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Self-Empowerment of minorities focusing on Trans-Border communities

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Preface

The drive home after going shopping in the United States with my parents was always enthralling. I used to count how many people were sitting or standing on the top of a fence overlooking into the United States. At a young age I did not grasp the magnitude of what this meant. It was “normal” to look outside the car window and observe people, mainly men, running across the highways as they rush to get mounted on the top of a brown fence that extended along the road all the way into the ocean. Throughout my childhood I remember noticing how some men tried to jump over the fence and run into the city. There was always one man who stood over the hill watching through binoculars holding a whistle. At a given time that man would blow the whistle and about one hundred people would run across the highway, climb the fence, jump over and run as fast as they could. On the other side of the fence there were some, about 10, policemen waiting for them. Some were caught as the rest kept on running.

Curiosity by this “practice” was developed through the years. So many questions ran through my head. Why are they doing this? Why can’t they go to the United States the way my family and I did? Were they successful in doing this? Who are they and how did they get here? My parents explained to me that they were searching for a better future for them and their families. At that time, I couldn’t comprehend the depth of the issue, so I was satisfied with that response. As years went by it became “normal” to see this happening. The border dynamics changed radically after the attacks of 9/11. The one fence became a fence and a wall as the number of border patrols increased dramatically. It changed the dynamics of how people tried to cross the border. It didn’t just change for illegal immigrants but for everyone trying to enter the country.

Before the 9/11 attacks we were able to cross the border through the San Ysidro port of entry in thirty minutes during rush hour. After 9/11 the wait time increased to three to four hours during rush hour. Visas were more complicated to obtain, so fewer people had access to legal entrance into the United States. The number of migrants trying to jump over the fence began to decrease since it became almost impossible for them to enter into the United States the same way. Opening the “business” for smugglers and opened a window for people in the mafia to abuse of these people. At the same time, more people were being deported into Mexico

A number of times I had to cross the border through the pedestrian entrance/exit. I never paid attention to a fence that divided the regular flow of people returning to Mexico and a group of people who were standing in line waiting to be attended by a border patrol officer. It was not uncommon to see this happening. I was not aware that these buses arriving on that side of the fence were people who were being deported into Mexico. I remember looking at their faces, looking sad, ashamed, with a sense of unworthiness. This fence was called the cage. Many of these people did not know where they were or had never been in Tijuana. They were thrown into an unknown city with no money and no sense of direction of how to go from there.

Growing up in Mexico the immigration crisis was always relevant. You always hear about it whether it is at school, on the news, politics, even as a coffee talk. in the in the United States we do not hear much about the issues along the border. It is interesting that San Diego being a border town not many people know what is happening in the South of this city. For years not much was said about the migrant community but due to the political climate we are currently leaving under the government of Donald Trump this population has been getting so much spotlight. As a US citizen with Mexican parents I am aware of the problematic of the issue causing a humanitarian crisis along the US/Mexican border.

When you have been standing under the sun for a long time, you don't realize how much shine there was until you walk into a room. A similar effect occurred to me after moving to Phoenix Arizona and got involved in organizations working at the border between Arizona and Sonora. Growing up in southern San Diego, northern Mexico I did not perceive any particularity about it until I moved away for college. Being able to grasp the unique culture emerging in border towns and how much I have taken for granted while I was growing up lead my inspiration to pursue my master's degree. Within my journey and gained experience in the Masters of Leadership Studies has given me the opportunity to broaden my views and deepen my understanding of needs.

As I commenced working on my Capstone I knew the targeted population I wanted to work with. I began by developing a volunteer program aiming to support migrant communities in both sides of the border between San Diego and Tijuana. Aspiring to collaborate between two countries providing growth opportunity for leaders and followers. As I continued to develop the program I noticed a commonality between myself, the group I was aiming to support, and the group that would had be part of the program as emerging leaders. This was the sense and need of belonging. A sense of belonging is a human need, just like the need for food and shelter. Feeling that you belong is most important in seeing value in life and in coping with intensely painful emotions (Hall, 2014). Having grown up in the between (Mexico and USA) with no determined culture has always been a challenge. Where do I belong? I am not Mexican enough nor American enough. As I grew up I learned to navigate between the two worlds. But, was not made evident until I was taken out of my surrounded environment.

Introduction

Migrants face challenges from the moment they flee their country or town. They leave behind families, memories, and friends. These people who are mostly men are motivated by the desire to find a better future for themselves and their families. When they arrive to Northern Mexico and are faced with the reality of what it takes to get to “El Sueño Americano” (The American Dream) they are set aside. Immigrants are a sector of the population who are segregated in every country. As they wait on the Mexican side of the border for an opportunity to enter into the United States whether it is with a coyote (smuggler), or walking by themselves through the desert, they make this border towns their temporary home. If they get to cross the border and get established in the United States then they face the reality of confronting a new culture.

Immigrants are seen with less value than the rest of the population. About 450,000 people are trying to cross the border every year (Jarvie, 2017). Leaving some death, others staying in Mexico, others being able to cross, or going back to their cities and countries of origin. As they make border towns such as Tijuana, Nogales, Ciudad Juarez their temporary homes a lot of them get robbed, assaulted, and raped. They end up homeless and hopeless. Another sector of immigrants are the ones who have been deported. When deportation occurs, they are thrown into Mexico, even if they are not Mexicans, with no money nor sense of where they are. When an immigrant gets caught crossing through the desert of Sonora/Arizona then they get deported either through Baja California/California or Texas/Chihuahua so that it becomes more challenging for them to try to cross again.

Migrants experienced such a unique journey and bring so much value to the culture of border towns. But the psychological and emotional damage migrants go through are key for their development and decision making. Not much is known or studied about the overall repercussions

of border towns. San Diego is a key city for immigrants and people living in the city are not aware of what is happening to immigrants.

Problem statement

Human beings have an emotional need to be accepted, whether it is by friends, family, religion, or something else. Living in the between and bridging that gap is where the challenge exists. One of the problematics of people living in border towns is not fulfilling a part of their belongingness. Not only the people who are established in those cities or towns but the people who travel to Northern Mexico in order to cross the border in search for a better future. Migrants are an important part of the culture along the border. The border spans 1,900 miles across four states – California, New Mexico, Arizona and Texas. Where a fence already stands, the surrounding dirt and grass tell the stories of those who try to cross it, those who patrol it and those who live next to it (Ahmed, Fernandez, and Villegas, 2017).

The purpose of this research is to study how migrants could experience self-empowerment having no representation as they are segregated by the communities they live in. Examining current literature regarding empowerment and how to reach self-empowerment, belongingness and the importance of it in everyone's' life including minorities focusing on trans-border communities and migrants. Is it possible for unrepresented minorities to reach self-empowerment? How to successfully cross established boundaries, expectations and stereotypes?

Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to obtain a broad understanding of each concept looking at research, studies, articles, and interviews. The concepts that will be addressed are minorities focusing on trans-border communities, empowerment, courage, and representation.

Minorities

Living in a society where people desire to belong and be part of something greater than themselves has pushed societies to cluster themselves depending on similitudes, characteristics they share such as nationality, gender, skin color, wealth, and more. As Joshua Krook states:

By the time we become adults we have a greater appreciation of the categorical distinctions between us. We have been taught, through the education system and the people around us, that people belong to different groups, and that these different groups are intractable and unchangeable. It is therefore not too surprising that when we meet people we immediately define them by their; race, occupation, hobby, income, demographic and personality (Krook, 2015).

These segregations have influence some negative attitudes of those with a greater sense of power towards other groups whom they consider less worthy. Throughout history, discrimination has been present and continues to be part of our story. Discrimination has a long history throughout the world. Most societies, especially the larger ones, have practiced some form and some degree of discrimination (Devine, 2008). In the United States people continue to be marginalized and discriminated.

Millions of Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Negroes, Indians, and other minority groups in our society suffer from severe deprivation and injustice not only in the past but now. Many widely varying factors cause this deplorable situation. They include historical developments, economic and physical conditions, technical and population trends, long-established institutional structures and practices, political forces, and social and personal customs and attitudes (The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights).

African Americans, Native Americans, Women are a few examples of some of the most discriminated factions in the United States. But some people face the reality of being part of a

double or triple minority. Women of color confront the struggles of being in a double minority group. Women in the workforce experience challenges and discrimination. Being a woman in a white man's world is hard and being a man of color in a white man's world is hard. But being a woman of color in a white man's world is even harder (Thorpe-Moscon, 2014). One of the reasons women continue to struggle in the workforce is because white men remain to dominate the leading positions. This is not because men don't want women to succeed. Rather, it's due to the unconscious tendency most people have to favor those who are most like themselves. This leads to a process called "homosocial reproduction," wherein existing power structures are maintained when those in power choose to surround themselves with others who look like them (Thorpe-Moscon, 2014).

Immigrants struggles as a "silent" minority everywhere in the world. A "silent" minority since no much is said based on the extensive amount of people living under these conditions. Although this has been changing during the last decades so to globalization. In our country migrants have become a topic to be discussed do to the ideologies of our current president, Donald Trump. But the reality is that migrants have struggle throughout history.

Beginning with the establishment of the U.S. border patrol in 1924 and the 1924 immigration act, people of Mexican descent have increasingly been constructed in popular and political discourse as "illegal aliens," a racialized category which is often generalized to all brown, Latino "looking" persons -whatever their citizenship, national original, legal status, education, class, or gender (Stephen, 2012).

Migrants along the southern border have been marginalized and generalized into one faction as mentioned before. Although the general idea that everyone who is crossing illegally are Mexicans was the reality between 1980 and 1990 but it is not the reality in our present times.

Central America is now responsible for most of the fluctuation in illegal migrant flows northward. Three countries in particular -- Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador -- account for the bulk of non-Mexican migrants arrested at the U.S.-Mexico border (Stratfor, 2017). Most immigrants entering into the United States through the southern border established themselves in southern cities. Due to the melting pot occurring in the southern region the dynamics and struggles these communities encounter are unique to the rest of the United States.

Trans-border communities or border towns as are most commonly referred as, are a minority faction within our country. To talk about these communities, it is imperative to address their neighbor cities and towns in Mexico. Both countries behold an international relation and communication. Interconnection and growth of cities and towns on both sides of the border are highly dependent on the development of migration in the region. If one added the population of all ten border states of Mexico and the United States, the region in 2000 consisted of over 80 million people (Staudt and Coronado, 2002). As migrants settle on either side of the border whether for a transition purpose or to settle, they offer economic growth and contributes to a developing culture. Interchange between both countries occur on a daily basis. At the center of the 2,000-mile U.S.-Mexico border, a sprawling transnational urban space swells with over two million people whose live hoods depend on global manufacturing, trade corridors, and government jobs (Staudt, Fuentes, Fragoso, 2012).

The region's dynamic and its unique economic, political and social collaboration create the distinctive culture in which millions of people interact. Considering the enormous differences between both countries, its people have worked together throughout history shaping their own identity. Here two different economies, cultures, and societies have fused to create a highly interdependent binational system (Martinez, 1994). The interdependent culture which continues

to be shaped will further develop according to who is making their way north of Mexico, new politics, and new generations. The major influences that shape the way of life of border landers include the borderlands milieu, education, social interaction, employment/income, consumerism, core culture, and popular culture (Martinez, 1994). As more people continue to settle in this region the problematics its citizens uphold will continue to occur.

Since a clear understanding of trans-border dynamics and culture is not palpable its new members might find it challenging to uptake it. People in these cities are constantly grasping both countries, although not all its members are allowed to cross the border between countries. Culture change is inferred through the person's exposure to foreign institutions, economic systems, consumerism, and cultural norms (Martinez, 1994). Finding a job, school for their kids and settling in a home is a challenging task for anyone moving to a new city or country. An exclusive practice occurring along the border is interacting with both systems. Being employed, attending schools, or carrying on significant social relationships on the other side are deemed to be especially powerful vehicles that engender or enhance contact with the neighboring nation's cultural system (Martinez, 1994). Connection between individuals is imperative in order to develop social identity. The unique experience along the border is fascinating and how it is possible to have people from so many different backgrounds get to collaborate.

Transnational interaction manifests itself in myriad ways, including close cooperation among local authorities, cross-border living arrangements and employment patterns, the use of each other's educational and recreational facilities, and mutual celebration of holidays and festivals. The extraordinary trans-border association is revealed in the massive number of people who cross the border at official entry points every year (Martinez, 1994).

Although, through history the evolution along the border has occurred immigrant continue to be vulnerable on both sides of the border. Collaboration between both countries exist but the power war continues to separate both sides of the border.

Since the early 1990s, the immigration and border-control apparatus of the U.S. state has swollen rather than shrunk. The U.S. border wall, also called the border fence, is symbolically emblematic of the border as fortress, but a fortress through which authorized goods and people can pass and through which unauthorized goods and people continue to pass regardless of the fence/wall (Staudt, Fuentes, Fragoso, 2012).

Unfortunately, division is part of the reality along the border. The needs of the vulnerable sector, the migrants are a reality until today. Research about the history of how trans-border communities have been created and settled is extensive but the current research is missing an imperative factor which is the migrant population and how are they living the issues in border towns on both sides of the border. It is clear that wealthier citizens are able to cross the border and educate their children in one country as they live on the other. But, what about those who do not have the resources? How are they being welcomed into the societies?

Empowerment/ Self-empowerment

As human beings develop their sense of belonging they also work on becoming independent and find motivations that will push them to achieve their goals. Self-empowerment is a key element for individuals to become whom they wish to be. Research has been made about what it is self-empowerment. The dictionary defines self-empowered as; deriving the strength to do something through one's own thought and based on the belief that one knows what is best for oneself. Considering the dictionary definition of the word, it exposes quite a number of concepts

which an individual aim to achieve. But understanding the complexity and reality of life this definition does not embrace the core of self-empowerment.

Human beings have a tendency to achieve independence and at the same time be useful in the world, being worthy and empowered. Self-empowerment is more complex than having the strength to do something. The core of where this strength comes from is where the real root of self-empowerment develops. As Nipa Shah states, I believe that confidence and self-empowerment go hand in hand. But it's the classic "chicken or the egg" question; Does self-empowerment build confidence or does having confidence make us self-empowered? (Shah, 2016). Confidence is a key element to obtain self-empowerment. Trusting and having faith goes hand to hand with empowerment. Confidence is built through interactions with others and as men and women learn about themselves, their desires and interest.

Some sort of security must be present in order for a person to be self-empowered. Self-empowerment is the state of having the social, economic, psychological, and spiritual power to meet our needs, and the ability to express this power (Tremaine, ND). By having stability either emotional, social or economic allows individuals to look at themselves and analyze what are they looking for in the future. Empowerment comes from within knowing and believing that the capability of achieving a desired goal begins in the core of our being.

The idea that a person needs reinforcement from someone or something in order to achieve self-empowerment is not true. Self-empowerment does not require others to give us power, but rather requires us to own and use our inner power, skills, and resourcefulness to meet our needs (Tremaine, ND). Empowerment does not begin from the outside in but from the inside out. All human beings are unique with a power to achieve any desired objective. The source of power comes from the soul of every being.

The best way to achieve empowerment is to have a clear goal in the future, depending on what a person is aiming to achieve in either one day, a week, a year or five years. One of the most empowering things is to have a vision or goal that really connects with you and which pulls you forward and motivates you (Coppock, 2015). Those visions and desires are connected to each individual's core values and desires. Being able to be our true selves, setting personal goals not to please anyone else but oneself will push ourselves to be self-empowered.

Based on my research most empowerment programs offered in the San Diego county are targeted to women and girls. Some programs are also targeted to people overcoming addictions or beginning on the workforce. Two programs in San Diego which provide self-empowerment programs are Leap to Success and Girls Inc. Leap to success is a program that focuses on women. The program provides women with tools and skills they need to regain confidence and rebuild their lives. As stated on their website, Girls inc. of San Diego County offers programs to inspire girls to be strong, smart and bold. One of the programs is targeted to Latina girls. Learning about their heritage, become active participants of their community as they take charge of their lives.

Existing research about self-empowerment is extensive, articles, studies, and books have been written about the importance of self-empowerment in life. But not much is said when someone is living under conditions where they do not have a clear view of the future or a present stability. How can these people achieve self-empowerment? What are some of the tools or steps someone can take in order to achieve self-empowerment. At risk populations should be able to be empowered and find that confidence to become whom they wish to be. Studies about empowerment within minorities and at-risk communities should be considered in future research about empowerment and self-empowerment.

Courage

Few concepts are as useful for the analysis of the human situation. Courage is an ethical reality, but it is rooted in the whole breadth of human existence and ultimately in the structure of being itself. It must be considered ontologically in order to be understood ethically (Tillis, 1980). Courage has been studied by philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle as well as by psychologists, sociologists, theologians whom are until this day studying the implications of courage. Courage is rooted from the Latin word cor which means heart. Being courageous implies to be connected to what lies on our hearts. Brene Brown, researcher professor, has studies the meaning of courage and what does it take to be courageous. In order to be courageous, one need to be willing to be vulnerable, this is the difference between being courageous and being brave.

Our only other option is to choose courage. Rather than deny our vulnerability, we lean into both the beauty and agony of our shared humanity. Choosing courage does not mean that we're unafraid, it means that we are brave enough to love despite the fear and uncertainty (Brown, N.D.).

We live in a society which loves to apply filters to everything we do or show, adding filters to pictures, comments, and life. Leaving the comfort zone is not what the surrounding culture tells society instead we live in a culture of "don't do discomfort". Not letting ourselves be truly seen. Showing our true selves is not easy specially when most people around us only portray their highs and we as human beings desire to belong. The most impactful moments in someone's life come in hand with vulnerability. The power of vulnerability has been undermined when it actually has a great power in the relationship amongst individuals. Vulnerability is the best measurement of courage (Brown, N.D). Researches work on putting together a measurement

An associate professor of sociology at Penn State, is studying the meaning of courage, calling it “a noble quality we all aspire to” (Boyd, 2016). For his research on the meaning of courage, Marvasti chose an initial subject sample of 100 students, who were asked, "What's the most courageous thing you've done in your life?"

Representation

As discussed earlier, migrants along the border region face a unique experience. In Tijuana a Contemporary Dance company has taken action upon the needs of belongingness of the children whom have been born under the conditions of poverty and migration. Briseida Lopez, dancer of Lux Boreal Contemporary Dance Company, has created a program called Fronteras to address some of the issues these kids face through art. Dance as a body language allows children to further develop skills and abilities they might not have been aware of. Dance improves sensitivity, understanding, appreciation, and consideration for others, both for their similarities and differences. Dance can broaden children’s horizons by introducing them to other people and help them better relate later in life to those they may face and also in their future careers (Reyn, n.d.). Fronteras is being implemented in a at risk community in Tijuana, Mexico. Camino Verde is one of the most dangerous areas in Tijuana with an increase in crime and violence. Fronteras in partnership with Torolab and La Granja Transfronteriza have created a space for these kids to attend dance classes once a week. In just a few years instructors have observed the development on these kids. During an interview with one of the instructors who has been with the kids for two years shared her experience at Fronteras. This interview has been translated from Spanish to English, some words have been altered keeping the meaning and connotations of the interviewee. Samantha Guerrero started working at Fronteras in 2015 once the project was established in Camino Verde.

As an observer at the Fronteras I have been able to notice the vulnerability of the children whom take the classes. What these kids have as a motivating representation are the cartel lords who live in the area. These kids' goals are to become members of the cartels, beginning at a young age. Samantha who has seen the kids consecutively every week has seen this attitude on the kids attending Frontera.

When I arrived, it was normal for the kids to say that they wanted to become "falcons" when they grow up, "falcons" are individuals who drug cartels "hire" to be on the lookout of the area. Observing who is doing what, who has a new car, if there is any new person whom they haven't seen. Some of them were already working as "falcons" when we arrived (Guerrero, 2018).

This is an example of how representation affects children and their decision making for the future. They live in poverty and dangerous conditions and the easy way to have money is by becoming part of the cartels. Projects such as Fronteras allow these kids to be aware that there are other possibilities they can achieve in their lives. The idea of pursuing higher education is not even on their mindsets since they have not met anyone who has done that.

Some kids did not think about the idea of attending high school because there are no schools near the area. It is not accessible for them to attend high school. But little by little they began to ask us; what did they study? how is it to attend high school? how could I become a dancer? One of the kids received a full dance scholarship in one of the dance academies where he attended all the dance classes from hip hop, jazz, salsa and more, and now he is attending high school. Most of the kids whom have partaken on Fronteras have attended high school now (Guerrero, 2018).

Children in at risk-areas deserve the opportunity to have positive representation in their lives. It is not easy to access these communities do to the risk it upholds but this provides an example of how good representation can make a difference in someone's' life. The benefit of providing aid to these kids even as basic as teaching them dance lessons benefit their views in the future.

One of the first challenges we encountered was the violence between them. As soon as they arrived they were punishing each other and slapping. By taking to them, proving some sort of therapy, we began to raise awareness towards their attitudes. Helping them to acknowledge why it is not correct to punch each other or yell at each other. Changing the mindset of why they want to punch my friend d why I want to resolve everything through violence. Now you do not see the kids yelling and curing at each other in class. You still see a few kids whom continue to curse but is very limited. Respect has become part of their environment. Even if they do it just for a few hours during the week they are setting the rules of respect by themselves (Guerrero, 2018).

How important it is for kids to have someone to look up to. Representation is important in everyone's lives. Kids who are living under conditions were their only have drug lords as a role model, defines their desires but once they are exposed to other realities it has an impact on their lives and those around them.

Personal leadership philosophy

Human beings are bio-psycho-socio-spiritual beings belonging in a world in relationship with ourselves, others, nature and spirit. We exist to belong and as we embark in the journey of life we learn to adapt. Through my time at SOLES pursuing my masters many leadership theories emerged as well as experiences and life challenges. As I began to interiorize the theories

and developing my personal leadership philosophy I needed to reassess previous and current experiences. It took me a few weeks of school to realize that this career path I have chosen goes deeper than just learning theories. Introspective examination is crucial to understand ourselves, others and, current events. The main theories contributing to my leadership philosophy are; followership, servant leadership, adaptive leadership, authentic leadership, and theory U.

Researching about minorities, self-empowerment, courage and representation, as well as my personal experience has given me a perspective and understanding of the here and now with a clear target on the future. Letting go the voices of fear, judgment, and cynicism is imperative in order to achieve empowerment and courage. To be courageous the willingness to have an open mind, open heart, and open will must be taken part of one's life. Migrants and at-risk communities have mindsets focusing in the past, what has happened throughout history and the continuously crisis. All those voices are forming their here and now with an unclear understanding of what is their purpose and how the future will look like. Theory U proposes that in order to operate from our whole beings there is a process individuals or organizations must journey through. Moving through the U means to reassess personal perspectives, being able to be truly present in the here and now.

Living in a world where leadership are skills that everyone attempts to obtain and willing to become or be called a leader has left out a key component of leadership; followership. Being a follower seems to have a negative connotation when in reality followership needs to exist in order for leadership to occur. Good, skilled followers are able to nurture good leadership, by invisibly helping keep a novice leader upright and on track. It's a lost art in our narcissistic times (Asghar, 2016). As I conclude my studies in leadership I noticed the importance of followership

and how society needs to learn how to become good followers. As a paradox, learning leadership has guide my desire to learn followership skills and become a good follower.

Servant leadership- I find great accomplishment every time I have had the opportunity to help someone in need.

To be an authentic leader I need to be transparent of my ideologies and ethical values remaining true to what I advise or teach. Self-care and self-growth are imperative to provide the best example to those around me. Cultural immersion cultivates sympathy towards other ideologies, beliefs, and lifestyles.

At the end of the day I want to go to sleep knowing I strive to be the best version of myself. Every decision taken throughout the day has an impact on not just myself but others or creation. Knowing this, I endeavor to live a life with purpose by serving others and developing a sense of meaning for myself and those around me. Living with integrity motivates me to go out of myself to give my life for others, caring for them so that they can be successful in life. By caring and being present for the good humanity fills me with joy and I accept the responsibility and the struggles it brings.

Implications for the field of leadership and future research

Based on the research, information regarding independent constructs such as minorities, belongingness, self-empowerment, courage, and representation can be found. Research on the dynamics between two or more of these constructs is limited or null. The biggest research gap is between trans-border communities, representation and self-empowerment. These communities facing the unknown with such a versatile culture is being left out and how its member could achieve empowerment with the lack of representation. In future research it would be interesting to look at the importance of leadership and followership opportunities for minorities especially

along the border. How would that benefit future generations and the growth benefiting both countries.

Due to time limitations, I was unable to research about the importance of art in the development of children's self-empowerment and the benefits of it according to belongingness and finding a voice to be courageous. A quick glance was able to be done when observing the program in Tijuana, Mexico and the interviews made. Art is a great way to introduce and inspire kids to become who they wish to be in the future. And, not looking only at the children's development but how it also benefits those who are facilitating the opportunities to the younger generations as they are also being impacted by the environment these kids are living in and how it allows them to reshape their lives.

Conclusion

Through my time at SOLES I have been able to grasp the needs of leadership and followership. As a leader I aim to be courageous supporting those who are most in need such as trans-border communities. Throughout my life I have been present and taken part of a trans-border community but being able to understand the reality many people are living has motivated me to become a voice for those who are not empowered and need representation.

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