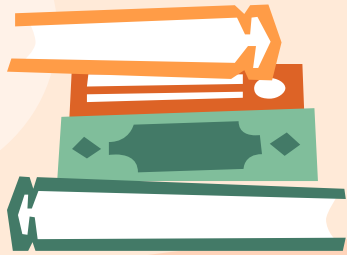




# Mothers United: An Immigrant Struggle for Socially Just Education



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# Purpose of Book

- The group “**Madres Unidas**” coming together to plan for a new school designed to replace the overcrowded one
- The author really wanted to create a team in which they could advocate for change, she started addressing the movement for implementing smaller schools in Oakland. She began attempting to show the division existing amongst teachers and parents
- Author works to empower the 5 parents to help them realize their positions and advocate for a school that would better support low-income minority.



# Methodology

## Qualitative Ethnographic and Participatory Research

The purpose of **ethnographic research** is to attempt to understand what is happening naturally in the setting and to interpret the data gathered to see what implications could be formed from the data.

**Participatory Action Research** is a qualitative research methodology that involves researchers and participants collaborating to understand social issues and take actions to bring about social change.

**Author: Andrea Dyrness**  
**Ethnographer and Translator**

- Motivated by the small-schools movement in 2000
- Research could contribute to social change and benefit the community

### Participatory Research Mother's United

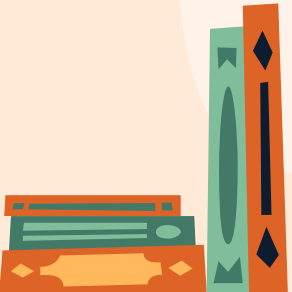
- Parents' research team led by 5 Latina, immigrant mothers with limited education and resources, in the Fruitvale neighborhood of Oakland
- Document their experiences in the design process.

### Methods

- Interviews with parents, teachers, students and community members
- Community Meetings
- Questionnaires
- Surveys
- Focus Groups

# Implications for Policy and Practice

- Highlights the disparities that exist for marginalized groups, and how they are included in decision making, policy change processes at schools.
- Emphasizes the role of the ethnographer in participatory research studies as “just to simply be with the mothers in the struggle, to hear them out, back them up” (Dyrness, 2011).
- In order to gather the authentic voice in ethnological research need to identify those in power and those not in power and continue to elevate the later



## Trust

# Findings

## Change

A key finding in Mothers United was the importance of ethnography as a research practice. Through this research practice Dyrness was able to create relationships and trust with the Madre Unidas throughout the process of opening a small-school and the reflection. While also serving as a translator for the mothers.

Latinx Madres Unidas fought to be a part of the greater community of the small-school.

The Madres Unidas worked hard to present the information they had found through their research and raised a series of questions for teachers and administration to answer. This then lead to creating a school environment the Madres felt a part of.