



# THINK — — IMPACT

## Richard Hanson

Richard received a BA in English and Spanish language and literature and later a Masters in Public Administration and Latin American Studies, with a focus on education and human rights, at the University of Texas at Austin's LBJ School of Public Affairs and Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies,.

A native of Texas, his interests in culture diversity, immigrant experiences, and human rights led him toward social projects and public policy, first as an ESL instructor and youth mentor for Latino youth, later as a legislative aid for Representative Pete Gallego in the Texas House of Representatives, whose district covered 75% of the Texas and México border. Then as a researcher, translator, and program evaluator for two Brazilian non-profits, Global Justice and People's Palace Projects, he focused on the application of international human rights law in prisons and alternative education programs for juvenile offenders, inspiring his Master's thesis, "An Evaluation of Intervention Models for Juvenile Offenders: From Rio de Janeiro, Brazil to Giddings, Texas."

Richard arrived to Oaxaca for the first time in December 2007 as a tourist, yet the unique context quickly inspired a new career. He saw an opportunity for connecting youth from different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds to explore history, identity, and future aspirations through various information-communication technologies and workshops, leading to the creation of the Trilingual Project and directing the ISITIA program for the ORB Foundation (FORB). His responsibilities evolved to include managing FORB's SEED México program, focusing on the creation of small projects that could lead to sustainable employment in the communities, as a strategy for curbing migration and orienting individual productive projects towards realizing community goals.

His founding of the non-profit Tejiendo Alianzas (TA) reflects the culmination of experience and community and partner network building over the last ten years. Through TA, he has co-created programming and collaborated with students and faculty from the Oaxaca state system of Community High Schools (Bachilleratos Integrales Comunitarios), the Tecnológico de Monterrey, CIIDIR Politécnico Nacional, the University of Texas at Austin, the Universidad Tecnológico de Valle de Etla, the Universidad Tecnológico del Valle de Oaxaca, and now the MIT Enterprise Forum. These partnerships enable students to apply their knowledge to support the needs of community projects in highly marginalized rural indigenous municipalities and villages.

This last step has finally set the stage for bringing ThinkImpact to Oaxaca.