all of the houses here below, I taught them to plant…with one other person. I united them, and I gave them an explanation, and the next day, we went to do practice. And that's how the Tarahumaras learned a little in [name of the community]."

Also, those involved with CEDAIN were responsible for organizing their communities into working groups. This is part of the success story. Hortensia said, "we knew that people did food conservation and jam, but we did not know anything about how to make it. Others thought that there was a lot of work and the payment is not fast enough. I told them that we, each one of us have to think of our family that is going to be benefited by this work, and that this could be like an investment, when you less expect it the payment will come."

CEDAIN, a rewarding job

CEDAIN is not only a regular job for its staff members; it is also a rewarding experience. CEDAIN offers staff a job that has a benevolent goal: It looks for the development of Rarámuri communities. It is also an opportunity to discover of new places and cultures, staff feels welcomed and part of the communities with who they work. For at least 10 CEDAIN members (Adriana, Alberto, Almendra, Alondra, Amelia, Ángeles, Aurelio, Gerardo, Octavio, and Santiago) CEDAIN has been a rewarding experience that goes beyond a job description. This theme is consistent with the personal experiences that I experienced throughout my experiences in the NIC.

The majority of CEDAIN staff shared that not only they love their jobs, in fact, they think of their job as a rewarding experience that goes beyond the salary or the material compensation they could get. For example, during the focus group of this research, Aurelio described his experience working for CEDAIN in this way:

"We work in the most beautiful place that one could find around here, the Sierra, with all its strong roots, the culture, we value that. I mean, only in few places you can see

as much cultural wealth as in here, those traditions, when you come back from [the communities/field work] you are marveled, even if you had a bad month, or the work or whatever, you feel complete because you were there with the people and willing to do a positive change, and well, why would we want more?"

After Aurelio shared his experience working in this stunning place, Adriana, a Rarámuri woman who has been part of CEDAIN for more than five years, added that in CEDAIN "we also like what we do". Likewise, Amelia said that her work is beautiful because she works for indigenous peoples: "in all the communities where we work, they are rarámuri communities, it is a beautiful job". Then, Alberto added: "it is more than a job, for some [CEDAIN] could be a job but for others, it is more than a job". Finally, to conclude how CEDAIN staff have a perception of their job as something that transcends the nature of their job descriptions, I share what Santiago mentioned in one of our conversations. He said that in CEDAIN they "are a team that does not see their job just as a job" in this sense he mentioned that their compromise is with the people in the communities.

As part of these experiences, staff generates a sense of belonging to the communities where they work. For instance, Ángles, shared that "it is like, you do not see your job as a job, you see yourself in the community, as if you were part of it, and people accepts you, they accept you the way you are". Additionally, Alberto said that staff "even feel part of the community because [they] spend time there, because [they] walk with the community, acompañamos allí". However, both Alberto and Ángeles are also aware of the responsibilities and contradictions that this could represent. Alberto is aware that this feeling of belonging is product of his own subjectivity, and that the community might not

consider them as part of the community: “but I do not know if the community considers us as from there. However, we say that we are almost from there, sometimes it is cool to say this, while in others it is detrimental”. Additionally, Ángeles recognizes the responsibility that comes when community members consider yourself as part of the community “I feel that this is a strong responsibility for us, people see you as part of the community”.

While some staff members feel that they belong to the communities where they work, some others do not feel part of the communities where they currently live. For example, Santiago mentioned that his experience of *being part* of a community comes only from CEDAIN’s experiences, he feels like a foreigner in the community where he currently lives. Santiago explained that normally he does not spend time there because the work in CEDAIN requires him to travel a lot: “if I share with you my experiences with the community, it is only because of my experiences in the communities where I spend time. Because in the community where I live, my relationship with people is almost nonexistent, you leave in the morning and arrive at night. In this sense, my experience with the community is through CEDAIN’s work.” Likewise, Octavio mentioned that outside his work he does not feel part of any community, he mentioned that factors like moving from place to place are some of the reasons he feels like this “I feel I do not have a community, I have been moving from place to place and it has been difficult to build a community. I have friends, but it does not feel like a community… outside my job I mean”. This is an interesting contradiction that is part of the experience of staff members in CEDAIN which must be discussed as well with staff and community members.

CEDAIN staff also mentioned that people in the communities see and treat CEDAIN staff as if they were "the best in the world". For example, Gerardo, a mestizo serrano and a recently hired member, said that people in the communities "treat you like a family member, they open the doors of their houses for you, they almost tell you that they'll leave you the keys of their house under the mat". Ángles also mentioned that "people motivates you, they look after you, they treat you as if you were the best thing in the world". Furthermore, Santiago said: "when I visit the communities, I feel that everyone likes me, I feel as if everyone was waiting for me, even if they do not know me, right? it means that you are an individual in the community and that everyone is taken in consideration, everyone knows each other". I could contrast this with the idea of how CEDAIN's practice encourage community members to meet and have dialogue with people in the community with whom they normally do not talk as Elena shared. My point is that the idealization of a harmonic community is contradictory with the experiences that community members shared, therefore, it must be problematized.

CEDAIN is a job but is also a job that helps others. Almendra a rarámuri woman that has worked in CEDAIN for more than 5 years, explained how CEDAIN could be a job but is a job that is helping other communities: "yes, [CEDAIN] is a job for all of us, but we are helping a lot of communities. We are providing food, water harvesting projects, the ferrocisternas, food conservation, all of that". Additionally, Alondra said that CEDAIN "at the end of the day it is something that makes me feel like a good person."

Gerardo and Ángeles shared that when they started working for CEDAIN they saw it as a regular job, after they were more involved in the project, they realized that CEDAIN is an institution that is helping other communities. Ángeles mentioned that even

though she has always been interested in helping others, she was not aware of what CEDAIN was doing when she first joined the team: “I saw CEDAIN as program or institution that was helping people like our governmental institutions do, that is what I thought. Then, when I started working for CEDAIN, they explained me the mission and the vision of the organization, but I was not yet immersed in the job. One joins this job because you need money to live”. Gerardo also shared that he needed a job for financial reasons, but he explains how he realized about other rewarding things that CEDAIN offers. Gerardo: “when you get a job, you get it because of money, that is what you do. But, when I joined CEDAIN, this is my personal experience, I joined as if it was a regular job, but later I got to see it and then I was no longer interested in the money. I was then interested in the work itself, and the power you have to improve the communities.”

CEDAIN, a job in the end.

CEDAIN team also acknowledges that besides the benevolent ideals that haunt their jobs, they also work for CEDAIN because they need a job. For instance, after having acknowledged that Ángeles is working in CEDAIN because she needs the money to live, she said that “we [CEDAIN staff] need of the communities, because we work with them, we [CEDAIN staff] are receiving a salary. This is a contradiction”. Likewise, Santiago said that beyond their commitment, at the end the team is working in CEDAIN because they also need a job: “even though I said that we are a really committed team, but at the end of the day it is our job, you have to have resources to live and to work.” Santiago finished by saying that it is impossible to be out of the economic system, you need money to survive, however he implied that in the communities everything was different. “In relationship with the communities it is different, but there you must be a

different person, a different team. But it is different, the system does not allow you to do this. It is not impossible, but it is difficult, a lot of times you are believing in this alone with the illusion that more people believe in that, it is kind of complex".

Arturo, a rarámuri man who has been working for CEDAIN for more than 5 years said that sometimes mestizos and Tarahumaras join CEDAIN only because they need a job, and if they are not really committed, then they hurt the organization. Arturo said: "mestizos have joined CEDAIN because of a salary and not because they want to help people, same happens with people of the region as well. For a salary they do everything they can to have a job". Arturo mentioned that if people are only in CEDAIN because of a salary it is not good for the organization because they need a serious commitment. "There are people that come, even if they do not know about the community if they come with good intentions, and willing to learn, that is enough, otherwise if there is no serious commitment then it affects the team."

As has been illustrated throughout this theme, CEDAIN is a rewarding experienced for its staff members. However, staff members are also aware that CEDAIN is a job at the end. I argue that critical approaches to analyze the practices and impacts of CEDAIN must be developed if we want to break the illusions of 'heroes or saviors' and 'victims' that staff members and community members might embody throughout the execution of this benevolent job.

At the same time, I would also like to invite staff members to question and reflect on why they only feel part of a "community" during their professional life or during CEDAIN's practice and to contrast this idea with the community where they live. I say this because as I reflect on how NIC might manipulate ideologies and practices of

activists, staff members might also experience similar feelings that I did: after a day of work I felt that I did not need to work on other activist activities because my job was an activist action, however, these activities are dictated and led by the funding agencies. In this way, I interpret that CEDAIN staff members do not feel that they need to 'build community' in the places where they live because they already were 'walking with the communities' in the places where CEDAIN works. This is only an invitation for reflection to practitioners that might be caught in this situation.

A word on paternalism.

CEDAIN was born with an anti-paternalistic approach, for staff in the team when this research happened they mentioned that CEDAIN is constantly on the quest to recreate non-paternalistic practices in its interventions.

Alberto and Alondra mentioned that CEDAIN looks to implement and develop anti-paternalistic practices. Alondra mentioned that CEDAIN looks for a development that is participative and sustainable with an emphasis in education. Alondra said that CEDAIN is "on the one hand, non-paternalistic, on the other hand, participatory, sustainable and with a focus on education. Well, that's how I saw [CEDAIN] in its first moments, like, CEDAIN wanted to be different from the rest in the highlands." Alberto mentioned that he looks for people to do things independently CEDAIN is: "trying to do the things well, it is looking for [community members] do things for themselves, it encourages [community members] to value the things they do, to value their work."

Discussion about the hierarchy of the organization

In discussion, I feel the need to focus on the issue of hierarchies. This theme can be described or interpreted in two levels:

- Inside the organization. The different identities that are created by the hierarchy of the organization represent challenges but also opportunities to grow for the team.
- CEDAIN in relationship with the communities and the funding agencies. CEDAIN staff is aware of the tension that is created between the communities and the funding agencies.

This hierarchical system is consistent to what other institutions and government face in our current societies. Some participants shared that CEDAIN staff can express their ideas, but those ideas might not be taken in consideration in the creation of the project. This normally happens during the monthly meetings when staff can express their ideas with other staff members. However, several participants said that those ideas are not taken in consideration in the decision-making process. These ideas suggest that the decisions are taken from the highest point in the organization. Several participants shared that the decisions are normally made from the top. One participant said that her peers "are young people, who do not know a lot of things, we have recently graduated from college". Under this logic, I interpret that there is a belief that recent graduates cannot know 'valuable' things. This last element is another example on how hierarchy is experienced across the team based on the identities each individual hold, in this case it is 'age'. Additionally, the hierarchy in CEDAIN shows that the DP were only one of many other activities that have been done under that logic. To contrast this idea, I suggest

thinking about stories like the owner of Facebook, the youtubers, etc., which could potentially prove this belief wrong. Age is an identity or a source of differentiation, but this differentiation is not deterministic to prove if someone knows or not. To elaborate more on this argument, I want to draw from the theory of knowledge presented at the beginning of this document. I argue we all we learn from every human being in this planet regardless of the race, age, ethnicity, gender, disability, or any other source of differentiation.

Some team members like myself believe that this hierarchy is problematic and must be change. One example is that the project must be developed and planed and designed with the ideas of the facilitators, promotors, community members and the rest of the staff. The DP during 2015-2016 is an example of this kind of work. The DP opened a communication channel, to listen and discuss the needs / problems of the community. CEDAIN facilitated a space for analysis, identification, prioritization, and discussion of the problems communities were facing. To overcome these problems, CEDAIN developed the action plans in dialogue with community members: this was one of the benefits of the DPs.

CEDAIN's chain of command of is another characteristic that illustrates the hierarchy in the organization. For example, the board of CEDAIN is at the top of this structure. Santiago argues that if the board has a strong leadership in the organization, there would be some sort of trickle-down effect that would make the work of all the organization better. Santiago illustrates it in this way: "the highest authority as we know, it is the board… everything is developed from them in a trickle-down effect, in other words, the way the board is working would be reflected on the operative and

administrative teams". I interpret his words in this way, CEDAIN staff requires of a strong board that follow certain protocol "funciones de un consejo" to have a healthy operative and administrative team.

The hierarchy in CEDAIN affects how the project is implemented and the relationships among staff. For example, throughout the narratives staff members shared with me, I identified, that regardless of the hierarchical position you hold in the spectrum of the organization, staff generally feels that they need to mediate between two publics or two entities with different interests or opinions. Individuals like Arturo feel that they need to mediate the interests of the community and the results that your boss wants. Ángeles feels that staff leaders need to mediate the interests of their teams and the interests or behavior of other people with higher positions in CEDAIN's chain of command. Santiago said that at an institutional level, CEDAIN must mediate the interests between the communities and the funding agencies. These examples suggest that CEDAIN exists in a hierarchical system.

Additionally, I could also argue that CEDAIN's staff understands that a fruitful practice will only be achieved after the organization puts the interests of the community first before the interests of the funding agencies of the project. The experience CEDAIN had with the PESA is a clear example of this interpretation.

I want to finish this brief discussion with this idea. During my experience executing the TSD in the Escuela Metodológica Nacional with IMDEC, I concluded this: the hierarchy of the organization is a contradiction to CEDAIN's ideals. Therefore, I suggest that CEDAIN's hierarchy is a characteristic that must be problematized, if CEDAIN wants to teach not only by what they preach but 'by example'.

CONCLUSION

This study is not an evaluation of the practice of CEDAIN, nor does it pretend to be a systematization of experiences. Instead, it is a reflective piece on my own assumptions and experiences in the NIC, in a conversation with the narrative of the participants of this research.

The findings of this research suggest that among many other learnings, staff members have learned to respect time and culture of the community and to validate local knowledge. This is consistent with the principles of popular education. However, the analysis-hidden curriculum suggests that there are areas of opportunity where CEDAIN could focus. For example, it is important for the organization to acknowledge the intervention and impact it causes in the communities where they work. The theme creation of identities could be a tool to reflect on the goal of preservation of culture. I argue, as other staff members in this research, that CEDAIN must acknowledge that they are an external agency introduced in the community, and that it is having an impact in the preservation of culture that goes beyond the reproduction of traditional rituals.

On the other side, community members have shared that the practice of the organization allowed them to learn new agricultural practices, production of organic fertilizers and pesticides, earthworm compost, jam, and other food conservation methods, communication skills and to work together. All these learnings are a reason for celebration. Additionally, the ways that were identified in which individuals learn, are also consistent with some PE principles. For example, community members and staff shared that experiences and dialogue are a source of knowledge. In this way the theory of knowledge that PE offers is consistent to what participants of this study think.

The results of this research are also consistent with what popular educators say: Neutrality is impossible. Practices of the nonprofits do not occur in a vacuum; therefore, the mechanisms of auto analysis and reflection that CEDAIN has developed, in conjunction with the attempt of this research to unveil the hidden and explicit curriculum of the practices of CEDAIN, are a great source of inspiration that could inform other practices with similar goals. In this way, staff must pay close attention to how they are developing their practices se they are aware of the indirect learnings that the organization might be teaching to community members and staff. I argue that if we are not aware of these indirect outcomes, the practices of the CEDAIN have the potential to reproduce the same structural problems that they are trying to overcome. In this sense, practices in the non-profit sector are either emancipating or oppressing, neutrality is impossible.

Narratives form community members are important to challenge our own assumptions. As Santiago said, community development requires practitioners to break their stereotypes and include the voices of the community. A clear example is the testimony of Hortensia, she explained how through her volunteer job in the health system she learned about family planning techniques. This, in her own experience, have made her aware of how different her life might have been if she had been aware of this information when she was young. This proves that doubts and stereotypes like the ones staff member illustrated during the focus group, for example: 'rarámuri peoples liked to have big families for x or y reasons' might not be an accurate reading of this ethnic group. I suggest that, to avoid this kind of mistakes, all stereotypes must be problematized because exceptions will always exist. These exceptions are important to address matters of justice.

Color blindness is a strategy that must be challenged. Again, neutrality is impossible, therefore we cannot state that by avoiding our difference we will recreate a just world. In fact, this strategy will be maintaining the status quo intact. I say this because of the hierarchical system where the practices of CEDAIN occur. I invite all staff members in the NIC to acknowledge that our differences are important. The personal is political, therefore our identities are important for the self-determination of individuals. I invite practitioners and academics to never stop listening to personal stories, they will always enrich the practices that the NIC performs. In this sense, I invite the reader to deconstruct the illusion of unity that the term 'community' casts, to realize that all our differences matter. I argue then, that there are plenty of possibilities of building 'community' based on our differences.

I also argue that no matter how mindful community members and nonprofit staff are about their practices, they will always result in good and bad outcomes. Though, I believe that a mechanism of action/reflection must be in place to improve what the NIC does. The critical analysis of the narratives of participants in this study, is a collective body of ideas worth to read, apply and challenge in the recreation of future practices. For example, the idea that CEDAIN members are doing things correctly and that the ones who must work and change are the communities is a contradiction. This statement, that was reproduced by participants of this research, goes in opposition to the CEDIAN's values like: 'respecting the culture and the points of view of community members'. In this way, reflection on these practices is important to avoid the banking education models.

The identification of the explicit and hidden curriculum I presented in the finding section, must never be read as deterministic. This was, in fact, created through my own subjectivity in conversation with the participants of this research. However, I think that these insights can be a source of discussion for staff and community members to analyze the impact of the intervention of CEDAIN. Additionally, the explicit ways on how participants have learned is an empirical set of information that could inform future pedagogical practices in CEDAIN. In other words, if CEDAIN is interested to use the experiences of their participants to inform their future practices they could use the findings of this research to plan their future strategies of intervention. I would invite the operative team to think about this possibility.

I hope the analysis presented is food for reflection for CEDAIN and other nonprofit organizations. My attempt is to trigger the new emancipatory practices for future interventions inside and outside the NIC.

Recommendations for future research

I share here some of the things I learned though this exercise:

- Our body matters, and it is the first territory that allows us to navigate and understand the universe where we live.
- Modernity exists in both city and the rural realities. Mestizo and indigenous identities encompass modernity and tradition at the same time. Culture and indigenous knowledge are in constant recreation and evolution in cosmopolitan metros as well as in a rural village.

- Dichotomies that try to explain our reality in our present only reproduce the structural forms of domination of our society. They must be problematized and defined in terms of grey scales. For instance, personally, the borderline that I had constructed which defined mestiza and indigenous identities is blurrier than ever. The same applies for oppressor and oppressed terms.
- The social system where we live is racist, therefore we are all consciously and unconsciously racists by default. There are no exceptions.
- Neutrality is impossible. If we are not advocating for justice, then we will always perpetuate the racist, patriarchal and colonial system where we live.
- Community is a complex word that, when it is not well defined and understood, creates illusions of unity and equality which reproduce the same systems of oppression that are ironically the opposite of the meaning of the word. Dialectical theory has allowed me to find answers inside this complexity.
- Folklorizing a culture and idealizing it as "better" than other cultural expressions has the same negative impact as racist attitudes.
- Cultural purity or authenticity are social constructions that supports hierarchical structures and oppressive systems.
- Self-determination and autonomy are crucial factors that are influence by who we construct individual and collective identities and culture.
- The unity of practice and theory is crucial to understand and enact justice.
- The way we understand the world is the first element we can transform in us to encourage our activism, we must constantly challenge it. Example: deconstruct the dichotomies you take for granted to understand the world differently. In this

sense I have challenged my mestizo identity by allowing my indigenous identity to grow in conversation with other indigenous people. I also learned this through the analysis of participant identities and binaries. This oversimplification overlooks that identities are in constant recreation and evolution. Now I am also aware that identities go beyond binary categories. Binaries overlook the existence of other possibilities within those two opposites. In this way next time I would try to find better ways to include the complexity of the participant's identity and positionality. However, the example of positionality that I present during the process of this research is the source of this self-critique. The story I told about hoy my positionality changed across the time of this research as insider and outsider for CEDAIN, it is a clear example that identities and positionality matter in how we act in the world. To that defines people in binary categories without looking at the complexity of other possibilities I am recreating a border or a limit of what you can be.

Research has been a great opportunity for me to reflect on my practice, to incorporate a theoretical framework, and to listen to my colleagues in new ways that I had never experienced before. Furthermore, the conception of a dialectical methodology is a great tool that could guide any practice that looks for equality and justice. I have learned that by glorifying the work of the nonprofit sector we could be maintaining and supporting the status quo that we are trying to overcome. I have also learned that communication among all participants, regardless of their position in the hierarchy of the organization, is necessary to design a project that becomes a countermovement that

challenges hegemony. I believe that by acknowledging others' realities, experiences and knowledge, we can create new ideas to recreate and act the transformation we envision.

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