

When the Body is the Oppressed, or The Ma Project, Dancing a New Collective Story (Participatory Research on Communication for Social Change)

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Abstract

In Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, El Colegio del Cuerpo (the School of the Body), through the Ma Project, an education-through-dance intervention funded by the World Bank, aims to restore the individual and the social body of a community affected by violence and high levels of social inequity. This research, a collaborative, interpretive, and participatory research aims to understand what are the elements of the Ma Project as an intervention for social change, the perceived changes in the children and the community, and the challenges of the project. Most Significant Change, participatory video, and ethnographic techniques (participant observation, interviews, and focus group) were used to explore these questions. Silence and the Present Body were found to be essential communicative elements of the project and community members identified respect to be at the roots of many individual and social transformations. The community also identified organizational weaknesses as well as limited access and "elitization" as some of the challenges that might hinder the continuity of the project.

Committee

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