Early Education, Community and Networks: A Strategic Alliance

“Improving Early Childhood Education in the Caribbean through Cooperation with Chile”

Trinidad & Tobago, January 2010
Ecological Focus
Relationship Early Education - Families

STATE

SOCIETY

PRESCHOOL

FAMILY

COMMUNITY

CHILDREN

CULTURE

PUBLIC POLICIES
Why work with the Community?

Because it allows:

- Expanding material and symbolic resources in direct benefit of the children and their families.
- Legitimizing educational communities as local actors that promote Children’s Rights.
- Make children visible in the territory as subjects with rights.
The Community as an Educational Space

- The educational units are inserted in physical, social, cultural, political and economic territories, which constitute communities or neighborhoods.

- These spaces are where people’s daily lives take place. In other words, life itself.

- These are the spaces where the children who attend the educational units and their families live.
The Community as an Educational Space

Therefore, education can only be **pertinent and meaningful** if the unique aspects of the local community’s life are part of the curriculum. In other words, the local community is part of the educational community.

Likewise, the educational community can appropriate itself of the local territory and community, using them as “living classrooms.”
How do we work with the local Community?
Thematic emphasis of Work with the Community

FOCUS ON RIGHTS

INTERCULTURALISM

GENDER EQUALITY

Special Educational Needs
What are we doing with the Community?

- “Open Doors” Policy: opening projects or activities by the educational units or programs to the local community.
- Promoting children’s rights as part of the local culture.
- Participating in activities for all of the children in the community on dates that are special for them (Children’s Day, Christmas, etc.) and in local festivities and celebrations.
What are we doing with the Community?

- We belong to the Social Security Network and our facilities are therefore community “centers for dissemination” of policies and programs involving early childhood and families.

- Because we participate in the municipal early childhood networks, we can articulate them with community organizations so they can influence decision-making.
Working with Local Networks

- The local space is where the state is closest to the citizenry.
- At this level is where social policies are implemented, which means that multiple inter-sector coordination instances also operate (Institutional Networks).
- But spaces for coordination are also produced between different civil society actors, among others, and the institutional actors (Social Networks).
What are we doing with the Community?

- JUNJI’s educational programs are local actors because:
  - They are recognized by the local community as the ones that most efficiently promote respect for the rights of the young children who use them.
  - They are recognized and called upon by other institutional actors, also because of the legitimacy achieved and their knowledge of the everyday life of the communities they are inserted in.
But, ultimately...

- Our **biggest and greatest** challenge is to contribute to the construction of solid and broad-based alliances with families, community agents and local actors so they can take responsibility for the development and wellbeing of the children in each territory where the JUNJI is located.