

A “Helping Hand”: Educational Obstacles Within the Ecuadorian Educational System & Its Effects

Education is one of the fundamental building blocks of a functioning nation particularly in the 21st century, however what happens to a nation if proper education is not afforded to all its citizens? In 2008, the Ecuadorian government sought to rectify obstacles within the educational system by reluctantly endorsing the MOSEIB curricula model and rendering public universities tuition free. The MOSEIB or the Bilingual Intercultural Educational System Model began in 1989 under the National Directorate of Bilingual Intercultural Education. The goal of this curriculum is to deemphasize Spanish-centric education and expose indigenous children to a curriculum based on knowledge from 13 different indigenous groups. According to Oviedo, this initiative “includes language instruction...process of cultural and linguistic reinforcement” (Oviedo,457). This comparative research seeks to investigate what types of obstacles exist within the American, British and Ecuadorian educational systems; this paper focuses specifically on obstacles within the Ecuadorian educational system since the constitutional change in 2008. Furthermore, this paper explores common variables identified among those who are at a disadvantage within the educational system and why it poses a problem. Lastly, I investigate what type of effects educational inequality has on various communities and how they resist it.

Using personal interviews with locals, primary and secondary sources, my early findings suggest that the constitution addressed certain inequalities but left pre-existing structural inequalities influenced partly by racism, classism and colonialism.

My preliminary findings indicates that the government is generally not sensitive to the needs of communities of colour. According to David Post, the change in the constitution more so

benefits the children of middle class families as they “ maximize the educational opportunities for their children...lag in taking advantage of the same increases that were generated by political pressures of parents with higher status” (Post,4). Middle class families are likely to have access to monetary and social capital that ensures their children’s success. Through a discussion with a local in Chota community, I learned that the national government demanded the closure of small schools; the school in their community was forcibly closed. This meant that the children encountered geographical,linguistic and financial barriers in accessing education. Shortly after the school was closed, the government paid for the construction of an expensive football field in the community. Its construction might seem innocuous, however it is problematic on several levels. Above all, its presence implicitly says that the government knows what is best for their community.

Since the constitutional change took effect the literacy rates in Ecuador as of 2016 are “ 94.35 % among male and female respondents aged 15 years or older” (UNESCO). However, there is evidence that while these improvements have improved the literacy rates in Ecuador, there are still certain segments of the population that have a difficult time accessing education due to their socioeconomic status, mother tongue and ethnic background. Marginalized groups find it difficult to gain access to the same type of schooling, language skills, money and social capital that their wealthier peers have access to. According to Raftery and Hout, the only way the education gap between the rich and poor would decrease is if demand by “ more advantage rich families is already saturated”(Post,4). Arguably, one could propose that if traditional as well as general inequalities were addressed, then underprivileged Ecuadorians might stand a chance of benefiting from this amendment. According to David Post, under the current enforcement of this

amendment parents of wealthier students are able to “ maximize the educational opportunities for their children...lag in taking advantage of the same increases that were generated by political pressures of parents with higher status” (Post,4). By examining what obstacles Ecuadorians face in the educational system, we can gain a better understanding of how unequal educational opportunities have far reaching sociological impact on the nation’s function.

In conclusion, educational obstacles that exist within the Ecuadorian educational system has far reaching impact on community cohesion, economic stability and persistence of crime within different communities. What is at stake is not merely about educational attainment but also about what type of types of injustice and violence that become exacerbated by systemic lack of opportunities.

Work Cited

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