

Transformative Education: Meanings and Policy Implications



GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR
EDUCATION
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Editors: Vernor Muñoz Villalobos
& Luis Eduardo Pérez Murcia

Foreword by the President of GCE

Education plays a pivotal role in transforming the world, including overcoming poverty, injustice, and inequalities. It is the vehicle through which knowledge and skills are strengthened to promote respect for human rights. Furthermore, through education, we can create safe spaces for learning, enlightenment, and development for all.

We all have a right to an education that is transformative. Transformative education opens doors to critical and liberating thinking and encouraging pedagogical formal and informal learning processes.

This Special Issue on Transformative Education has been prepared by the Global Campaign for Education (GCE). It presents a series of articles written by specialists, activists, and academics who fight for the right to education in varying contexts worldwide.

The transforming role of education is the common denominator in all of them. The articles propose new visions of pedagogy and popular movements from different angles, illuminating the spaces necessary to advance additional debates.

The insights shared are intended to ignite robust discussion, and we invite all of you to join the conversation and help strengthen knowledge around transformative education.

Refat Sabbah

President

Global Campaign for Education

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Introduction: Education as a Catalyst for Change

Luis Eduardo Pérez Murcia and Vernor Muñoz Villalobos

The power of education to transform lives has long been discussed in academic research. Pioneering scholars in the field of international development, notably Mahbub ul Haq (1996) and Amartya Sen (1997), have questioned the understanding of education as a simple tool for promoting economic growth and instead placed it at the heart of contemporary debates on human well-being. In Sen's view (1997: 1959), the benefits of education cannot only be measured by improvements in commodity production and levels of income. "Even with the same level of income, a person may benefit from education, in reading, communicating, arguing, in being able to choose in a more informed way, in being taken more seriously by others, and so on". The prevalent model of global development that seeks to reduce diverse social and cultural phenomena, such as education, to questions of mercantile efficiency and economic growth reminds us how important is understanding and fighting for the real aims of education, as stated by the Human Rights Law.

Besides the power to transform individual lives, education has the power to bring social change. In the UNDP's (2000) report, which explores the links between human rights and human development, Amartya Sen reiterated the intrinsic value of education for the satisfaction of all human rights and its role in bringing positive social change. More specifically, he stressed the value of education for reducing poverty, inequality and making societies fairer. This approach has been well received by both academics and practitioners who have consistently placed education and its transformative power on critical debates on inequality and the search for social justice. In the 'Voices of the Poor' series, Deepa Narayan et al. (2000) explicitly reported education as one of the critical dimensions that those living with little income considered central to escape poverty and poverty traps. Narayan et al. (2000: 5) stressed: "Poor people realize that education offers an escape from poverty; but only if the economic environment in the society at large and the quality of education improve".

In the specific field of education, theorists from a wide range of disciplines have emphasised its power to transform societies. In a recent account, Bhurekeni (2020), for example, emphasises the need to update curricula at the very primary level as a significant step for Zimbabweans to decolonise their education system. Although the changes in curricula are only one of the many steps required to bring change in the country's education system and the society as a whole, those changes are significant to overcome what the author denotes as "imperial forms of domination". As Bhurekeni (2020:101) stresses, they still influence the country's social and political institutions. Social change through education is not to change curricula. It can be also achieved through education practices, policies of inclusion of traditionally excluded social groups, and, for example, through the engagement of the education community in "alternative" forms of teaching and learning. Kalungwizi, Gjøtterud, and Krogh (2019), for example, have shown the significant role of participatory action research for strengthening democratic relations in the educational system in Tanzania.

Although education is inherently good for human wellbeing and social change, and people who enjoy the right to education are often less exposed to hunger, famine, and dying from preventable diseases

(Sen, 2000), education systems do not always bring positive change. When children are subject to physical and psychological abuse in the school environment, they are not only at greater risk to abandon school but also to experience long-term physical or mental ill-health, amongst other negative impacts on their health and social behaviour (Ferrara et al., 2019). In both cases, education is not only failing to bring positive change, but also deepening existing social injustices. To name but only one additional example, if rather than learning about the intrinsic value of justice and equality, children learn to discriminate against each other, the opportunities to bring positive change through education may be considerably compromised. To be more specific, if rather than embracing diversity, the school and curriculum promote hate between different ethnic and religious groups and radicalization (see Arvisais & Guidère, 2020; Sobic-El-Rayess, 2020) the possibility for positive social change may not be only compromised but extremely limited.

Overall, and in line with Amartya Sen's critical reflections on education, we acknowledge the intrinsic value of education for human development and human well-being. However, we contest the idea that education systems are inherently good to bring positive social change. Rather than assuming a positive nexus between education systems and social change, we argue that the ways education systems open opportunities for positive change require detailed context-specific analysis and the design and implementation of comprehensive education policies aligned with both a human-rights based approach and the very idea of transformative education.

Bringing change in the everyday

The papers published in this issue, which includes contributions in English and Spanish, bring into question the notion of transformative education, and advance the understanding of how education systems can be transformed to secure the right to education and a positive impact on people's lives. By bringing together the voices of education specialists, researchers, practitioners, and social activists, this issue contributes to unpack the conceptual and practical value of the notion of transformative education, to transform education systems, education practices and education policies.

Acknowledging significant differences in the way the notion of transformative education is conceptualised in scholarly research, it is fair to acknowledge that most contemporary debates on transformative education are inspired by Mezirow's (1991, 2004) transformative learning theory. His very idea that the initial stages of one's life is the time for formation, and further stages, for transformation, has been the focus of scholarly work on this matter and even the inspiration for launching a Journal on Transformative Education. In fact, as it can be read in the journal's presentation of scope and objectives, transformative education is conceptualised as those "educational practices that are informed by transformative learning theory and that foster deep engagement with and reflection on our taken-for-granted ways of viewing the world, resulting in fundamental shifts in how we see and understand ourselves and our relationship with the world"¹.

It is also worth emphasising that Mezirow's theory has inspired contemporary debates on transformative

¹ See *Journal of Transformative Education*. <https://journals.sagepub.com/description/jtd>. Accessed on January 7th, 2021.

education. As Hoggan & Kloubert (2020: 3) highlight, Mezirow's academic dialogue with Sharan Merriam (2004) has pointed to 'the possibility that transformative education encompasses more than just promoting immediate, dramatic change, but that it also includes (and is arguably more justifiable in) the teaching and developing of processes that make possible and hold the potential for long-term transformative effects.

This idea has significant implications for policy debates on education. It suggests that change in education can take place in the everyday, and that even minor changes can transform our societies in the long-term. The practices that families do and recreate in their domestic space when creating a learning environment for their children can bring change for the children who are attending school and the new generations of the very same family. Change is also created when the teaching practices are aware of the diverse ways of learning and struggling in the school environment, and when rather than judgment and mistreatment, students receive the support they need to thrive and succeed. The social framework of patriarchal beliefs and behaviour encompassed in the concepts and models of the old industrial societies has had a dramatic impact on education, validating and reproducing stereotypes, prejudices and inequalities throughout generations. Subsequently, one of the most urgent purposes of today's education, is to promote substantive equality and changes by building in all persons the capacity to respect and exercise human rights.

Moreover, the acknowledgment that changes can potentially take place in everyday life makes all of us more aware of the many ways every single individual can contribute to the transformation of our education systems and societies. A single teacher or teaching practice can make the difference in people's academic, social, and political life. If rather than pushing displaced people to the boundaries of our neighbours and communities, we embrace them as part of our communities and transform our schools to address their specific needs, we are bringing positive change. This is not to say that more structural changes are not needed in our societies to transform our education systems and create fairer societies. It is more a way of highlighting that the power to change our education systems to create fairer and inclusive societies is in our hands. As the next section illustrates, the papers published in this issue develop this idea further in many ways.

Navigating the volume and its contributions

The contributions are organised into three main sections, as follows:

Bringing change for disadvantaged communities

The role of education to address the specific needs of learners from disadvantaged social groups and improve the living conditions of people in vulnerable situations is addressed in five papers. **Eftychia Ramantza's** piece refers to one of the critical challenges faced by education systems today. This is the need to address the learning and education needs of adult migrants and refugees. Her contribution unveils the complexities of adapting education systems to the needs of people who have no legal status in a country and who have no command of the local language. Ramantza's contribution shows how the understanding of other people's education needs challenge our own conceptions of what

education is about. By using life narratives approaches, Ramantza illustrates how the encounter with multiculturalism and witness of the struggle migrants and refugees experience in the context of Greece, to satisfy their learning needs and integrate into society, inspire changes in the way teachers see education and their role in society. What is significant in this study is that the contact with migrants and refugees inspire transformation in the teaching practices of the four teachers who took part in the research. As Ramantza, this volume, stresses, “the biography study of four female educators reveals that multicultural class experiences offer opportunities for critical consciousness and can lead educators to transformational experiences by giving them opportunities to learn, improve their educational and intercultural skills and broaden their horizons”. What is salient in the narratives of these four female teachers is that migrants and refugees are not a problem but an opportunity to change education practices in the country. In this regard, this piece adds to contemporary debates on the impacts of migration and refugee movements on host societies.

Peter Dankmeijer’s paper also links the ideas of inclusive and transformative education. By looking at “My-ID” Programme, Dankmeijer explores how a programme that was initially designed to address discriminatory practices against students with diverse sexual orientation and gender identity, develops further and encompasses what is called by the author a “more broad and radical way to adapt education to the globalized world”. Dankmeijer’s contribution calls our attention to the necessity to make schools and education actors aware of the role of human needs and emotions in education practices (see Boldrini & Dankmeijer, 2019). No need to say that all the people involved in education experience different needs and emotions, but worth emphasising that they shape their everyday experiences of teaching and learning. The analysis of this specific programme in the Netherlands brings us the opportunity to see how education policy has the potential to bring change in the ways education systems address social complex issues such as citizenship and democracy. As Dankmeijer in this volume concludes, “transformative change in education requires a radical rethinking of the function of the school in modern societies. [...] In a globalized world, schools need to become Socratic laboratories to question how to “find the truth” and how to continuously learn to make and take our place in our multileveled societies”.

The role of education to promote equality and empowerment for marginalized individuals and communities is also the focus of **Sanne Müller and Anne-Sophie Bang-Manniche’s** contribution. By looking at what is called in the paper “ways of working” in Oxfam programmes, Müller explores how the idea of transformative education can be put into practice and its effects on gender equality. Drawing on a number of empirical examples, including adult literacy programmes in Mozambique, gender transformative professional development for all teachers in South Sudan, strategies to fight against gender-based violence in Sierra Leone, the paper shows the significant potential of transformative education to addressing and changing discriminatory gender stereotypes and harmful social gender norms, and eliminate gender-based violence. The analysis also shows the value of working with all the actors involved in education, including students, parents and members of the communities, teachers and schools and decision makers, to effectively transform education practices and bring positive change. This paper resonates with contemporary academic and policy debates on gender equality and the importance of education to bring change in the lives of those living with very little income and in marginalized communities.

Neha Ghatak, Niveditha Menon, and Jyotsna Jha's paper looks at the challenges of implementing a mentoring approach for transformative education in Bihar, India. From preliminary field observations gathered during the implementation of two modules of the model and a baseline survey, the paper illustrates the multiple social and structural restrictions faced by young girls to enjoy their right to education, and the ways in which schools, families and communities engage with ideas of autonomy and agency of young girls, to transform school and teaching practices. The findings reveal that the mentoring model stimulates critical thinking among socially disadvantaged children and provides them strategies to understand their own identities, belief systems, and the social norms in which they are immersed.

The issue of promoting rights within and through education is the focus of **Maria Ron Balsera's** contribution. Her analysis illustrates the inherent contradiction in promoting education as a catalyst for change when in reality, and in many contexts of the world, education often plays the role of reproducing social inequalities. By bringing into question the understanding of education as human capital and unveiling the practical implications of adopting a human rights transformative approach to education and development in fifteen countries, Ron Balsera shows how education can enhance students and their families' opportunities to become agents of change. While all individuals are potentially agents of change, the paper suggests that this actually cannot be taken for granted. This will be achieved when governments adopt the positive action to secure the right to education for everyone and in doing so, when they introduce the changes that the education systems demand to make our societies fairer.

Transformative education and institutional change

The notion of transformative education and its implications for shaping institutional change is addressed in two papers. **Marcos Eduardo Miranda Santos, Eneida Maria Erre Araújo, and Jhonatan Uelson Pereira Sousa de Almada** discuss the influence of institutional models that welcome critically-oriented pedagogical action and that challenge conventional teaching-learning practices. Drawing on the example of the State Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Maranhão (IEMA), the paper shows that the institutional model was identified by the school community as a determinant of the positive outcomes achieved by the Institute.

The nexus between institutional change and transformative education is also addressed in Francisca Carla Ferreira das Chagas, Vandrezza Souza dos Santos, Antônio Vagner Almeida Olavo, and Carmen Pineda Nebot's paper. Based on the analysis of a primary and a secondary school, in the municipality of Benjamin Constant in Brazil, the contributors identify some of the critical challenges faced by educators to perform their work and highlights the importance of bringing change in the institutional practices related to teachers training. **Isabel Gil** calls into question the role of technology in transforming education practices. Drawing on the case of Ecuador, Gil exposes the limits of technological advances in bringing change to education practices. The paper concludes by suggesting that effective change in education practices can be only achieved when the aims and objectives of education are reconsidered by the different social actors involved in it.

Questioning education policy inspired by neoliberalism

A critique to education policies inspired by neoliberalism is the focus of three papers. **Carol Inugai Dixon's** paper argues that neoliberalism, as a particular manifestation of capitalism, can create confusion about the aims of education and conflict in educational institutions. Instead, the paper suggests that the embrace of democracy in education systems, in particular by developing a curriculum that stimulates social, emotional, and ethical learning, can better expand individuals' opportunities for self-development. **Débora Cristina Goulart and Márcia Jacomini's** paper adds to ongoing debates on the impacts of neoliberalism policies on education. Following a comprehensive analysis of neoliberal education reforms in São Paulo, the paper shows how a local initiative called Grupo Escuela Pública y Democracia is not only challenging the curricula proposed by the local education secretary, but also suggesting alternative non-compulsory modules. The volume closes with **Fabiola Munhoz's** analysis of the role of civil society organisations in Latin America to promote a based-right approach to education. Drawing on the experience of the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE, by its Spanish acronym), Munhoz sets the region's movements for popular and transformative education in a historical perspective. Her research unveils how civil society organisations have been relying on the idea of emancipatory education as a way to demand transformation in the region's education systems. Despite the many difficulties civil society organisations have encountered to advocate for the right to education in the region, including the commercialization of education and criminalization of social movements, those organisations have played, as Munhoz shows, a central role in the promotion of a rights-based approach to education.

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**Part I:
Bringing Change for
Disadvantaged Communities**

Life Stories of Adult Educators: Teaching Adult Migrants and Refugees as a Transformative Experience for the Participating Educators

Eftychia Ramantza

Abstract

In multicultural contexts, the usual way of thinking of teachers and their educational approach may prove dysfunctional, as they cannot meet the needs of adult students, who belong to a different culture. Adult educators are confronted with a “disorienting reality”, that can transform past problematic meaning schemes about education, otherness, their professional role, and the meaning of life. The purpose of this article¹ is to contribute

to the scientific debate on the theory of transformative learning, pointing out how the sociocultural context and educational experiences can work in a transformative way, not only for learners but also for adult educators. The research on which it is based on sought to address a gap in the study of perceptions of adult educators on cultural differences and transformative learning in non-Western cultures. Using adult educators’ life stories as a qualitative research tool, the present research aims to reveal whether teachers’ previous beliefs about otherness and education have been transformed through interaction with refugees exploring their past hypotheses and seeing if there has been a change of vision not only in education practice but also in their broader view of the world and themselves. The biography study of four female educators reveals that multicultural class experiences offer opportunities for critical consciousness and can lead educators to transformational experiences by giving them opportunities to learn, improve their educational and intercultural skills, and broaden their horizons. The findings of this study, that need further research, can be used to improve the educating programs provided to the vulnerable group of refugees, as well as to design training programs that will properly prepare the prospective educators to eliminate dysfunctional beliefs and prejudices. Summarizing, the organization of a teacher training program based on the ideals of intercultural education and transformative learning is considered necessary to critically examine teachers’ beliefs and principles, and to develop positive attitudes towards diversity.

Keywords

Refugee crisis, education programs for migrants-refugees, life stories of adult educators, Transformative Learning Theory

² This article is part of my research dissertation in the postgraduate program of Adult Education of the Hellenic Open University, held in Athens between October 2018 and September 2019 (Ramantza, 2019). <https://apothesis.eap.gr/handle/repo/43376?mode=full>

Introduction

The widespread crisis in the Middle East has led to mass migration of millions of people with different backgrounds, forming a new multicultural reality for many European countries today. Monitoring data on migration flows in the Mediterranean region shows that 30,971 migrants and refugees arrived in Europe between January and April 2018, of which 14,352 arrived in Greece (<http://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean>). The international trend of integration (Council of Europe, 2008; European Commission-COM, 2011; UNESCO, 2001) promoted today by the EU and the Greek state is based on the intercultural model of education (Georgogiannis, 1999: 50), which aims, among other things: “at the fight against racism and xenophobia, the removal of social exclusion and the provision of equal access to education and the labor market for all vulnerable social groups”.

Advocates of adult education emphasize the importance of “intercultural” learning, highlighting the value of dialogue and mutual exchange between cultures (Morrice, 2018). The communication with different cultural, religious, ethnic groups is for adult educators an opportunity for learning, critical reflection, and conscious awakening (Magos & Simopoulos, 2010). Moreover, the daily challenges experienced by these vulnerable populations and all kinds of obstacles they face (situational, predisposition, education gaps, negative educational experiences, identity or emotional destabilization issues) can be aggressively or defensively expressed to the educator, especially if the educator belongs to the culture of the host country, and immigrants have negative experiences in the host-residence process (Cross, 1981; Corey, 1990; Douglas, 1991; Isserlis, 2001; Lucey, Chaffee, Terry, Marbre, Stone, & Weincek, 2000; Navridis, 1994; Patnaik, 2014; Tsiboukli, 2005).

It is obvious, therefore, that education and management of multicultural classes requires on the part of the educators the development of appropriate skills, in line with the principles of intercultural education, and positive attitudes towards the prospects for empowerment and emancipation of immigrants.

According to Freire (1996), who devoted his life to the linguistic literacy of his compatriots, critical awareness and emancipation are achieved through language, understanding of its function and symbols, while positively affects the improvement of daily transactions, contact with public services and employment (Shields and Price, 2002). In this light, we consider it appropriate to organize training programs for adult educators on intercultural education and transformative learning theory, so as for teachers to critically examine their beliefs and principles before the start of immigrant education. After all, the personality of the adult educator largely determines the participation of the trainees in the program, but also the success of the program itself (Vergidis, et al., 2013).

The Role of the Adult Educator in Multicultural Classes

The role of the adult educator is crucial to the effectiveness of educational interventions and must be encouraging and facilitative, to advise and guide learners, and formulate conditions for their intellectual and emotional development (Courau, 2000; Kokkos, 2005; Mezirow, 2000; Rogers, 1983). The task of adult educators, according to Brookfield (1987), is to build a safety climate to

make learners feel ready to share experiences, thereby highlighting the importance of “openness” and the confidence initiated by the educators. For Cranton (2016) and other leading educators and theorists (Brookfield, 2006; Freire & Macedo, 1995; Jarvis, 2012; Palmer, 2000; Shor & Freire, 1987) the concept of authenticity plays a central role in the traits that must characterize an educator, as it is a critical component of good teaching. An equally important feature that educators must have is a disposition for critical self-assessment, aimed at self-knowledge and professional development (Brookfield, 1995; Jarvis, 2012). Educators who have a good understanding of themselves are able not only to express what they believe in, but also to act in accordance with their underlying values (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004). Moreover, Taylor (1997: 50) outlines the characteristics of effective adult educators: “They must be enthusiastic during their educational work; display care, authenticity, honesty, and a high degree of integrity”; moreover, according to Freire (1971, 1978), the role of the educator develops in an equitable relationship with the learners, aiming at their critical awareness.

In particular, educators working with groups from diverse cultural backgrounds need to critically examine their educational approaches, in order to facilitate and support adult learning. As such, the role of educators is determinant in fostering a learning culture that promotes the empowerment of learners, providing them, among other things, equal opportunities for inclusion and access to the labor market. In this light, this case study is intended to explore the role of educators in programs aimed at integrating adult migrants-refugees into the sociolinguistic-cultural reality of Greece; furthermore, the purpose is to approach the sensitive issue of the habits of mind that shape the educational philosophy and practice of adult educators working with migrant population in Greece. We find it useful to explore adult educators’ frames of reference, as our mental habits and beliefs shape specific interpretations about the world, ourselves, and others, almost automatically directing our behaviour (Mezirow, 1978, 1981, 1997; Mezirow, et al., 1990, 2000). In addition, educators’ frames of reference largely determine their attitudes toward migrants-refugees; influence the climate of learning, the collaboration and communication amongst the parties (Habermas, 1981), having a decisive impact on group dynamics (Corey, 1990; Douglas, 1991) and the effectiveness of educational interventions. According to Mezirow (1998), adult educators envision a society inspired by empathetic understanding, solidarity, and commitment to participatory principles of democracy, to ensure that social system, organizations, and their practices meet the needs of people who serve.

Transformative Learning Theory

In 1978 Jack Mezirow introduced a theory of how adult learning occurs. According to this, adult learning is a process of transforming the way we think and approach reality, which can only be achieved by those who have reached a point of maturity, due to the experiences they have acquired. Transformative Learning Theory begins with the premise that the way we perceive and interpret the reality that surrounds us, our relationships with others, and the one with ourselves is determined by our family and the values of the wider social and cultural environment, that are responsible for our socialization.

A fundamental concept of his theory is the frame of reference, consisting of two dimensions: the habits of mind and the opinions. The frame of reference, in other words, our perception system, that

is, the way we gain meaning from experience and give meaning to our lives, reflects the rules of a dominant culture, the values of the wider social context, and the beliefs of the family environment, by shaping mechanically our thoughts and actions, almost without thinking (introjections). This leads to epistemological, sociocultural or mental distortions, often due to a blind acceptance of the dominant beliefs. When someone realizes that his own life is in a state of disharmony, due to the fact that his initial assumptions limit the way he perceives the world around him, he experiences what Mezirow describes as a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 1990). In this case, he experiences a reality that shakes pre-existing dysfunctional certainties off and this can activate critical reflection, leading to reframing, that means changes in opinions or habits of mind.

It is obvious that in multicultural contexts, as the educational programs we examine, adult educators' usual way of thinking may not meet the needs of students—who belong to a different culture, proving their usual opinions or habits of mind dysfunctional—. Thus, educators are faced with a “disorienting reality”, they are living an experience that shakes the foundations of their perception and can transform earlier problematic views and meaning schemes by shaping more functional ideas, values, and beliefs. But how could we investigate the initial assumptions of the trainers? And how could we see if there was a difference in perspective due to the cultural exchange with refugee migrants?

Biographical Research and Transformative Learning

The biographical research methodology has shaped a powerful research movement in the European educational tradition (e. g. Armstrong, 1998; Dominice, 2000; Edwards, 1993; Goodson & Sykes, 2001; Rosenthal, 1993). Particularly, in the study of adult education, biography as a narrative genre offers a wealth of research data that give us important information about events-stations in the narrator's life and often reveal the directions of his future plans. The biography also allows the narrator's personality to be sketched with his cognitive, emotional, intuitive, ethical dimensions, revealed in a dialectical relationship to the sociocultural context and elements of tradition (Tsiolis, 2006). The basic idea is that when individuals “outsource” their personal stories, they are interpreted and evaluated in a contextual way, that is, within larger family, social, or cultural contexts (Randall, 1996).

In addition, life stories, as a part of biographical genre, encompass narrator's frames of reference (Koulaouzidis, 2013), so they are fully consistent with the purpose of our research, which is the study of transformative learning, due to their retrospective function and the constructive character of the theory (Mezirow, 1991). More specifically, narrative self-reflection drives subjects to a process of retrospective self-observation, self-understanding and self-disclosure, which can lead to awakening consciousness and giving transformative character to the research process itself (Fleming, 2003; Jaspers, 1963). According to Mavrogiorgos (2009), the biographical-narrative research method encourages educators to critically reflect on their role and their educational approaches. That is, it promotes self-awareness and the building of personal and professional identity.

After all, storytelling offers us a way to connect the past, present, and future, as individuals and as societies. When we think of our personal history, we make sense of our past in a way that justifies and interprets the present, pushing us into a more credible future (Bruner, 2004; Freeman, 1993).

All these dimensions of storytelling offer enormous potential for understanding transformative learning. According to Coryell (2013), the adult education sector needs further studies on critical transformative learning, trainers' perceptions of cultural differences, and transformative learning in non-Western cultures.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of our study was to investigate whether adult educators' participation in migrant population learning programs can influence educators' worldview and transform dysfunctional habits of mind or beliefs.

Research questions:

1. What are the beliefs of the educators prior to their involvement in migrant and refugee's programs?
2. What are the beliefs of the educators after their engagement?
3. Do we observe a transformation on educators' worldview after their participation in multicultural classes?
4. Does biographical narrative enhance critical awareness that implicates transformation?

Methodological Options

We followed the qualitative approach of research, which according to Galata, et al. (2017), can capture the nuances of meaning and interpretation that numbers cannot convey, in particular, the life stories of adult educators in Athens. As for the data collection technique, we chose the interview based on curriculum design standards, which consists of three distinct phases: a) the main narrative, b) the clarification questions, and c) the report (Koulaouzidis, 2009), with reference to educators' involvement in migrant-refugee education programs. In terms of sampling, we followed the snowballing techniques. That is to say, we asked a female educator who worked in this field to recommend us some of her colleagues who were willing to tell us their life stories. This led to the emergence of female point of view on the subject, although it was not in our original intentions. It can probably be explained because of the biographical nature of the research, which is closer to female temperament (Murray, 2008). Thus, four female educators with different social and educational backgrounds were the sample of our research. Participants agreed to recording of the interview and keeping notes, retaining the right to withdraw from the process at any time, not to answer questions they didn't want to, and even silence portions of the narrative at a later time. It was also agreed the use of nicknames and the protection of their personal data, while the time and place where the interviews were given were arranged to serve the participants' schedule. To familiarize ourselves with the admittedly demanding research method, we conducted a pilot interview, evaluating the audio file.

The Research Tool

The research tool we constructed followed Mezirow's theory. After the free storytelling, clarification-report questions followed up for understanding the individual biography and identifying changes in instructors' frame of reference. Specifically, for the second and third part of the interview, we constructed a control sheet with four thematic axes. The first axis explored the experiences of participants from their childhood and adulthood to date, focusing on the role of family, school, local community, friendly and professional environment. The second axis corresponded to the first research question; it required the participants to think of their initial assumptions about the content of the training, the training process, and their major beliefs, including their motivations and expectations around their participation in these programs. The third axis, which answered the third research question, followed the ten steps of Mezirow's transformation course and explored the existence of transformative experiences, its stages and the factors that favoured them. The fourth axis related to the views of educators, as these were formulated after their participation in the program; it corresponded to the second research question, and had a report nature, answering also the fourth research question about transformative extensions of biographical narrative.

Research Data Analysis

We followed the objective interpretive analysis, which highlights the external reality (institutional rules of society) while it also emphasizes the subjective-internal reality of the participants (Pandazis, 2009; Ulrich Oevermann, op. Cit. Tsiolis, 2006). Our intention was to highlight the subjective, contextual representations of the subjects, and the changes observed due to their participation in these programs. After listening carefully to the audio documents, transcribing them and consulting the field notes, we recounted the life stories of the teachers. Our generalizations had qualitative features of highlighting specific cases as alternatives to the subject under investigation. We also sought to preserve the dual interpretation of the past-present and analysed the data consciously of our subjective assumptions, seeking to expose our personal perspective in the face of scientific ethics as much as possible (Tsiolis, 2006). Indeed, to ensure content validity, we performed member checking, sending back to the participants our stories of their lives for approval.

Limitations and Ethical Dilemmas of Research

Due to the small sample size and the female perspective highlighted by the present study, it is evident that its results cannot be generalized. These findings are only indications of further research. In addition, the research participants were not selected as a representative sample of the target population, but with the intention of highlighting their experiences, focusing on the depth of these, rather than the number of participants.

The key issue of any research is the respect and protection of the participants' privacy. For this reason, we used aliases and removed portions of the narratives, as suggested by the participants, to exclude the risk of their identities being revealed. Finally, the degree of researcher's involvement

in the research data is an additional dilemma. In a biographical type of research, which utilizes the interview as a research method, the researcher cannot be neutral; on the contrary, skills of self-observation, identification of assumptions and behaviour that influence the way that data are collected and interpreted, are required.

The Self-Reflection of the Researcher

During the interviews, the primary goal was to ensure conditions of safety, confidence, and discretion so that the participants would feel comfortable and free to express their experiences and feelings. In addition, I tried to maintain a discreet attitude, with as little interference as possible, so as not to change the narratives or unintentionally influence what they said. If I had to change something about the interview process afterwards, I would try to manage my anxiety better so that it would not affect my thinking and attitude, and I would try to deepen more in educators' emotions and thoughts.

Editing and analysing the data were demanding processes, not as much because the transcription of the recordings was time-consuming, but because multiple readings of the material were required for deeper understanding. In addition, emotional distancing from the content of the narratives was necessary, while as for the data interpretation. I tried to stay consistent in the original narrative, without making my own assumptions, highlighting the change in participants' frames of reference. Concluding my review of this experience, I presume to say that research in this field, and in particular my acquaintance with the educators and the narratives of their personal stories, pushed me in a process of introspection and self-reflection.

The Results of the Research

Short presentation of educators

Although the four educators came from different backgrounds, they all were willing to transform education practices in adult refugee education. Below we briefly present the life course of the educators and the acknowledgement of their transformation.

1st educator: Thalia

Thalia, 40 years old, grew up in Athens, studied social sciences in Crete, and has been living and working as a lecturer at the University of London for the past 15 years. Research reasons brought her back to Greece in 2017, where she became involved in refugee education. The only child of an urban family, with progressive ideas, she grows up in an environment of artistic incentives and love about studies and sciences. Being a very good schoolgirl, with a developed sense of social law, she had been dancing for many years and wanted to become a professional dancer; however, an injury directed her to postgraduate studies in the UK, where she first came in contact with diversity. Refugee education, a completely different context than the academic in terms of conditions, organization and background of participants, made her realize that the typical academic approach cannot meet the needs of refugees. The disorientating dilemma for Thalia arose when she came into conflict with a group of trainees. Characteristically she mentions:

... the students wanted acceptance, they wanted love... What I realized I was not doing well was this: That I had entered... in a superficial process, that I would try to teach something and nothing more... While that wasn't the case and generally it just couldn't work like that... Now I also feel my students' care and I have developed an educational relationship with them that is centered on the person [...]

This was the Transformation... this... exactly this!

2nd educator: Rosa

Rosa, 25 years old, a graduate of the Department of Philosophy, Education and Psychology, majoring in psychology, grew up in a low-income family in a multicultural district of Athens (Patisia). Since her early years she develops friendships with migrant children at school and in the neighbourhood. Having an artistic nature, she deals with theatre, dance, singing; participates actively in feminist organizations; is sensitive to vulnerable groups, while parallel to her studies, she works as a waitress for a living. The need to offer prompts her as a volunteer to teach Greek to refugees. Inexperienced as a trainer, her original approach was typical. The disorienting dilemma for Rosa arose when she realized that some people had never been taught writing:

I was shocked... I didn't know what to do, as I had never dealt with an illiterate man before, having to learn him something... I originally thought he had dyslexia, but he didn't know how to write... Essentially, he needed someone to deal with him, to sit down, listen to him and insist ... not to give up on his first difficulties! I started thinking about how we can really help these people, to really see what they need... For me, the educator is called to go down the stairs, so that he can stand next to the trainee and listen emotionally to his need...

3rd educator: Maria

Maria, born in Kozani, 38 years old, was raised in a closed provincial society (Trikala), in a high education family. Being a good student at school, she studies English literature in Athens and goes to London for retraining, where she experiences a kind of cultural shock, being herself a foreigner in a multicultural capital city. Gradually she becomes familiar with other cultures, and a year later she returns to Athens. As an educator she has extensive experience in vulnerable groups of adults (e. g. Second Chance Schools in prisons), is a certified adult educator and has been working with refugees in hostels and the Hellenic Red Cross since 2016. She mentions about her experience in refugee education programs:

As time goes by [...] I become much more tolerant of otherness and everything it involves... If I once had two thoughts about one thing now I have four... (she smiles) ... For something I see happening around me that impresses me, I say: 'Sit down! Think! This is not the way you know it, there are also stories that you probably don't know or will never know...'. I'm trying to be more conciliatory. Over the years I have gained patience that I never imagined I would ever have for many things...

4th Educator: Lena

Lena, 31 years old, a husband and mother of two boys, grew up in a small town in provincial Fthiotida. Her parents, who were teachers with a solidarity attitude to fellow human beings, are a pattern of behaviour and guide in her life. Being a good student at school, she studies English literature in Athens, while at the same time she starts working in an English language school and enrolls in the Samaritan Corps of Hellenic Red Cross, where she meets her husband. Certified adult educator, with postgraduate experience in adult education and extensive experience in migrant populations, first aid training at “camps” in Samos, language education programs for adults in Athens, designing of migrant integration programs in the labor market, she acknowledges her personal transformation, realized as a result of her biographical narrative: “Now that I’ve heard what I’ve gone through and how much this thing has changed me ... Finally, yes ...! A transformation has taken place, an important one indeed... However, I started out positively and it is not that I moved from one pole to the other; but I gained more acceptance and understanding of this area (the refugee issue)”.

Analysis Of Biography: Family And Social Environment, Studies And Career

Family largely determines the initial assumptions, guides the career choices, and helps in shaping of the personality of each narrator. Moreover, it seems that family acts as the most catalytic factor in shaping consciousness, given the fact that educators have a positive attitude toward diversity, even though Greek society is skeptical of otherness. Educators’ school experiences, when they were students themselves, were positive and the model of the beloved teacher shaped the archetype of the good teacher to which they seek to resemble. However, the career path of each educator varies. Maria and Lena are typical examples of adult educators teaching English language, having postgraduate studies in adult education and specialization in vulnerable populations. Thalia lives abroad for many years, teaching Social Studies in a British University, she returns to Greece for research, and she gets involved in refugee education, while Rosa, having a degree in psychology, is in her early career, lacks experience but has a huge appetite for offering. Of all the participants, only Lena is wife and mother of two boys, and the person who experienced the refugee problem in all its size, when she went to a camp in Samos to educate the population there.

Assumptions Before the Program

The need to offer to the fellow human being is the motivation that has pushed all educators to educate refugees-migrants. In addition, the premise reflections are common: a) they have a positive attitude towards otherness, which nevertheless may be accompanied by feelings of regret or compassion for this vulnerable group; b) they are aware of the particular educational needs of refugees-migrants; however, Thalia and Rosa only on a theoretical level; c) the common goal of all is the emancipation of refugees through language training, social and vocational integration.

As for The Content and Educational Process Reflection, Assumptions Vary

Maria and Lena have been experimenting with alternative-experiential educational approaches and multilingualism since they both have been exercised in vulnerable groups and have specialized knowledge. Thalia and Rosa follow, at first, a typical approach with emphasis on grammatical and syntactic rules, because they want to shield their students with knowledge so that they do not face racist treatment. Soon, however, they realize that this is ineffective. Thus, Thalia uses art to gain the confidence of the training group, while Rosa takes on the role of a cooperative learner educator who asks trainees to teach her something in their own language so that they feel important themselves and trust in their strengths.

Perspective transformation

Thalia and Rosa reviewed their educational approach and their relationship with the educational team (epistemological transformation). However, we are skeptical of the term “transformation” in regard to the 25-year-old Rosa, as she is in the process of shaping her professional identity and not of changing it. On the other hand, Maria experienced a mental transformation as elements of her character were differentiated: she became more patient, conciliatory, empathetic, open, and accepting to otherness. Finally, Lena has a better understanding of otherness, having lived with refugees in a camp, while she is concerned about the example she gives for her children as a way of life in society, in terms of human rights, the values of life, and how we should approach otherness (sociocultural transformation).

Process of transformation

While Thalia and Rosa verify the progress of Mezirow’s ten steps of transformation, in the narration of Lena and Maria the process of transformation is unclear: either because this has not become aware, or because the researcher failed during the interview to elicit it, or because the transformation process did not follow Mezirow’s ten-steps regulatory course, arguing in Taylor’s view that “it is retrospective, evolving and spiral by nature” (1997: 43-44). To understand the process of transformation, as described by Mezirow, here is the example of Thalia.

Thalia’s transformative process

- The disorienting dilemma: it emerged when she came into conflict with the trainees.
- Self-examination: “what am I not doing well?”
- The initial assumption: she follows a typical educational approach.
- She recognizes that the typical approach does not work and starts a dialogue with colleagues.
- Explores new experiential-alternative educational approaches, e. g. utilizing art.

- Enacts a plan: educators' collective reflection is established as a daily procedure of the educational institution.
- Acquires knowledge through seminars or conferences.
- Adopts a new role in relational learning approach by providing dance lessons for women and organized visits to cultural sites for all.
- Feels confident in this new role: the relationships with the trainees deepen and the trainees begin to learn.
- Eventually, redefines her career plans, making use of the experience in the field of refugees' education.

Assumptions After the Program

- All educators converged on the following views:
- The initial feelings of compassion for the refugees were replaced by admiration for the strength of their character and their abilities.
- The management of the multicultural class improved their educational and intercultural competences; it provided opportunities for endoscopy and revision of the broader worldview.
- Empathy and readiness for change are fundamental qualifications of an educator who wants to work with refugees.
- They vision an education that eliminates discrimination and forms appropriate infrastructures and institutions for the inclusion of all vulnerable population.
- The experience on the refugee issue has been a milestone in their educational path and redefined their future career plans.
- The strongest feelings after their participation in these programs are joy and moral satisfaction: they feel they have become better people, educators, citizens, parents.

The Transformative Extensions of the Biographical-Narrative Method

The leading educators' view is that the reflection on lived experiences enhances the critical awareness and contributes to perspective transformation and the crystallization of new views, feelings, and thoughts. A typical example is Lena, who realizes her personal change during the interview.

Conclusions

Teaching adult migrants and refugees has been a transformative experience for participating educators. Each transformative experience has been unique, in terms of the phases of transformation; the

cause that triggered it; the patterns that changed, and the way it influenced each educator's life, her educational work and her future plans. Educators' participation has pushed them into a critical process of exploring their educational approaches, looking for ways to facilitate and support the learning of their foreign students. This conclusion confirms similar research with educators who worked with teams from diverse cultural backgrounds (Kaliva, 2018; Kyriakou, 2107; Tsaprazi, 2013).

In addition, the biographical method proved successful in penetrating the teachers' frame of reference, highlighting their initial assumptions, how these were transformed, and which new perspectives each teacher adopted. Moreover, biographical narration, due to its retrospective, self-reflective function, intensifies critical awareness and can lead to a perspective transformation.

Educators' life stories have a direct impact on their educational approach and goals, contributing to the creation of knowledge that is based on experience and dialogue, and derives from the constant interaction of factors such as theory, research, learning process, personal and team experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Dominicé, 2000; Goodson, 1994).

Finally, critically assessment of educational approach in the context of culture offers the opportunity to critically examine the intimate cultural tradition and the culture of other peoples (Rose-Cohen, 2004; Taylor, 2006). It also contributes to realize the importance of maintaining an ongoing dialogue between cultures so that the success of educational interventions will be ensured (Berry, 2005). Eventually, it may help educators to develop strategies for improving the cultural awareness and intercultural competence of all members of the educational team (Barber, 2003; Vlachopanou, 2018; Chang, 2007; Simopoulos, 2014).

Utility and Value of the Research

We believe that the value of this research lies in highlighting the transformation process and the factors that promote it. Its originality lies in the fact that very few researchers are concerned with the sensitive issue of educators' mental habits and assumptions, and in particular, how these assumptions affect educational practice. In addition, we consider that our research has contributed, even at least, to the discussion about transformative learning, regarding the educator's role, his relationships with learners, and the role of the wider context as a determining factor in conscience remodelling. Finally, we believe that the plenty of research data we collected from the interviews is absolutely useful to convince policy makers in organizing appropriate refugee educational programs and training programs for prospective educators, as well as in developing appropriate attitudes towards the learning process and relations with otherness.

Useful Data for Educational Policy Makers

Regarding the trainees, the research reveals that they are a very distressed population, with diverse needs and strong heterogeneity in terms of religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and differences that arise from gender roles among them. In addition, the educational groups often consist of mixed populations and diverse age groups; besides, the educational background of each trainee and their

expectations from the program are very diverse. Thus, some immigrants intend to stay in Greece and are interested in learning the Greek language, while others want to go to a Western country, and for them the knowledge of English is useful. That is why a multilingual system is necessary, in order to minimize the phenomenon of early abandonment of the program.

Moreover, some learners are illiterate and face enormous learning disabilities. Some have experiences of war and are emotionally vulnerable. Most of them are far from their families, experiencing tough situations and survival issues, and in many cases, differences in religion, customs or cultural traditions cause them embarrassment and require subtle management on the part of the instructor. In fact, according to the common disclosure of all participants in the research, for the proper organization and operation of educational programs it is necessary the synergy of teachers, social workers, speech therapists, psychologists and professional counsellors, to address the issues related to the energetically integration of immigrant populations in Greek society.

Actual differences in culture, habits, language, religion, mentality and social organization often affect not only the instructor but also the members of the educational group, who may come from different ethnic-racial or religious backgrounds and possibly conceal contradictions or rivalries. For all these reasons, it took time to set aside any differences, which are expected to be significant in a multicultural class environment. Actions beyond the narrow educational context and multifaceted contact were required, such as visits to museums and cultural sites, sports activities, excursions, and artistic expression, which allowed trainees to feel safe, open to each other, and to gradually integrate, which is the ultimate goal in their education.

Moreover, cultural destabilization refers to dilemmas similarly to Mezirow's disorienting dilemma, for the management of which educators must "formulate protected learning environments of thoughtful dialogue and interaction" (Taylor, 1994: 173). In other words, refugee migrants need a transformative education that will allow them to adapt more easily to the new sociocultural environment of the host country. Strict technical or conventional training cannot prepare the kind of critical and democratic citizens who will learn to coexist and work together in a new multicultural reality. Obviously they have to learn the language of communication, but what matters is the critical awareness of the new reality they are experiencing and the transformation of their perspective on the world. In this regard, the use of aesthetic experience through holistic observation of works of art offers education the starting point for the development of critical consciousness (Freire, 1970), while the transformative power of art favours the transformation of dysfunctional assumptions and a broader meaning perspective, so that trainees become emotionally more receptive to change, that is, to the way they perceive themselves and the world.

The research findings, regarding the trainers, show that adult educators in multicultural group training programs need to redefine their role, teaching methods and management techniques, so that they meet the practical needs of everyday life and the expectations of a group of adults with different frame of reference: historical, biographical, cultural, and religious, among others. It is even necessary to identify possible fears or distortions concerning the education of immigrant populations, which, if not recognized and addressed, will affect their educational approach. In this respect, at the level

of educational policy, a preparation program for teachers is considered absolutely useful to detect their initial assumptions through innovative training approaches, e. g. utilization of art (Kokkos, 2011; Perkins, 1994) for the emergence of emotions, attitudes, perceptions, and expectations about their role as educators in multicultural classes.

An educational program for teachers on the ideals of intercultural education and transformational learning is necessary for them to critically examine their beliefs and principles, to develop positive attitudes towards otherness. Critical self-examination of the instructor is necessary to formulate a learning climate that allows for the recognition of diversity and promotes fruitful dialogue between cultures; it presupposes careful monitoring of personal beliefs about the value of cultural diversity, bridging the gap between foreign and natives. To utilize cultural diversity as an opportunity for learning, critical reflection and conscious awakening are pillars. Accordingly, the main objectives of an instructor training program, among others, ought to be: respect and a priori appreciation of others, self-awareness of the educator, cultivate of empathy, development of a genuine dialogue between different cultures, testing of alternative perspectives on the world, and readiness for revision.

It is also important for the potential educators to understand the importance of personalized educational approach, gradually introducing group-collaborative teaching techniques and becoming familiar with effective crisis management techniques, in case of reactionary behaviour that team members may exhibit. In addition, it is absolutely necessary that they understand the value of a climate of respect, security and mutual understanding among the members of the educational team, while it is equally important that they inspire and facilitate the learning process by cultivating self-confidence and promoting self-efficacy of their learners. Finally, educators ought to commit themselves with the moral-humanitarian and socio-political dimension of their role, so as to develop a positive attitude toward cultural pluralism and encourage learning activities that incorporate the culture of minority populations into the dominant culture. After all, critical self-reflection is a key element in understanding personal interpretations and is a crucial factor in teachers' professional development, as it significantly contributes to the provision of high-quality educational services.

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My ID to Be Myself: a Transformation of Schools from Disciplinary Knowledge Factories to Cooperative Spaces for Emotional Self-Development and Activism

Peter Dankmeijer

Abstract: Empowerment and Democracy in Schools

This article describes an analysis of and first attempt to develop an innovative “My-ID” program for citizenship, non-discrimination, student participation and democracy in schools. In the course of its development, the original focus on combating sexual diversity discrimination was broadened to encompass a more radical way to adapt education to the globalized world. On the micro-level, the My-ID program focuses on how to deal with emotions and needs. However, working with emotions and needs is uncommon in traditional schools. The My ID program, therefore, incorporates effective elements from other disciplines to create a comprehensive attempt to transform schools into real life learning environments for empowerment and democracy.

Keywords

LGBTI, Intervention Mapping, Fight or Flight Response, Transformative Education, Nonviolent Communication, Non-Discrimination, Democracy

LGBTI Students

Discrimination of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersexual (LGBTI) students is a persistent problem in societies (ILGA, RIWI & LOGO, 2016; ILGA, 2019) and specifically in education (UNESCO, 2012; UNESCO 2017, Dankmeijer, 2017b). Research on suicide among LGBT young people does not only show that they are up to five times as likely as the general population to commit suicide or make suicide attempts (Van Bergen et al., 2013; Russell, Joyner & Kara, 2001), but also that bullying in high schools is the second largest reason for this high rate of suicides, after bullying and exclusion by the family (Haas et al., 2011; Van Bergen et al, 2013).

Mainstreaming LGBTI Issues

In the Netherlands, Edu-Diverse (EduDivers) and GALE (Global Alliance for LGBT Education), operate to structurally improve the situation of LGBTI students in schools. While Edu-Diverse focuses on the Netherlands itself, her sister organisation GALE focuses on the global level. GALE is the only global organisation focusing exclusively on sexual diversity in education. Edu-Diverse and GALE focus on school environment and services they provide rather than on the direct support of LGBT students, and on peer education, which is the focus of grass roots organisations. GALE’s view is that the target group does not only consist of self-identifying LGBTI students, but also of students who postpone their self-labelling when the environment is not welcoming enough. GALE also includes in her target group

heterosexual cisgender¹ students who may be excluded or bullied because their gender expression does not strictly conform to stereotypical expectations of “male” or “female” behaviour. To capture this target group, GALE uses the acronym DESPOGI (Disadvantaged because of their Expression of Sexual Preference or Gendered Identity) rather than LGBTI (Dankmeijer, 2017a).

In the analysis of social exclusion of DESPOGI, GALE uses the framework of “heteronormativity”. Heteronormativity refers to the assumption that heterosexuality and the categorisation of people in male or female are “normal” and are the norm for social relations, cultural concepts and institutional regulations. This legitimises stigmatisation of other expressions (Rich, 1980; Warner, 1991; Rubin, 1993). Because heteronormativity does not only limit the choices of individual DESPOGI, but strongly influences the entire school culture (Kjaran, 2017), GALE and Edu-Diverse focus on organisational change of schools and of the educational sector as a whole.

The Intervention Mapping Protocol

Edu-Diverse initiated a scientific roadmap to develop a program labelled “My-ID” – “my identity, my idea to change the world” (Dankmeijer, 2014). The roadmap is based on the “intervention mapping” protocol (Bartholomew, 2016). Because it turned out to be impossible to obtain funding for a large-scale development and testing program, Edu-Diverse and GALE joined forces to develop and test parts of the program in a series of smaller projects. The strategy started in 2007 and is still developing. In this article, we describe the most interesting findings from this development.

Although the development of this program started with a focus on making schools safer for DESPOGI students, it quickly became clear that transforming a heteronormative school culture into a more inclusive and supportive school culture could not be done by focusing only on a single topic (sexual and gender diversity). We had to take a wider perspective. Therefore, the My-ID development can also be seen as an attempt to modernise schools and the education sector beyond the ambition to fight discrimination and to promote inclusion. The transformation now focuses on changing schools from “total institutions” (Goffman, 1961), focused on learning specific knowledge and skills, towards schools as learning environments where students get the opportunity to develop themselves to become open, to become autonomous thinkers in a fast-changing world, with key skills to actively engage in democratic structures.

We used the Intervention Mapping Protocol to systematically develop a program that would be truly transformative (Bartholomew, 2016, <https://interventionmapping.com/>). The protocol involves 6 steps:

1. Carrying out a needs assessment
2. Identifying changes to concrete objectives

¹ Cisgender: People whose gender identity matches the sex that they were assigned at birth. For example, someone who identifies as a woman and was assigned female at birth is a cisgender woman. The term cisgender is the opposite of the word transgender.

3. Identifying methods and strategies
4. Developing the program
5. Developing the implementation plan
6. Developing monitoring and evaluation strategies

In this article, we follow these steps, providing background information, describing results of the various studies in which these steps were used in school environments, and discussing challenges to implementation and future use of the protocol.

Carrying Out a Needs Assessment

In the following paragraphs, we go through the first step of the Intervention Mapping Protocol: carrying out a needs assessment. We first give a short overview of the determinants of homophobia and transphobia. We discover that the determinants identified are just the top layer of a deeper mechanism of emotional aversion, and the societal norms and stereotypes. We describe the model we developed to connect different theoretical and research schools into a coherent framework that supports individual and school change (meso-factors). Finally, we describe the macro-factors that influence the schools and participants in the schools.

Determinants of homophobia and transphobia

In 2007 Edu-Diverse started to map the situation of DESPOGI students and of DESPOGI teachers. For DESPOGI students, the main personal factors (“determinants”) influencing their situation were (Kamps, et al, 2010):

- Negative self-image and low self-esteem, leading to a sense of insecurity.
- Struggling with the dilemma of openness. Research has shown that opening up leads to added discrimination, especially in hostile environments (Dankmeijer, 2011). At the same time, not opening up leads to minority stress: a type of low level stress that causes trauma and burn-out in the long run (Meyer, 2003).
- Self-isolation. A high percentage of LGBTI teenagers feels “different” and take some distance from others. This leads to a lack of “living together” (Sanders, 1977).

These personal factors are largely caused by environmental factors:

- Negative behaviour towards LGBT people, notably social distance. While many studies have documented overt violence and unequal treatment of DESPOGI students (“traditional homophobia”), studies in more tolerant societies have shown that even when overt negative behaviour diminishes, a considerable amount of social distance remains. Such social distance has been labelled “modern homo-negativity” (Kuypers & Bakker, 2006).
- Lack of social support. In research on Dutch school pilots, the lack of social support is a

persistent aspect of modern homo-negativity (Kuyper, Vanwesenbeeck & Dankmeijer, 2007).

Additional analysis of the attitude of teachers (Timmerman, 2009; Redde, et al, 2009; Ohlrichs, van der Vlugt & van de Walle, 2013) showed that:

- Teachers often feel ashamed to discuss sexuality (“shyness to handle topics”).
- They don’t know much about sexuality or sexual diversity.
- They don’t know how to handle negative responses from students.
- They are afraid of resistance by parents and religious institutions.
- They would be willing to address sexual diversity if it were a formal part of the curriculum and if they were legitimised by the law and school administration, but this is often not the case.
- Teachers who give (more adequate) attention to sexual diversity usually do so because they consider it an interesting topic that fulfils needs of students.

In school pilots, Edu-Diverse noticed that school administrators often don’t recognize the need to address discrimination (especially when it concerns sexual diversity), and they often lack skills to plan innovation or to coach their staff team(s).

Deeper causes of discrimination

In due course, it also became increasingly clear that exclusion of DESPOGI is not an issue that stands on its own. In the first place, it is well known that discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity is closely related to gender discrimination (sexism) in general (Capezza, 2007), and that most forms of discrimination are linked with each other. Research on discrimination consistently shows that intolerance towards a range of topics and groups is, on average, displayed more by boys, by those having a religious background, by people with a lower level of education and from a lower social class, and by younger high school students (Wilkinson, 2004; Gormly, 2010; Carvacho, 2013; De Graaf, et al, 2017). Researchers still differ in opinion on how to explain these interrelationships. It may be that young adolescents’ age, vulnerable masculinity and low social status factors influence a generalised sense of threat and a rigidity in thought that limit some students (and adults) to remain flexible and open in the face of insecurity.

It is interesting to note there is growing literature on emotions that has been overlooked in educational research. Just like other animals, humans are equipped with a survival instinct labelled the “fight or flight response” (Cannon, 1932). This is an automatic physical response that is experienced when people feel there is a potential threat. Such instinctual responses can be triggered by any unusual situation or by meeting others who are different from what people are used to. It has been shown that the fight or flight instinct leads to an increase in hostility (Dodge, 1980). This emotional mechanism may explain the deepest roots of intolerance. An example of how such emotional hostility becomes a social dogma is the Catholic doctrine which states that sexual diversity is a threat to the (heterosexual) “natural” family (Vic, Stensvold, & Moe, 2013). The results of Implicit Association Testing revealed

that this rejection of uncomfortable feelings in the face of people who are different from ourselves is almost universal (Greenwald, et al., 1998).

Emotions are the most important factor influencing attitudes, and most research on discrimination and tolerance focuses on measuring attitudes (as predictors for behaviour). However, most research on attitudes relies on the framing of attitudes in terms of cognitions (that is to say, framed in terms of cognitive opinions and arguments), rather than on emotions. In the My-ID program, we conceptualize attitudes as “frozen” emotions, which are legitimised or “covered” by cognitive arguments (Boldrini & Dankmeijer, 2019). We label this blend of emotions and cognitive opinions the “Magnum effect”, and in teacher trainings we symbolise this duality with an image of an ice-cream covered (“frozen emotions”) with a thin layer of chocolate (the “arguments”). We warn teachers not to lose themselves in “correcting” prejudice of students by countering arguments in a cognitively, because this is not effective in changing the underlying aversive emotions. We posit that effective pedagogic interventions should focus on emotions.

According to health promotion theory (Bartholomew, et al., 2016), attitudes are strong predictors of behaviour. As noted, homophobic and transphobic attitudes are likely to be followed up by social exclusion or “taking social distance” (Knifsend & Juvonen, 2014). Taking social distance from people who don’t fit in our own world view or expectations is common. Especially with the extensive use of internet, this is likely to lead to stronger social and political polarisation (Bakshy, Messing & Adamic, 2015).

Schools traditionally focus on stopping extremely negative behaviour by reproaching bullies and by punishing behaviour that clearly crosses the line. But most negative behaviour starts with more implicit and covert social exclusion, and only sometimes escalates into public violence. This is why discrimination and exclusion often escape the attention of teachers; additionally, some teachers think it is not the responsibility of schools to do something about it.

To sum up, social distance makes people less aware of others and tends to create stereotypical images.

The NEABS-model

Edu-Diverse conceptualised the relationship between norms, emotions, attitudes, behaviour and stereotyping as a vicious circle of exclusion playing out in society as a whole, and in schools specifically. This “NEABS”- model explains how Norms, Emotions, Attitudes, Behaviour and Stereotyping interact to create a downward spiral fuelled by instinctual fear and anger (Boldrini & Dankmeijer, 2019). The NEABS-model is an attempt to theoretically connect different theories on social exclusion and discrimination. It can also be used as a visualisation of concrete



processes taking place in schools or classrooms, making it helpful for school staff to support awareness of emotional mechanisms and behaviour patterns. It also provides a basis for adequate handling of incidents, as well as for a supportive school environment that reverses the vicious negative spiral depicted into a positive one.

Teachers often don't see much difference between teasing, bullying, and discrimination (Gielen & Klooster, 2010). Lekunze and Strom did an interesting in-depth study of how teachers view and deal with bullying in (New Jersey, USA) high schools. They found that teachers tend to see "bullying" as more or less synonymous with all kinds of violence, both physical and emotional; however, they don't recognise the underlying processes and mechanisms, and therefore lack ideas on how to systematically stop bullying or promote prosocial behaviour. Instead, teachers tend to handle bullying "incidents" in more or less standardized ways: they reproach the bully and in serious cases report and punish them (Lekunze & Strom, 2017). Teachers seem to perceive bullying on a continuum of escalating violence that they have to deal with in various ways based on the seriousness of the incident. From the perspective of teachers, incidents deserve most priority when they disrupt class discipline and the teachers' ability to "teach" (to keep attention on the teacher speaking). Arguably, such a wish for strict control of students is not in line with teaching objectives to promote self-esteem, citizenship and twenty-first century skills to their students. The Jersey teachers would also like to see more lessons about bullying, but the implementation of such lessons is limited and often not very effective because single lessons without a supportive context just provide hollow or double messages. At the same time, many teachers think that "bullying has always been part of school culture and will always be" (Lekunze & Strom, 2017). They don't link the school culture to causes of bullying, nor do they see what a more prosocial school culture could look like.

The NEABS-model can be used to develop a more multifaceted and coherent policy towards pro-sociality, which takes the typical high school elements into account. Such a coherent prosocial school policy requires a consciousness of the students, teachers, and school administrators of how these social, bullying and exclusion mechanisms work. Interventions focusing on only one of the 5 domains of the model (norms, emotions, attitudes, behaviour, or stereotypes) will not work well because then the underlying mechanism will not change. In line with the socio-ecological model, the school needs to develop a holistic and coherent policy for pro-sociality, that contains coordinated elements on all domains.

Macro-influences on discrimination

Teachers and school administrators are making clear that their routines are also highly determined by macro-influences, like national legislation, cultural norms, pressure from parents and local religious groups, and NGOs. GALE monitors the implementation of the right to education for DESPOGI by making country assessments and by comparing countries (Dankmeijer, 2017a). This monitoring shows that countries seem to cluster in several regions of "supportive" countries, "ambiguous" countries and "denying" countries. In supportive countries, the government attempts to mainstream LGBTI issues in the education system. In ambiguous countries, LGBTI groups advocate for change but get ambiguous responses from government officials and from schools. In denying countries, sexual and

gender diversity is largely taboo and often formally forbidden and socially and legally punishable. The assessments show how supportive legislation and guidelines are often not well implemented, but that negative legislation is often supported by a homophobic and transphobic context, which makes it more likely they will be actively used for exclusion and persecution. An example of such a macro-determinant of lack of safety, are the so-called anti-LGBT propaganda laws, which censor schools to give even neutral information about sexual diversity (Shemetov, 2018). Human Rights Watch monitors how conservative States tend to form a traditional values coalition, that often acts in unison at the UN level. The traditional values coalition maintains that human rights need to be mediated by local traditional values, which are supposed to protect social cohesion, with the family as the main “pillar” of stability in society. Graeme Reid, director of the LGBT Human Rights Division of HRW notes: “The human rights movement is not opposed to the existence of customary law, religious law, and tradition; it is opposed to those aspects of them that violate rights. As a result, the task at hand is one of transformation [...] to remove discriminatory elements. As the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women stipulates, States should ‘modify’ the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women to eliminate ‘prejudices and customs and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women’” (Reid, 2013).

From the NEABS needs assessment, it becomes clear how inclusion or exclusion in schools is not only a question of micro-interventions on the student level or even at the teacher/staff level. We also need to have considerable attention for reorganizing the meso-level of school administration and the macro-level of national legislation and cultural norms. The macro-level even includes the framework of UN conventions and the current tense discussion on human (sexual and gender) rights on the global level.

The macro-influences on schools require redefining the role of the school in the world. The Italian philosopher and educationalist Danilo Dolci criticised traditional schools to be autocratic institutes that transfer top-down “objective” (State-dictated) knowledge. As an alternative, Dolci developed a pedagogic method: The Mutual Maieutic. The core of this pedagogy is the equal dialogue between students and teachers. In this pedagogy, teachers are not autocratic transmitters of “objective” knowledge, but coaches of an in-depth dialogue which makes intensive use of the experiences of the students. It is inspired by the way Socrates taught, by asking students questions which “brought out the truth”. This way students become political subjects; they are encouraged to speak, discuss, and to take political action with the school supporting them (Dolci, 1973). Of course, this politicises the school, and rather than controlling students, it encourages them to undertake social and political action to fight poverty and injustice.

Objectives of The Program

As a second step, we developed objectives for the program. The objectives reflect that, on the micro-level, inclusion is both a question of personal empowerment and a welcoming and helpful local environment. The deeper layer of objectives underpinning these is learning how to express emotions and how to deal with the fight or flight instinct when feeling uncomfortable in new situations and

in the face of non-normative expressions. Part of this is the use of Nonviolent Communication, a communication method developed by Marshall Rosenberg (Rosenberg, 2003).

On the meso-level, we set the objective to facilitate a smooth organisational innovation process which builds a structurally warmer, more open, and supportive school environment. We stress the need for attention to democracy in schools, real student participation and, where possible, the school aligning with or influencing inclusive community standards and norms. We encourage schools to take a stand and realise they are not just transferring objective knowledge or skills, but have a function in reproducing and/or changing community standards. Like companies increasingly recognise, schools are also societal and cultural “actors”, who play a role in co-creating society.

On the macro-level, we aim to improve the structure and administration of national education systems and international agreements on education and tolerance, which support these micro- and meso-objectives. While much educational legislation, guidelines, and international agreements are already in line with our objectives, they are often not implemented or are even contradicted by specific discriminatory legislation or practices. This means our macro-objective is mainly to advocate for educational structures to become more democratic and focused on emotional skills in practice, and to truly integrate tolerance and non-discrimination to all vulnerable groups in the system.

In sum, we align objectives on the micro-, meso- and macro-levels. Based on both scientific and human rights analysis, these starting points make it an attempt to radically transform schools from traditional knowledge/skills factories towards living democratic laboratories, where students learn not only with their brains but also with their emotions and their hearts.

Effective Methods for Implementing the Program

To find out which strategies and methods to choose, we explored which “effective elements” for such objectives had been found in existing programs. Based on our review we established 5 key “effective elements”.

Group formation and norming ground rules

One of the most basic methods to create basic school safety is starting the year with setting prosocial rules. Research by Ton Mooij revealed that making agreements with students on ground rules in the first 6 weeks of the academic year was the only intervention that had a significant effect on school safety. It did not even seem to matter which rules exactly (Mooij et al., 1999a and 1999b).

Bruce Tuckman wrote a guide on how to coach group formation. He distinguishes 4 group phases: forming, storming, norming and performing. In the forming phase people usually keep quiet and look around to understand what this new group is about. The storming phase starts when the more dominant individuals step forward and claim a position of status in the group. A group competition evolves, in which the groups establish who has more and less influence, and who plays different roles in the group. When this “social order” has been established, the group develops norms on how to interact within the group and to outsiders. This is the “norming” phase. In a balanced and prosocial

group, the ground rules and role of leaders are constructive and cooperative, and contribute to optimal group performance. In a group where the power distribution is unbalanced or where leaders exert their power in a selfish or abusive way, asocial and negative behaviour may become the norm (Tuckman, 1965).

Understanding how bullying works and how to act against it

Explaining and discussing what bullying is and how group processes work can also help, but to be effective it needs to be embedded in a longer-term spiral curriculum and integrated into the school system and routine, in a sustainable way. This is shown by evaluations of the two anti-bullying programs that 'world-wide' have been found most effective: the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (Olweus, 1997; Limber, 2004) and KiVa (Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012). Both programs are combinations of interventions, but a common key element seems to be that they focus on explaining to teachers and students how bullying works and discussing interventions with students. These programs share the recognition (initiated by Olweus) that the focus on combating bullying should not be on the victim and the bully, but on the "bystanders". The program motivates teachers and students to cooperate on "norming" each other towards prosocial behaviour. In the KiVa program (for primary schools) this is even made more specific by making sociograms of each group, which makes it very concrete who the leaders are and who the less popular students are, which groups of friends link to each other, and which more isolated individuals are at risk of being bullied or excluded. Through sociograms, it becomes visible who the popular students are (who are likely to become bullies), unpopular students (who are likely to be victimized), and cliques of friends who support the popular students (cheering bystanders) or who may be passive bystanders.

Systematically creating commitment

To assess what is needed to "manage" a transformative change on the meso-level of schools, we studied organisational change theories. The theories identified all seem to have 3 main phases: agenda-setting to engage with an innovation, implementation (trying-out and adapting to specific needs), and integration of the new routine in the organisation.

Everett Rogers (1985) did extensive research on organizational innovation and he divides a change process in 5 phases: the first one, agenda setting; the second one, matching the mission to the innovation; the third one, tailoring the innovation to the organisation; the fourth one, clarifying to the members what is expected, and the fifth one, making it a routine. The first and second phases correspond to the agenda-setting; the third and fourth phases to implementation, and the fifth one to integration. Rogers stresses that it is important to gradually increase the commitment of all the staff in the innovation process. This is a gradual process in which "innovators", "early adopters", the "early majority" and the "late majority" are becoming convinced. A final small group of "laggards" stays behind and they are either allowed to remain exceptions to the rule or they leave the organisation. Rogers claims most innovations have two critical points: the administrative decision, which falls between the second and third phases, and getting the commitment of at least a part of the "late majority". When more than 60% of the organisation (including part of the "late majority") has engaged with the innovation, it is likely it will remain a routine.

Another useful model was developed by John Kotter (Kotter & Cohen, 2002), who describes 8 steps for change: the first one, increase urgency; the second one, build a team; the third one, create a vision; the fourth one, communicate for buy in; the fifth one, empower action; the sixth one, create short term wins; the seventh one, don't let up, and the eighth one, make it stick. In these steps, the first and second ones correspond to agenda-setting; the fourth up to the seventh ones, to implementation, and the eighth one, to integration. Like Rogers, Kotter stresses that innovations cannot be dictated but need to be developed in cooperation with the people who have to implement it; their heart needs to be in it. Compared to Rogers, Kotter's model is more detailed and is formulated as instructions for consultants.

Positive behaviour support and restorative justice

A large body of research shows that punishment does not actually work to establish prosocial behaviour (Kadzin, 1989; Martens & Meller, 1990; Mayer, 1995). The main effect of punishment is that people who engage in illicit behaviour avoid doing this in view of authorities, so this pushes it underground rather than eliminating it. It is true that punishment, or the threat of punishment, leads 'on the short term' to less illicit behaviour, but mainly when there is a strong and consistent monitoring and discipline. Such discipline is not in line with modern expectations of empowered and democratic citizens, and role-modelling strict behavioural control may deprive students of important learning experiences in taking their own responsibility. Schools must ask themselves two things: why and to what extent it is desirable to prescribe a strict discipline and use of punishment, and whether there are other methods to establish a respectful environment or not.

Another body of research shows that giving compliments helps students to feel empowered. In Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) programs, negative criticism is avoided and complimenting students for positive behaviour is stimulated (Sprague, et al., 2002; Sprague & Golly, 2004). The PBS-method distinguishes between 3 levels of problematic behaviour, with most attention going to a supportive culture in which problematic behaviour is largely ignored, while positive behaviour is complimented and rewarded. The other levels are students with regular problematic behaviour and students with consistent problematic behaviour. They need to get additional support, with a focus on rehabilitation by planning and rewarding small steps towards positive behaviour. We should make a caution: the US program is very behaviouristic in nature and contains detailed descriptions of how to act, which may lead to giving compliments only as a "reward". There are several studies that indicate insincere or inflated praise does not work, especially not with students with low self-esteem and more generally, in other than American cultures (Daikuhara, 1986; Barker & Graham, 187; Brummelman, et al., 2014). In Nonviolent Communication, giving praise as a reward is not recommended because it teaches students to long for more approval. Such use of compliments can be used as a sophisticated disciplining rather than being an expression of sincere celebration (Rosenberg, 2015). We therefore favour expressing our own feelings and needs in relationship to how others inspire us, instead of giving compliments.

A final emerging body of research is on alternative methods to deal with conflict and negative behaviour. These methods are called "restorative" and have a "no-blame" perspective (Zehr, 1995, 2004; Claassen, 1995). "No-blame" means that the school understands bullying, that exclusion is

due to group mechanisms and possibly to personal trauma, and that blaming the perpetrator will not work. The problem and the resulting behaviour need to be solved in context. Restorative methods attempt to “restore” the damaged and unconstructive interaction between conflicting persons by involving the social environment, including parents. Bullies, victims and their peers are all involved as co-developers of solutions.

Focus on school culture and prevention

An effective school policy focuses at least as much on prevention as it does on handling incidents. Incidents will always occur but need to be seen in the wider context of small group processes and the influence of the larger school system/routine. There are two bodies of research that focus on this.

One school of research focuses on “prosocial behaviour” or “pro-sociality”. This theory states that children have a natural tendency to be social, and more specifically, to share things, to help each other and to comfort when someone else is in distress (Dunfield, 2014; Gulshkova, et al., 2013). For some reason, such “prosocial” tendencies are eroded later in life, and more selfish tendencies take over. The prosocial pedagogic approach claims that children need to learn both knowledge (know when sharing, helping or comforting is needed), motivation (be inclined to share, help, or comfort others when they need it) and skills (to be able to assess when sharing, helping, or comforting will resolve the need, and how to do it in specific situations). The prosocial approach is not limited to the school itself; the school is part of a wider community with social norms. The approach therefore aims to create a “pedagogical community” within and around the school, with common prosocial objectives (Boldini & Dankmeijer, 2019). Like Danilo Dolci claimed, this requires a political positioning of the school against discriminatory community practices (Dolci, 1973).

A second body of research focuses even more on the community as a whole: the “community approach”. In most community approaches, learning is not no longer the prime objective, but rather it is seen as one of the tools to ultimate goals like peace, conflict resolution, climate sustainability, alleviation of poverty, community empowerment, health and well-being. Key interventions in community approaches are dialogue with different stakeholders to reach a joint vision; practical forms of cooperation between the school and the community, like students doing community work; the community using the school buildings and services, or combined community services like libraries, meeting spaces and health services, and intergenerational activities and open lifelong learning. However, because communities are unique and studies with control groups are nearly impossible, the impact of the various community interventions remains unproven. (Downes & Cefai, 2016).

Developing The Program

In the following paragraphs we describe the fourth and part of the fifth steps of the Intervention Mapping Protocol: developing the program and developing the implementation plan. Based on the needs assessment, our setting of objectives, and the exploration of strategies and methods, we developed 4 modules for the My-ID program: a periodic school self-reflection, staff training, democratic participation and curriculum development.

Module: Self-Reflection

In a Dutch project on youth participation and a European funded “antibullying certification” project (ABC), we developed surveys for students and teachers of secondary schools, to get a reliable view of the situation in relationship to the stated objectives. In addition, we developed a teacher workshop and an interactive “school review” by students, to involve the entire school community in a qualitative self-reflection. The first My-ID module, indeed, consists of this data-collection and participation, and finishes with a review by the school administration and proposals to enhance school policy.

The experiences generated from these surveys and workshops show that it is relatively easy to motivate all participants to take part in short-term innovative interventions, but that it may be difficult to make the different stakeholders actively “hear” each other. Also, to translate recommendations of teachers and students into a strategy that the school management commits to (Dankmeijer & Picavet, 2017) proves challenging. For example, both teachers and principals may initially be shocked by students’ critical feedback. They may try to disqualify criticism as lacking representation, or as individual opinions of some “problematic” students. Staff and administration also often have tainted observations of each other, which can make it challenging to hear the underlying needs. These challenges could be solved by better expectation management (informing stakeholders they will get both positive and critical feedback and are expected to take this feedback seriously) and by making sure the surveys are collected from all students and teachers, or at least from a clearly representative sample (to make sure the survey results will be taken seriously).

Another challenge is to transfer the recommendations into a sustainable strategy. School managers and staff are not accustomed to systematically implementing change, and the daily routine of the school may be seen as unalterable or overwhelming. The survey results may need interpretation and grounded recommendations before they are useful in the reviews by students and teachers. However, school staff may not be competent to do this (Mooij, 2015), or may not have time for it. Such challenges require a strong principal / administration who knows how to manage change or a good change consultant who gets considerable management support.

Module: Staff Training

The second module of the My-ID program is a staff training, which can be between 1 and 5 days. We developed staff training, piloted by Edu-Diverse in Dutch vocational schools and secondary schools, and by GALE with partners in Cyprus, Greece, Lithuania, Italy and Spain, in two European level trainings, in a Brazilian training and in workshops in China, Korea, Vietnam and Indonesia. The centre piece and most successful part of these trainings is the explanation of the NEABS-model and how it works concretely regarding heteronormativity. This is done by a series of activities during which the teachers are invited to explore their own norms, emotions, attitudes, behaviour, and stereotypes (the 5 domains of the model), and to compare these with those of the students. When they start to recognise and accept their own ambiguity in handling these five domains, they are ready for the transformative process of changing their pedagogy and didactic work. This transformation is supported by more in-depth self-reflection work, and role-play focusing on both analysis of handling emotions in class and on skills to handle their own emotions and those of students. It is common that teachers note

that their new pedagogic approach needs support from the administration and may require change in the school structure and routines. In addition, it always remains a challenge to transfer those new insights to school practice. This challenge needs to be faced by a strong school innovation pathway.

Module: Democratic Participation

The third module of the My-ID program is a “school review” by students, which is a kick-off for a student leadership group which provides on-going advice on school issues, including the curriculum. The student review was originally created as a one-off (one-day) event. However, through our pilots, we noticed that school principals or administrators valued it as a “nice educational event” rather than a serious attempt to extract substantial recommendations by students. Moreover, school administrators often had difficulty accepting recommendations by students, who were critical of current school policy or practices, or because their recommendations did not align with administrative plans.

We are now in the process of enhancing the introduction of the student review to the school administration, to make sure student participation will be taken seriously and will be sustained. One challenge is that each school is in a different stage in regarding students as active agents of change. Roger Hart reflected that the way we theorize about how we can systematically raise the formal level of students’ participation is not yet clear (Hart, 2008).

During our pilots, we came across another more basic challenge to adequate student participation: the way they are treated as inmates rather than as participants. In the surveys among students, we consistently found that students reported they were “made fun of” and “insulted” by teachers, using a form of “humorous” discipline. Marshall Rosenberg calls this “violent communication”, which ignores the needs of students. He propagates the use of Nonviolent Communication, which helps both teachers and students to better recognize and express their feelings and to handle conflicts without abusing power (Rosenberg 2015).

Ultimately, in our view, schools should become more adequate models of democracy and treat both staff and students as equal stakeholders in the school. This ambition to make schools more democratic is a substantial challenge, due to the current autocratic tradition. It would be worthwhile to study the experiences from “democratic” schools and to explore how their experiences can be transferred to regular schools (Waghid, 2014).

Module: Curriculum Development

The fourth module of the My-ID program is a manual, along with consultancy support, for redevelopment of the curriculum and pedagogy. In most schools, the curriculum is largely set by governments or by educational publishers, leaving little space for students to make choices in their learning goals, topics or subjects, level, and time frame. This naturally creates a sense of being forced to learn what others dictate, a disconnection between the learning content and learning needs, and ultimately, a lack of motivation to learn, as well as the perception that school is more a factory or prison than a place for self-development.

The objective of the curriculum module is to help students and teachers see opportunities to tailor the curriculum to self-development, emotional needs, and the relationship to the environment. In the module, the school develops a spiral curriculum focussing on emotional intelligence. The module offers a matrix for the planning of the spiral (listing a timeline on the vertical axis and study topics or subjects on the horizontal axis) and a large collection of classroom methods and exercises. Some of the methods have instructions on how to coordinate and align activities by different teachers across subjects or over time.

The collection of activities is based on the analysis of effective elements we listed earlier. For example, it is strongly advised for schools to create safe learning groups or classes in the first six weeks of the academic year, by systematically facilitating the forming, storming, norming and performing phases, and to make explicit group agreements during this process. In a large school with dozens of groups, the school also needs a system to link these class-level discussions to a joint democratic decision-making process, in which the school-level agreements will be re-evaluated and updated each year. Another series of activities is focussed on sexual and relationship education, which is a prime interest of high school students. However, rather than being focussed on avoiding risks of pregnancy and STDs (which are government priorities), the My-ID program focuses on the needs of high school students. This would include topics such as how to meet someone, how to date, how to have fun, while being honest with and respectful of each other.

In the pilots with curriculum development, the major challenge was the lack of awareness and time limits of school leaders and teachers to organize the curriculum enhancement process. Teachers were very willing to include a few new activities in their lessons, but even if they saw the need for a coordinated spiral curriculum, they were not able to develop it. Both their lack of development time and a lack of capacity to coordinate or coach the innovation process were significant road blocks to developing the curriculum.

Edu-Diverse and GALE looked at the effective elements for systematically creating commitment, and to recent scientific innovation processes, to find a solution. Edu-Diverse tested the 8 change phases of Kotter in a series of consultancy projects with schools. However, the Kotter-phases seemed to be somewhat abstract and too commercially phrased for school administrators. The 8 phases also tended to scare off school administrators initially because the process looked lengthy and cumbersome. To overcome this, Edu-Diverse simplified the model to make it more practical for school consultancy. Edu-Diverse presented to the schools the so-called GEEC-model.

	Hobby	Management	Team work	Student involvement
Goals				
Environment				
Education				
Care				

This model simplifies “school policy” by dividing it into 4 domains: Objectives, Environment, Education and Care / Counselling (GEEC). An effective school policy consists of integrated actions in each domain. At the same time, the model presents a flow of change. The first phase is the “hobby” phase, where only innovators undertake action in their own class or work area. These remain “hobbies” because such localised interventions are not adopted by others. A second phase is administrative action. In this phase, the administration leads a needs assessment and creates a vision and a general strategy. In the third phase, the commitment of the entire school team is built. This is a gradual process as Rogers described it. Finally, the students are integrally involved. Students should be involved from the earliest stages onward; but building full commitment of the entire student population is only realistic when the staff acts as a team rather than as “kings in their own class”. Because of its simplicity, the GEEC model works well to motivate and guide school administrators and in leading innovation teams.

As school consultants, Edu-Diverse staff uses a more elaborate but adapted version of the Kotter phases to monitor and stimulate progress in school consultancy and pilots. We usually don’t show this model to principals or teachers in the early phase of innovation because experience shows that they may get discouraged when they see that real change is a long term process. However, for consultants it is useful to monitor the innovation process in more detail and to continually be alert to where and how the adoption of the innovation progresses or stalls.

We conceptualize three main phases: the first one, agenda-setting: creating administrative commitment and forming an innovation committee; the second one, implementation: developing staff team and student commitment and trying out and tailoring the innovations, and the third one, integration: consolidating the innovations by making sure they become transferrable, repeatable, and regulated routines.

In the first phase, the creation of a leading team that has the administration’s support is crucial. The group creates an inclusive vision that aligns with the positive self-image of the school. The content of such a vision is not prescribed but can focus on high performance (“we help each other to excel”), citizenship (“we want to be social and responsible people”), the environment (“we care for each other and the world we live in”), sports (“we are team players”), or on religion (“we all walk in God’s light”).

In the second phase, the broadening of commitment in the staff team is the key focus. Because teachers and supporting staff are very practical, this phase is mostly about creating concrete lesson activities and adapting school routines, trying them out, and discussing which versions work and how they can be improved. This team dialogue about innovation is both a pathway for concrete improvement and a way to increase commitment.

In the third phase, attention is given to how to consolidate the change in regular school routines. Innovations are codified as new routines, and new staff and students are introduced to them; but more importantly, they are made to feel like “this is the constructive way we do things here”.

Schools have many questions about what works. In our school consultancy, the 5 effective elements described are used to coach schools towards concrete adaptations of their curriculum in such a way that they are tailored to specific school missions and needs.

The experiences of school pilots using this consultancy tool have not been documented in detail yet. One observation is that innovation in schools is usually hampered by lack of time, and by teacher absence and changes of staff in charge, causing a lack of continuity. When principals express fear that this is going to take considerable time, they are actually right. It often takes 3 or even 5 to 7 years to reach the integration phase. Informing the school administration beforehand about this is often not realistic because initially, most principals are not yet entirely convinced about the need for systemic change. However, they usually become more enthusiastic over time.

Another observation is that many school team leaders have not been trained to lead change processes in their school. Many principals are former teachers who have been promoted to the administrative position. Their additional training (if they get management training at all) is either very practical, for example, on how to make a roster and how to follow ministry guidelines, or very general, on leadership on the basis of American and Japanese commercial gurus. They miss the skills on how to concretely coach and guide teachers. In addition, teacher teams may not be the easiest teams to manage. Especially traditional teachers are used to working quite autonomously and may see changes to their own routines as an interference with their professionalism and their autonomous position as a “king in their own class”. Principals need to learn how to deal with the mix of such traditional teachers and more modern, cooperative teachers. This can be accomplished by focussing on the real needs of students and on “helping” teachers to cater for these needs, even when this implies changing their own pedagogy, class management, and cooperating as a school team.

Conclusions and Recommendations

All stakeholders - from students to teachers, school administrators, school boards, and local, national, and international authorities - have traditional conceptions of what education should be. These conceptions still include schools being autocratic institutions where students learn “facts” in a competitive environment, are to be “disciplined” in their behaviour and be regularly evaluated through testing. This traditional view of education is a far cry from the current political calls and policy papers to teach twenty-first century skills (empowering students’ own choices, creativity, and flexibility) and democratic values (tolerance, non-violent conflict resolution, full social and political participation).

The current system and its routines are out-dated. In our pilots with the emerging My-ID program, we see how schools are struggling with dysfunctional routines and facing a range of challenges in adopting innovations within a system that does not give enough space for real improvements.

In the development of our My-ID program we initially focused on improving the school experiences of DESPOGI/LGBTI students, but gradually became aware that real change cannot be sustained when we limit ourselves to this narrow focus. Under LGBTI discrimination lies a much more basic mechanism of instinctual exclusion that gradually evolves into more stable negative attitudes and negative behaviour. This mechanism is far wider than LGBTI discrimination and is even wider than just discrimination. We need a broader holistic view of how we can learn to adequately express our emotions without intolerance or polarization, and still remain sensitive to the range of diversities we will increasingly encounter in a globalized world.

We used the Intervention Mapping Protocol to analyse the challenges and to develop a pathway in which we use elements from a range of theories for a more comprehensive approach. During these explorations and experimentation, we learned that the emotions and attitudes that underlie negative behaviour and exclusion cannot be “corrected” by cognitive arguments, by rote learning or by traditional class discussions - with the teacher framing the conclusion.

Transformative change in education requires a radical rethinking of the function of the school in modern societies. The world will not return to localized traditional cultures and communities where people can be forced to abide by traditional norms, which often serve to keep autocratic leaders in power. In a globalized world, schools need to become Socratic laboratories to question how to “find the truth” and how to continuously learn to make and take our place in our multileveled societies. This is a skill, but more importantly, it requires new ways to recognize our needs, handle our emotions, and request what we need in non-violent ways.

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Gender Transformative Education: How Transformative Education Contributes to Creating Gender Equality

Sanne Müller and Anne-Sophie Bang-Manniche

Abstract

Transformative education is a powerful tool to promote equality and empowerment for all marginalised groups. This article shows how a conceptual framework on Gender Transformative Education (GTE) is used to guide the design of Oxfam's education programming to promote gender equality, illustrated with empirical cases. The conceptual framework is used to analyse context-specific barriers to gender equality and equal education rights in terms of a) discriminatory gender stereotypes and social gender norms, b) School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) and Gender-Based Violence (GBV), and c) social and economic barriers. Based on this analysis and with inspiration from the tender transformative work of Plan International, holistic programmes are designed to address barriers through three approaches, working with communities, teachers and schools, and decision makers, respectively.

Keywords

Gender Transformative Education (GTE), Transformative Education (TE), Gender Stereotypes, Harmful Social Gender Norms

The Potential Role of Education to Either Preserve or Transform

Education may play a positive role in transforming people and societies. It may also - if it is not designed with a transformative purpose - conversely become an instrument to maintain or reinforce the status quo, existing power relations, oppression, discrimination and inequalities. But education can also be one of the most powerful instruments to promote equality for marginalised groups, and it can have a catalysing effect on gender equality, as recently demonstrated in the Oxfam report *The power of education to fight inequality* (Oxfam, 2019b). It is well documented in research that education deconstructs barriers to gender equality and conceptions of gendered identities, as documented in the Oxfam publication *Sexual Diversity and Gender Identity Rights Policy* (Oxfam, 2019a) and in the UNESCO *Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report 2016*. Discriminatory gender stereotypes, embedded in cultural norms, beliefs and practices, are challenged, as education empowers girls and women by providing them with knowledge, skills, self-esteem and access to information. Education increases their participation in decision making processes in the family, community and public life; it strengthens family health; it reduces early and forced marriages, early and unwanted pregnancies as well as maternal and child death. Education also has a significant effect on reducing School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) and Gender-Based Violence (GBV), in general, as well as sexual harassment and assault, and harmful cultural practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Education, furthermore, significantly increases earning prospects and reduces income inequality between men and women (UNESCO, 2016, p. 80-84).

Barriers to Gender Equality and to Transformative Education

Gender equality has been at the core of the global education policy agenda for decades and significant progress has been achieved in girls' enrolment in primary education. Even so, large challenges remain in terms of achieving both parity and gender equality in education, and to reach the target set within the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on education: "By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations" (United Nations, 2015). While in most countries, gender parity is found in the initial years of primary school, there are large regional differences. Disparity increases at secondary and tertiary level with girls lagging in low-income countries (particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, Northern Africa and Western Asia), and boys lagging in some upper-middle income countries (UNESCO, 2019, p. 8-9). Adult literacy, especially for women, has seen little progress in decades, with 63% of adult illiterates being female in 2019 (UNESCO, 2019: 7), compared to 64,6% in 2004 (UNESCO, 2004). Analysis shows that gender often intersects with parameters such as poverty, and location (urban/rural divide) as well as crisis situations (UNESCO, 2019: 9-10). This means that looking at gender alone is not enough, but rather gender must be understood in an intersectional way. For instance, as noted in Oxfam's report *The power of education to fight inequality* (Oxfam, 2019b) "In India the median number of years of education girls from the richest 20% receive is 9.1, whereas as the median number for children from the poorest 20% is zero years" (Oxfam, 2019b: 21).

Crisis due to conflict or disaster furthermore disrupts education, a situation which currently affects an estimated 75 million children and youth (Education Cannot Wait, 2019: 9). While statistical data on gender in these contexts are limited, it is known that existing gender barriers, SRGBV and GBV tend to be exacerbated in crisis affected situations (Iversen, E. & Oestergaard, E., 2019). This result from the loss of livelihoods as well as changed social norms and shifts in power dynamics that are often linked to emergencies (INEE, 2010; 5). Increased poverty may force families to remove children from school to engage in income-generation activities and boys' education is often prioritized over girls' education. Without access to schools and learning opportunities, girls are often tasked with care responsibilities and are at increased risk of early marriage as well as early pregnancies, and some might never return to school (INEE, 2019: 51). Analysis indicates that girls are almost two and a half times more likely to be out of school if they live in conflict-affected countries (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2015: 3). For example, in South Sudan, which has suffered decades of war, violent conflict and displacements, it is estimated that 75% of girls are not enrolled in primary education (UNESCO, 2018).

In addition to these long-term consequences, existing gender discrimination and harmful social norms might be exacerbated, as power dynamics within families, communities and societies are in flux, and can change the status of women and men (INEE, 2010: 5). People often face additional psychological and financial stress due to the emergency and might respond in aggressive and violent ways, leading to an increase in violence against girls and women. In Sierra Leone during the Ebola epidemic, reports of child abuse rose by 69% and teenage pregnancies increase by 65% (UNDP, 2015: 4) and the same pattern is seen in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Levels of GBV and SGBV are also often higher

during and after conflict. As described in an INEE gender guidance note, “Schools may mirror the violence and unrest in surrounding communities, and threats or acts of school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) may increase.” (INEE, 2019: 12).

Even with impressive efforts made over the last decades in many low- and middle-income countries to increase education enrolment, there are still large groups of marginalised children not getting an education, most of them girls. And many of those who go to school do not achieve adequate skills due to low quality of education. Enrolment is easily visible in education statistics - and serves as a way for governments to improve their ranking on global education monitoring lists. However, the stocktaking on the Education for All goals toward the end of 2015 showed that major challenges remained with regard to education quality and equity, which was therefore emphasised in the formulation of the new SDG 4 on education. The debate is now on how best to achieve this new goal.

Unfortunately, in the struggle to solve what has been labelled the “learning crisis” and to ensure that “no-one is left behind”, certain governments have turned to privatisation and commercialisation of education as a solution. This has, however, proven to be ambiguous at best in terms of improving quality, and directly detrimental to efforts of achieving equality (Oxfam, 2019b, p. 25-30). The relationship between privatisation and girls’ education has not been subject of much research, but existing evidence indicates that girls are overall less likely to access private schools than boys, due to the cost of schooling, among poorer sections of populations (Action Aid, 2017, p. 7-9). A worrying fact is that while private schools are generally expected to follow the same laws and regulations as public schools in terms of child protection, gender rights and measures to avoid abuse, SRGBV and GBV, there is an alarming lack of state oversight and monitoring of private schools and thus, no guarantee that child and gender rights are respected (Action Aid, 2017, p. 7-9).

Thus, while education has a well-documented potential to act as an equaliser, it is unfortunately clear that this potential is not always realised. It is therefore time to rethink the way that education is perceived, and education policies designed, so that transformative education approaches are used to promote equality in general and gender equality in particular.

What Is Transformative Education?

For Oxfam, transformative education that aims to challenge unequal power relations by stimulating critical thinking, empowerment, and active citizenship, is necessary if the full potential of education is to be unfolded (Oxfam IBIS, 2016). This is also reflected in the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) Strategic Plan from 2018, where transformative education is now one out of four strategic areas: “GCE aims to advocate and campaign at all levels for education being considered as a driver of social justice, sustainable development, individual and collective freedom and joy of learning together” (Global Campaign for Education, 2018: 20).

Gender Transformative Education (GTE) is a further development of the larger concept of “transformative education”, a concept drawing from various pedagogic theories.

American researcher Jack Mezirow developed the notion of “ Transformative learning” - a learning that fundamentally transform one’s frame of reference. It can be used to challenge taken-for-granted knowledge such as social norms, ideologies, stereotypes, presuppositions, etc., leading to a new way of understanding the world through a new paradigm of learning (Mezirow, 2000). Transformative learning involves critical reflection, which requires the learner to open-mindedly re-evaluate existing concepts, ideas or assumptions and to participate in critical discourse and critical self-reflection, which refer to how ideas and assumptions applies to the learner (Mezirow, 2003). To Mezirow, participating in critical discourse also produces what he calls democratic citizenship, because by actively participating in dialogues with others who can challenge one’s frame of reference, hence further one’s critical thinking is challenged. Transformative learning thereby transcends beyond what is learned and thus, empowers the individual to be able to transform the community.

Transformative education is furthermore tied to the work of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. Freire’s thinking goes beyond Mezirow’s transformative learning by saying that education is tied to the society that influences and structures it. To Freire, education is political, and he is critical towards the social structures and norms that are being reproduced in traditional forms of education, along with the societal hierarchies that are extended into education and exist between teachers and learners, where learners are subordinate to teachers (Freire, 2014). Freire instead calls for” liberating education”, that embraces active participation through dialogue between teacher and learner, inclusiveness and critical thinking. He furthermore underlines that teachers must abandon their authoritarian role over the learners and become a part of the learning process themselves (Freire, 2014: 75).

The Gender Transformative Education Conceptual Framework

The Oxfam Gender Transformative Education (GTE) conceptual framework was developed in 2019 by Oxfam education staff across the world, working together in the learning community Oxfam Education Community of Influence and Practice (ECPI). The purpose of the framework is to guide and strengthen efforts for education to act as a catalyst for social transformation and gender equality (Oxfam Education Community of Influence and Practice, 2019). The GTE framework is described in a learning note and is based on Oxfam’s experience in education and gender programming, as well as on a previous concept paper on Education and Gender Equality (Oxfam IBIS, 2017).

Within gender programming and policies, different gender frameworks are used and although there are similarities between them such as they all recognise the need for a gender perspective in programmes and policies, the approaches of the frameworks however vary in priority and scope. The choice of gender framework that steers the aim of the program or policy can be categorized into a continuum of exploitative, accommodating, and transformative (IGWG, 2013):

Exploitative

Gender blind/gender neutral

Gender blind or gender neutral programmes and policies are not intentionally discriminatory but nevertheless reinforce gender-based discrimination as they do not take into account the different

roles and diverse needs that gender differences call for. Gender blind/gender neutral maintain status quo by ignoring or not including a gendered perspective. This will hence not help transform the unequal structure in society.

Gender sensitive

Gender sensitive programs take into consideration and acknowledge social gender norms, different gender roles and gender inequalities, however without taking any actions to address them throughout the programs.

Accommodating

Gender accommodating

Gender accommodating programs and policies accommodate gender specific needs but without confronting gender inequality. This framework like gender sensitivity may show short-term results and benefits, but without addressing or challenging underlying asymmetrical power structures or gender inequalities.

Empowering

Gender responsive

Gender responsive programmes and policies refer to programs that reflect an understanding of gender norms, gender roles and gender inequalities as central. They strive to establish equality, inclusiveness, and fair distribution of benefits. Gender responsive programs and policies aim at challenging inequalities. Gender responsive is moreover based on knowledge and awareness of the culture in which the program is carried out.

- Gender transformative

Programs and policies that are gender transformative acknowledge differences in gender roles, gender norms and gender equalities in the cultural context, and actively try to transform underlying social structures, policies and social norms that reproduce and reinforce gender inequalities. This is done by engaging women, men, girls and boys in critical thinking; examining and changing social norms and institutions that reinforce asymmetrical power relations.

As education can play a conventional or even oppressive role in several settings, it can do so in particular in cementing traditional gender norms, which is why the gender transformative framework is crucial to apply into educational settings. According to Oxfam, "...social gender norms, including harmful social gender norms, are reflected directly or indirectly through education systems. If not deliberately designed to be transformative, the education system can be one of the most conservative social mechanisms reinforcing gender-stereotypes. A hidden curriculum might lead to biases in textbook representations of gender and in teaching practices which in worst case can lead to an environment of School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV)" (Oxfam Education Community of Influence and Practice, 2019). However, by actively engaging teachers and students through critical thinking

and awareness on how to challenge and thus, change harmful social norms and practices, they can be empowered to make change.

The underlying analytical framework for GTE defines barriers to gender equality in education in terms of discriminatory gender stereotypes and social gender norms, School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) and Gender-based violence (GBV), and social and economic barriers. Each type of barrier manifests itself through a multitude of factors, both outside and inside the school environment. These factors have negative effects on equal access, progression and performance in the education system. The framework is designed to address gender barriers in low- and middle-income countries, and therefore the hindering factors identified are those that usually put women and girls at disadvantage. But boys and men are also in these countries at times disadvantaged. It can be due to the same factors as for girls: for example, boys may be the victims of sexual harassment in schools as well as girls, even though it is not as common. It can also be due to other factors that usually affect boys more, such as being taken out of school to provide income for the family, or the risk of being recruited into armed forces. It should be underlined that whatever type of gender imbalances are prevalent in a given context, solutions should always include working with both genders and understanding their positions in intersection.

Gender often intersects with other parameters such as poverty, culture, ethnicity, crisis, rural/urban etc. It is therefore important to analyse and assess gender inequality as an intersection of facts. The term “intersectionality” was coined by the American civil rights activist Kimberlé W. Crenshaw in 1984. Intersectionality is a method for understanding that what discriminated people experience is multi-layered. Crenshaw describes this multi-layered discrimination with the image of a house. The basement of the house contains all those people who are disadvantaged due to their race, sex, class, ethnicity, sexuality, age and/or physical ability. The people are standing on each other’s shoulders, with the ones being disadvantaged by multiple factors concurrently at the bottom, and the ones being disadvantaged only by a singular factor at the top. The ceiling of the basement is at the same time the floor of the house, on which the people with no disadvantages stand. Hatches in the ceiling make it possible for the disadvantaged from the basement to get to the floor. However, mainly the singularly disadvantaged ones and seldom the multiple disadvantaged ones are permitted to enter (Crenshaw, 1989: 151). Using intersectionality forces to consider the multiple factors for discrimination and thus avoid essentialism. When working with transformative education, and particularly gender transformative education, an intersectional lens is crucial in understanding the broad and multi-layered discrimination people feel, but also to challenge harmful social structures, norms and behaviours, both inside the classroom and in the community.

The gender transformative conceptual framework is shown here below (adapted from Oxfam IBIS, 2017: 4):

Barriers to gender equality in education

Barriers	Factors outside school	Effect on education	Factors in school	Effect on education
Discriminatory gender stereotypes and social gender norms	Women are expected to become mothers and wives, and men to become bread-winners and contribute economically to the family as heads of households. Girls are victims of early marriages and early pregnancies.	Low value placed on girls' education as they are not perceived as bread winners. Early marriages and early pregnancies lead to school drop out of girls.	Negative or inflexible gender stereotypes and harmful social norms may be reinforced at school.	Lack of female teachers means a lack of female role models for girls. Gender biased curriculum reinforces existing gender roles. Gender biased teachers may reinforce existing gender stereotypes and lead to discrimination.
School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) and Gender-Based Violence (GBV)	Women and girls are more often than boys and men victims of GBV and harassment. In fragile countries and conflict contexts this disadvantage is reinforced.	Girls are less safe than boys on the way to school as well as in school.	Long distance to school increases lack of safety for girls. Lack of separate toilets increases unsafety for girls.	SRGBV make it less safe for girls than boys to go to and sometimes be in schools, so many girls drop-out. Early pregnancies are a high risk for girls, and they will often be expelled from school for ever.
Social and economic barriers	Poor families cannot afford the cost of sending all their children to school. Poor families depend on children to work inside or outside home.	Families tend to prioritise boys' education over girls for financial reasons. Girls have to do work in the household with less time for school. Boys have to carry out work for the family with less time for school.	The cost of schooling may include school fees, additional costs and opportunity costs (value of children's work lost by family).	The higher the cost of schooling, the higher risk of girls not to attend school. Privatisation of education, particularly commercially driven, increases inequality and exaggerates girls' disadvantaged position in accessing and completing quality education.

The GTE approach aims to address the barriers to gender equality in education, unlike the other before mentioned frameworks, particularly working to change the root causes of gender inequality as embedded in discriminatory gender stereotypes. According to the GTE learning note, social gender norms are "Rules of behaviour, which people in a group adhere to because they believe most of the group act according to the rule and that most other people in the group believe they ought to behave accordingly. There is significant pressure to conform to the gender social norms in the world, and in certain

countries, where gender equality is particularly polarized; it can be dangerous not to conform. These social gender norms are upheld in societies through e. g. traditions, language, culture, gender roles, education content, work, representation, and in some countries even embedded in law (e. g. Saudi Arabia). It is targeting the ways these are upheld and reproduced that makes it possible to challenge the social gender norms. If the reasons are tackled - we can also prevent the outcomes such as gender inequality in the private and public sphere, Gender-Based Violence (GBV), including School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) and harmful masculinities. Social gender norm change is a complex non-linear and long-term process, which is possible when approached through a holistic and multi-level gender transformative practice.” (Oxfam Education Community of Influence and Practice, 2019: 2).

GTE is characterised by the following principles (Oxfam Education Community of Influence and Practice, 2019: 4):

Gender Transformative Education:

1. Works towards equal educational access, completion and outcomes for all - specifically the most marginalised -, including equal participation in the educational process, learning achievements, and completion of different levels of education, but also extends beyond formal education to non-formal education.
2. Has strong focus on developing knowledge, skills, attitudes and leadership to challenge and change traditional gender norms, financial, social and political dynamics that create gender inequality in society.
3. Takes seriously the intersectionality of e. g. gender, inequality, poverty, disability, race, and marital status, and hence supports the most marginalised.
4. Ensures formal and non-formal educational settings are safe spaces for all learners.
5. Works to challenge social gender norms and where relevant, harmful masculinities, and promote mental and physical well-being.

For education to be gender transformative, rather than gender sensitive or accommodating, it must raise critical awareness on gender stereotypes and roles, and teach all stakeholders involved how to challenge and change harmful social norms and practices. This includes learners themselves (children, young and adults) as well as communities, parents, teachers, school managements and relevant education authorities and institutions. The GTE conceptual framework includes carrying out a context-based analysis on barriers to gender equality in education, and based on this analysis, design of holistic programmes to address barriers through approach-working with three groups of stakeholders:

Approach A

Working with communities: This includes all community members, as well as parents/caregivers, community leaders, religious leaders, young' and women groups as well as local associations and structures. Working with the whole community is important, if cultural practices and discriminatory gender stereotypes should be transformed.

Approach B

Working with teachers and schools: Teachers are the key agents to be implementing GTE, whether within formal or non-formal education. They are to lead the transforming of classroom cultures and teaching practices towards gender equality. They therefore need knowledge, skills, confidence and support. They should be trained in gender sensitive methodologies /gender responsive pedagogy on how to promote and apply gender equality in the classroom. Learning environment and learning materials should be gender sensitive and avoid typical gender stereotypes. In the formal education system, School Management Committees (SMCs) and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) constitute an interface between the school-system and communities, and they can play an important role in promoting and supporting change at school level, together with school leaders/headmasters.

Approach C

Working with decision makers: For GTE practices to become scaled up, institutionalised and included in public education policies, decision makers should be convinced through advocacy, to implement and finance GTE policies. This includes governments, elected politicians at local, regional and national level, as well as officials in Ministries of Education and at relevant levels of the education system, including local level administration, teacher training colleges and teacher supervisors.

“Holistic” programming means working with all three groups of stakeholders. This is necessary if transformation is to address root causes embedded in cultural norms and beliefs of communities, and lead to implementation of concrete changes at school or non-formal education level to promote gender equality, as well as ensuring sustainability and scale through policy-level engagement.

Methods for Promoting TE and GTE in Schools

Teachers are key change agents when it comes to promoting GTE in schools. The approach towards developing GTE includes applying methods such as Gender Responsive Pedagogy (GRP) and Culturally Sustainable Pedagogy (CSP) into the classroom and, thereby, creating awareness of gender equality practices among teachers and students.

GRP has been used for over a decade as a methodology to transform ordinary schools into gender responsive schools in sub-Saharan Africa. “Gender responsive” means taking action to correct gender biases and discrimination, to ensure gender equality and equity (Mlama, et., al., 2005: 2). The initiative to create gender responsive schools was started by the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) in 1999 (Mlama, et. al., 2005). Using GRP means creating academic, social and physical environments that take into account the needs of boys and girls. The method further entails that

the school management adopts policies and practices that address gender-based needs for boys and girls. It also implies that knowledge and awareness extend to the community leaders and members, as well as parents and children not yet in school, to enhance the support of gender equality practices. GRP not only refers to what it is in the lesson plans and curriculum, but also on the communication (discourse and non-verbal communication) used in the school, the classroom set-up, and highlights the gender stereotypes and the personal biases held by teachers and students. GRP aims to address the later through awareness and personal reflection. and thereby creating gender responsive schools.

CSP applies to what is being taught inside the classroom - the content of teaching. Cultural practices, including gender social norms, are not static but dynamic and in constant formation, which means that students are formed by both traditions and customs of the family, community, etc., and the dominant culture they encounter in their everyday lives. CSP therefore works to sustain the multicultural and multilingual diversities, while at the same time not essentializing cultural practices to marginalized groups. The aim of CSP is therefore two-fold; first, to create a commonality within the education by making the curriculum linguistically and culturally relevant to the students and thereby, refraining from a monocultural approach based on predominantly white, male, middle-class norms of language and culture (Paris, 2012), and second, that education simultaneously offers access to the dominant culture (Paris, 2012: 95). Making education relevant to the student's own experience is a vital part of transformative education and has increased participation in the classroom and prevented students from dropping out (Camarota, 2007). GRP and CSP are essential components to employ in teacher practices to enable teachers to be better equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to teach GTE. This means that a strong teacher training program with a specific focus on GRP and CSP is crucial when changing and challenging social gender norms and harmful gender norms in schools, and strengthening transformative education.

Below are elements that we consider important to include in teacher training programs to make schools and staffs more gender responsive.

Table 1: Making schools and staff gender responsive: critical aspects to be considered

Indicators and key considerations teachers should take into account.	Elements of awareness/indicators	Why is it important to address
Establishing a thorough understanding of gender and gender equality	Examining and establishing fundamental gender concepts	Integrating gender concepts into the schools and the classroom gives the teachers as well as the students a thorough understanding and vocabulary to express the social and structural inequalities that they experience in their every day's life.

<p>Analysing the school</p>	<p>What is the ratio of male and female teachers and students?</p> <p>How many students are in the class? Too many, too few?</p> <p>What are the social amenities at the school (water facilities, electricity, transportation options, telephones, health services)?</p> <p>Are there separate washrooms for boys and girls?</p>	<p>Analysing the school is important because it frames the tangible structures of the school. Awareness of the ratio of male and female teachers is important to encourage diversity, show representation, and have role models for girl children.</p> <p>The number of students has an effect on the classroom. If there are too many students, the teacher can overlook the most marginalized and students may become invisible in the classroom. If there are too few students, the marginalized student may become a target or the class can be cut.</p> <p>Separate washrooms for girls and boys, as well as safe transportation options and health services encourage girls to come to school by appeasing the parents.</p>
<p>Gender sensitive awareness in the classroom and during lessons</p>	<p>Are boys and girls encouraged to participate in the lessons? Are girls encouraged to speak up in the classroom?</p> <p>How is the seating arrangement in the classroom —does it facilitate participation from both girls and boys? Can the seating arrangement be redone to improve participation from both boys and girls?</p>	<p>What goes on inside the classroom affects the students learning. If marginalized students are not encouraged to participate during a lesson, they can fall behind. Encouraging girls to speak up during class could be done through group work, role playing, case studies, group presentations, that encourage students to speak.</p> <p>The classroom set-up can discourage participation from marginalized groups, however rearranging the seats has shown to improve participation from students', e. g. new desk-mate, horseshoe shaped seating arrangements.</p>

<p>Analyse and unfold the curriculum and learning materials</p>	<p>Is the curriculum relevant for the learners —is it based on the experiences, culture, history, language of the learners? Can the learners relate to the texts and tasks? Is it contextual? Is it taught in their mother tongue?</p> <p>Is it gender conscious? Are the characters representable of the students? Is it taught in their mother tongue?</p>	<p>The curriculum has to be grounded in a relatable cultural context and language for the students; it cannot be a standardized curriculum produced in Europe that does not correspond with the local context.</p> <p>It is important to be aware of how men/boys and women/girls are portrayed in the learning materials. If people are shown in stereotypical gender roles, e. g. women doing domestic work/passive roles and men in leadership positions/ active roles, the stereotype must be challenged to stimulate critical thinking.</p>
<p>Awareness of the language used in schools</p>	<p>Does the language reinforce biases? Is the discourse sexist and degrading? Are girls discouraged to participate through language/body language?</p> <p>How is the discourse on cultural and linguistic diversity? Is it encouraged and appreciated in the classroom or is it laid-off and ignored?</p>	<p>Harmful verbal and non-verbal communication used in class can discourage participation if tainted with biases or reinforces gender differences. Hence, awareness on the language can encourage girls to speak up in class.</p>
<p>Awareness about personal biases</p>	<p>How does one's personal biases influence the classroom environment?</p> <p>How are people spoken about — are there racial, ethnic, religious or gender biases that discourage student participation?</p>	<p>Examining one's personal biases is crucial because they can discourage student's participation in the classroom. Hence by becoming aware of how the teacher's or student's biases impact in the classroom environment, dialog may be sparked to unpack the biases and thus encourage critical thinking.</p>
<p>Working with the community leaders and members</p>	<p>Outreaching the community to raise awareness on the need of supporting girl's education</p> <p>Encouraging knowledge building about gender equality practices in the community</p>	<p>It is important to include the local community and the local community leaders in the social transformations, so they feel important and may undertake responsibilities for a continuing transformation. Including the community will secure the continuity of social change.</p>

Incorporating these indicators in daily classes would empower students to take steps towards breaking with gender stereotypes and eliminating violence against girls, women and the most marginalized, and addressing social, cultural and economic barriers. With a focus on positive reinforcement in the classroom, the students would gain self-confidence to participate, speak out, and make decisions. The students would moreover be able to practice critical thinking to challenge harmful gender norms as well as cultural and gender biases and, in turn, become active citizens. Using gender responsive pedagogy and culturally sustainable pedagogy is a way to further gender transformative education in the classrooms.

Applying The Gender Transformative Education Conceptual Framework in Practice

The framework is based on previous programme experience and “ways of working” in Oxfam programmes. Yet, there has not been any assessment or systematic analysis carried out of these programme practices in relation to promoting gender equality. The following is an attempt to show through illustrative examples how approaches highlighted in the framework have been used previously in Oxfam IBIS programmes, and how these contributed to results in terms of improved gender equality. Each approach is briefly introduced using references from the GTE learning note (Oxfam International, 2019, p. 8-12). The examples below show how working with one group of stakeholders affects work in other levels of stakeholders, which is the aim of the holistic programming involving all three approaches.

Addressing and Changing Discriminatory Gender Stereotypes and Harmful Social Gender Norms

Working with communities

Gender inequality may be deeply rooted in culture and tradition. Transforming discriminatory attitudes, beliefs and norms is a long process, which requires long term engagement and commitment, and requires involving the communities and challenging them to discuss and reflect their observances on existing gender roles and perceptions. In Mozambique, engaging men and women in adult literacy using the reflect approach for adult learning and social change, and applying the theories of Paulo Freire¹ by including discussing sessions about issues and problems that affect daily life in the community and the fundamental rights of women and children. This empowered woman to become engaged in school management, and subsequently school development plans became more gender sensitive and involved initiatives to promote girls’ education. According to project reports, men who participated in the reflect sessions manifested a change of mentality towards their wives, regarding to them more as equals and now helping them with household chores and adopting a better treatment for them. A lesson learned is that it is important to sensitise local leaders and men, who are usually the guardians of traditional norms (Oxfam IBIS, 2019).

¹ REFLECT considers gender equity integral to social change, analyzes the causes of inequalities, creates a process for examining social stratification, addresses conflict as a reality. It is an evolving process that embraces innovation, recognizes the importance of individual transformation, and seeks an equitable practice of power at all levels (Gender in Development, July 1998, p. 27). THE REFERENCE TO THIS SOURCE IS MISSING IN THE REFERENCES LIST.

Working with teachers and schools

Gender equality cannot be achieved in education without quality educators who promote gender justice through their daily practices. For this reason, Oxfam stresses the importance of ensuring gender transformative professional development for all teachers. In South Sudan, a context where female teachers are extremely few, an accelerated learning programme was managed to increase the number of female teachers; it included training on gender sensitive practices for all teachers. Teachers were trained on how to use gender sensitive approaches in classrooms, to engage the girls as much as the boys and to encourage girls to speak up; not to perpetuate gender stereotypes through examples used in teaching; to avoid giving the children gender specific tasks in the school, and engage children themselves in critical discussion on traditional gender roles. Furthermore, they were taught to spot girls at the risk of dropping out and to address parents and communities on such issues, as well as on how to eliminate SRGBV. The women teachers became strong advocates for female enrolment; they taught using gender sensitive methods and implemented activities to help females stay in education, such as providing dignity kits, functional segregated latrines and more equipment for female recreation activities, such as volley balls, nets and reading materials (Nicholson, 2018).

Working with decision makers

Oxfam supports adolescent girls and related organisations (parents and community members in School Management Committees (SMCs), Parents Teachers Associations (PTAs), and civil society organisations (CSOs), including women's organisations and networks, in raising their own voice and holding government to account in fulfilling their responsibility for providing free public education services of good quality for all. In Mozambique, a 10-yearlong advocacy campaign was led by the National Education Coalition (NEC), involving a vast network of organisations, to change a law prohibiting pregnant girls from attending school in the daytime together with other students. Many of these girls had been forced to give up school, as they were not old or mature enough to study in evening classes that exposed them to risk of sexual violation and bullying. With the change of the law, they could now attend day-time school (Oxfam IBIS, 2019).

Addressing Gender-Based Violence

Working with communities

SRGBV is a fundamental human rights violation, which also obstructs education, especially for the child and adolescent girl. SRGBV reflects on GBV, more broadly in societies and communities, and it is linked to the low status of women and girls as well as to the prevailing unequal power relations. In Sierra Leone, a multi-stringed strategy was applied to eliminate GBV through education efforts. This included research on GBV to identify the social norms that perpetuate violence against girls in schools and to inform the development of a Sierra Leone "Enough Campaign" strategy geared towards reducing violence against girls in schools. Young women were trained to engage in school governance and, in particular, to promote girl's education. This led to school and community dialogues on bullying and sexual harassment of girls, appointing female teachers as focal points to whom violence could be reported. As a result, girls are now more confident to talk about their experiences in schools of such

violence when it occurs, thus making it possible to address it (Oxfam IBIS, 2019).

Working with teachers and schools

To ensure gender equality in education, it is fundamental that the girls and boys feel safe in their learning environment. The Education Thematic Programme in Guatemala developed a comprehensive education and training model to prevent violence against girls and women (VAWG). A complete set of education and training material for children, youth and adults was developed to promote gender justice and reduce VAWG. The approach also included a model that revalued traditional indigenous ways for compensating women victims of violence. The training model was later adopted by the Ministry of Education in Guatemala to be scaled up and used more widely in the school system (Oxfam IBIS, 2019).

Working with decision makers: School safety and the elimination of SRGBV is ultimately the responsibility of the State.

In the Sierra Leone programme mentioned earlier (under Working with communities), Gender Alliances and Girl Ambassador Networks were formed to address all forms of SRGBV, corporal punishment, child labour, teenage pregnancy, early marriage and educate their peers - including boys - to have respect for girls. A National Girls Conference was organised with the purpose of building girls' confidence, life skills, and resistance towards GBV. Advocacy was carried out to influence the new education policy in Sierra Leone. One of the outcomes of the policy processes was that the attention of government was raised toward the problem of rape and sexual violence in schools as a national concern. The First Lady of Sierra Leone hosted her colleague first ladies from West African countries in the capital, Freetown, and launched the "Hands Off Our Girls" campaign in the strive to end sexual violence against girls, a campaign that attracted a huge national and international attention (Oxfam IBIS, 2019).

Addressing Social and Economic Barriers

Working with communities

Within the community-based approach, Oxfam seeks to sensitise parents to recognize that girls have an equal right to education as boys - even if the economic means of the families are limited. In deprived areas of Northern Ghana, a project engaged in extensive community animation, whereby poor communities were facilitated to make demands for schooling services. The approach of actively engaging local communities and their leaders has inspired them to join in co-generating solutions, e. g., incentives for teachers in the form of housing, food stipends, providing initial classroom infrastructure and school toilets, support to enrolling children in school and monitoring their regular attendance. The project also contributed to some far-reaching harmful gender social norm changes such as banishing child marriage from their communities to the benefit of girls' education, which increased to the same rate as boys' (Korboe, 2018, p. 11).

Working with teachers and schools

Over the last decades more and more countries have started offering free public education, and school fees have been abolished, especially at primary level. This has had a tremendous effect on school enrolment in general, and an even more remarkable effect on girls' education. However, many schools have additional costs in terms of school uniforms, books and stationery, and in some cases also so-called "hidden costs", for which schools and/or teachers ask parents to contribute, and as such pay unauthorized fees. In Burkina Faso, parents' associations were trained on how to engage in school management, and the capacity of their organisations strengthened. An important part of training included monitoring and tracking of school budgets and spending to enhance transparency in financial management of schools, in order to make better use of financial resources at schools and reduce the burden of hidden costs for households involved in education. In turn, this would have a beneficial effect in particular for girls' education, since families with limited means tend to prioritise the education of boys when costs are involved (Oxfam IBIS, 2019).

Working with decision makers

Any kind of cost on education limits access - and thereby the right to education for all. This is particularly the case when it comes to girls' education. Access to free, public, quality education is one of the major advocacy priorities of Oxfam, and we are engaged in these both at countries level, but also in all regional and international forums, where education financing is raised. In Ghana a Girl Model Junior High School (GMJHS) was piloted to act as a model, to convince education authorities to finance girl's junior secondary schools on a larger scale. The GMJHS has been thoroughly documented and proven to be effective in promoting higher completion, pass and transition rates among girls in deprived districts. Advocacy was carried out involving NGOs, youth groups and former GMJHS students leading to the setting up of more schools: a total of 58 district assemblies made budgetary allocations in the course of 2017 and 2018, to replicate lessons from and establish GMJHS. The drivers of this change can be pointed as the effective use of evidence from budgets/expenditures and from GMJHS documentation, the synergic coordination between the youth organisations, the proactive channelling of the youth's energies and positive impatience, and the facilitative guidance in advocacy by Oxfam staff (Oxfam IBIS, 2019)

Reflections Regarding How to Further Develop Gender Transformative Education

Looking ahead, Oxfam (and particularly the ECPI group within Oxfam) will continue its work with GTE as a part of the broader picture to strengthen transformative public education for all, to fight inequality. Based on work the ECPI group has done on Transformative Education and Gender Transformative Education, the group is now working towards developing a guideline and documented methods for GTE to create awareness on how gender affect the life of the individual. This is done in collaboration with and inspired by Plan International, who, among others, are also working with the implementation of GTE into their programs. We wish for a continuing collaboration in this work to broaden the knowledge and practices of GTE, and to learn from the best practices and experiences of others.

We hope that, in this article, we have reflected the importance of transformative education to promote equality and empowerment in all marginalised groups and, particularly, we have outlined the role of GTE in promoting gender equality, fighting negative gender biases and empowering boys and girls to become active citizens, fighting for equality in their contexts. While the power of education is great, it can only fully be unleashed, if it is designed to be transformative from the outset; if students, teachers and parents are empowered, and if the focus is on holistic learning outcomes, that go beyond literacy and numeracy, to reach all the way to democracy, human rights, equality and active citizenship.

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Developing Mentoring Approaches for Transformative Education: Context and Challenges

Neha Ghatak, Niveditha Menon and Jyotsna Jha

Abstract

This paper documents the difficult contexts and challenges of implementing a mentoring model in Bihar, one of the most backwards states, both educationally and economically, in India. The purpose of the mentoring model is to develop critical thinking skills among socially disadvantaged children and to provide them with tools and resources so that they are aware and thoughtfully engage with their own identities, their beliefs system and social norms. Through the detailed documentation of the contexts and challenges of the implementation, the paper elucidates the various social and structural restrictions placed upon young girls, and the manner in which schools, families and communities engage with ideas of autonomy and agency of young girls. The paper uses the preliminary field observations made during the implementation of the first and the second module of the model, in addition to results from a baseline survey conducted of 700 respondents from the 10 sites of intervention.

Keywords

Transformative Education, Mentoring Model, Adolescent Girls

Introduction

Mentoring, when done well, can provide inspiration and guidance to young people, and help them towards positive social relationships as well as to take action with their communities for positive social change (Jarjoura, 2013). Good mentoring relationships can also foster social relationships with peers, families, and communities, based on empathy and trust. Primarily because of its emancipatory potential, mentoring components have been extensively used in transformative education models in India. One such model that is currently being developed is the Bihar Mentorship Model (BMM)¹, being implemented in the Indian state of Bihar by the Centre for Budget and Policy Studies (CBPS).

The primary purpose of BMM is to develop critical thinking skills and to provide children with tools and resources to make them aware of their own identity, their beliefs system and social norms. The idea is to provide space for children in government schools to examine, analyse and change their perception and knowledge of themselves, to question existing patriarchal and regressive norms in society and to reflect upon their lived realities. Essentially, BMM strives to create a form of emancipatory pedagogy that prioritises critical thinking and civic engagement skills for girls and boys. The emphasis of BMM is on the facilitation of "... alternative political cultures and the participatory institutions and practices..." (Fischer, 2006: 20) within the existing framework of education, so as

¹ The authors of the paper have conceptualized the BMM using elements of several mentoring models prevalent in India, that are built to be responsive to the identified needs and requirements of the students. The first module was on articulation and information. The second module, which is currently ongoing, is on knowledge and caste. The third and final module is likely to be on gender and collectivisation. This is being done through a project fund support received from Malala Fund, as part of their Gulmakai Champions Network programme.

to create long-term sustainability of the BMM.

The main participants of BMM are adolescent children aged between 11 and 14 who are currently studying in classes 7 and 8 in 10 schools in Muzaffarpur (rural district) and Patna (urban district). Most of the students engaged with BMM belong to marginalised social communities like Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Class (OBC)², and religious minorities such as Muslims. As we are working in government schools where girls are typically over-represented due to flight of boys to private schools, we have more girls (65%) than boys in BMM. Consequently, the mentoring module that is being developed for implementation is tilted towards their interests, needs, requirements, and challenges. Apart from adolescent children, BMM also works with teachers in the ten schools and the communities from which the children belong.

The goal of this paper is to document the difficult contexts in which BMM is being implemented in and the challenges of doing so. It seeks to elucidate the various social and structural restrictions placed upon young girls, and the manner how schools, families and communities engage with ideas of autonomy and agency. The paper uses the preliminary field observations made during the implementation of the first and the second module, in addition to results from a baseline survey conducted of 700 respondents from the 10 sites of intervention³.

The paper is divided into six sections. After this brief introduction, we describe the theoretical and conceptual background of BMM, after which we examine the landscape of education in Patna and Muzaffarpur. We then describe the critical support structures of education that influence the outcomes of the BMM. Next, we examine the experiences of implementing the mentoring model together with the challenges. Our final section concludes with a brief overview of the strategies undertaken to address the concerns raised in the paper.

Theoretical and Conceptual Background of BMM

The theoretical background of BMM primarily uses critical and feminist pedagogical philosophies, deeply rooted in the notion that education should play a role in creating a just and democratic society (Giroux, 1983). This approach to education involves a particular way of engaging with the production of knowledge, the institutional structures of the school, and the social and material relations within the wider community, society, and nation-state (McLaren, 2000, 1993; Keesing-Styles, 2003).

There are, of course, similarities in critical and feminist pedagogical traditions. In both, the epistemological inclination focuses on the access to/ownership and creation of knowledge and its relationships to power and politics. While critical pedagogy advocates critical literacy for the masses to achieve critical consciousness, cultural autonomy and political action, feminist pedagogy

² These are officially recognized educationally and socially disadvantaged groups in India.

³ The field observations are in the form of qualitative field notes collected through mentors implementing the programme. The data from the baseline survey establishes the sociocultural backgrounds and attitudes of the children before the implementation of the modules. No data for impact of the mentorship model was analysed at the time of writing this paper, hence no such information included.

places these same concerns through women's standpoints and engages with the feminist principles of ethics and caring (Luke & Gore, 1992), and focuses on the manner how the concept of "woman" is produced. Both critical and feminist pedagogies seek to challenge systems of domination, question social construction of knowledge and power, and generate consciousness and critical thinking to promote social change (Nouri & Sajjadi, 2014).

Taking a cue from Paulo Freire book, *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, we argue that providing holistic education to children requires them to reflect upon all forms of oppression and focus on principles of equality and freedom, so as to break the culture of domination. Within the classroom, the combination of feminist and critical pedagogy emphasises the role of reflexivity (reflecting on oneself and the world), action orientation (positive social change and empowerment), attention to affect (blurring the lines between rational thought and emotions), and connections between the local and global (Fonow & Cook, as cited in Crawley, Lewis, & Mayberry, 2008). Ultimately, in terms of practice and methodology, the feminist and critical pedagogy question dichotomies of objective and subjective knowledge through participatory and interactive learning. The aim for both fields of thought is to create an egalitarian classroom where the students are not seen as passive receivers of knowledge but are co-creators of knowledge. In summary, critical, and feminist pedagogies strongly advocate for students and teachers to be aware of the conditions that affect their lives and to take action to transform it.

Embedded in this framework, the BMM model that we have developed thus far emphasises themes related to self-reflexivity, sensitivity to diversity, empathy, and empowerment. The BMM seeks to create a space wherein children can develop a sense of self, explore and engage with new relationships and ideas, and build social networks. Needless to say, this pedagogical approach is inherently diverse and specific in context. The pedagogical approach that BMM follows is intricately linked to the definition, realisation, and articulation of discriminatory and oppressive forces and enables the children to formulate some form of action to address it. By incorporating both critical and feminist pedagogies, BMM attempts to incorporate transformative educational models within the constrained environments of government schools in India. In this process, we are also aware and mindful of creating opportunities for experiencing the joy of explorations, discoveries, laughing and learning together, as these schools are often deprived of resources and children rarely get such chances either at home or in school. To understand the way in which BMM and its modules work within these environments, it is first important to understand the sociocultural contexts of the girls and boys in schools.

The Landscape of Education in Bihar

Bihar is a large state (10.4 crore people) and is considered one of the least urbanised states in the country (11.3%) (Govt. of India, 2011; Govt. of Bihar, 2017). It also has a dismal sex ratio (916 females per 1000 males) and has a poor track record with regards to female literacy (53.3%). Part of the reason is that although it does have over 80,166 primary and upper primary schools, they tend to be saddled with a high teacher-pupil ratio (1 teacher: 50 students), based on the data collected by the District Information System for Education (DISE, 2015-2016). The state also witnesses high rates of drop-out at classes 5 and 8 (14.49% and 15.06%), which are important transitional points during

the educational cycle. The state also faces certain kinds of challenges with regards to providing adequate infrastructure to the schools. For example, only half of the schools (52.5%) have boundary walls, whereas just over a quarter of the school (34.9%) have access to electricity. It is safe to say that children in educational institutions in Bihar face tremendous educational and infrastructural challenges. These patterns are also true for the two districts where we work.

Patna

The urban district, Patna, is the state capital of Bihar and is the second-most densely populated district of the state. It has a poor sex ratio (897 females for 1000 males) and has a slightly higher percentage of literate women as compared to the state averages (61.96%) (NFHS 15-16, 2017). It appears to have about 3982 primary and upper primary schools with at least 183 private schools, and the pupil-teacher ratio is slightly better than the state average (1 teacher: 36 students). We find that the drop-out rates are high, at 25.5% in class 5 and 22.02% in class 8 (DISE, 2016-2017). We also find that 62.9% of the schools have a boundary wall, and a little more than half of the schools (56%) have access to electricity.

Muzaffarpur

The rural district of Muzaffarpur has a total population of 48.01 lakhs, with a slightly better sex ratio (1059 females per 1000 males) (NFHS 15-16, 2017), but the literacy rates are still dismal (53.8%). Although the district boasts of 3,457 primary and upper primary schools, the teacher-student ratio is quite high (1 teacher: 45 students). This is also reflected in the drop-out rates which are fairly high for class 5 (13.64%) and class 8 (19.79%). With respect to infrastructural requirements, about 61.8% of the schools have boundary walls and only 46.5% have access to electricity.

If we analyse the official school data source, DISE (2015-2016), more thoroughly, we find that while there is almost universal enrolment in the primary stage, the transition from primary to upper primary, and from upper primary to secondary schooling appears to be a cause of concern. This is compounded by the prevalence and popularity of English-medium private schools. Because of the aspiration for the English-medium private schools, we find that parents often prefer to send their male children to fee-charging private schools despite the high expense and retain girls in public schools where schooling is free, as education is not often seen as a matter of priority for girls. The low sex ratio and low female literacy also point to the fact that while some educational outcomes might have improved in Bihar, the attitudinal and structural barriers to girls' education still remain.

Given Bihar is primarily an agricultural state, children often work in the agricultural field to sustain their families, and the work burden is heavier for girls who also engage in care work (Stearns, 2005; Bano, 2008). Moreover, girls are often withdrawn from school at the first sign of familial distress. The situation is worse, when social norms within schools and communities make it harder for girls from marginalised communities to function well within schools. These larger sociocultural contexts have specific implications for the implementation of BMM; therefore, the choice of schools was carefully done.

The Ten Sites of BMM Intervention

The selection of the ten sites or schools began with the selection of two blocks, through consultations with the Bihar Education Project Council (BEPC). We then selected four schools within each of the blocks. In Patna, we also selected an all-girls' missionary school, and in Muzaffarpur, we selected an all-girls residential government school within the chosen block. We wanted to engage with a diversity of school contexts, which is why we selected semi-urban and rural government schools, a private unaided missionary school and a rural residential school. The differences between the schools help us in understanding the diversity of the contexts and also helps us to modify the activities and the modules, based on the circumstances particular to the field. Given the theoretical origins of the BMM, we did not want to create a "one size fits all" approach since it has plagued education policy in India for decades.

Institutional Profile of Sites

Site category	District	No. of schools	Location	Management	School type	Classes taught
Government schools	Patna and Muzaffarpur	8	Periurban and rural	Government-run school	Co-ed and Hindi medium	Classes 1 to 8
Krantipur ¹	Muzaffarpur	1	Rural	Government-run school	All girls Hindi medium	Classes 1 to 8
Jashpur	Patna	1	Urban	NGO (Charity)	All girls Hindi medium	Classes 1 to 7

1 Pseudonyms have been used to protect the identity of the schools.

Source: CBPS field data 2018

What is common among these sites is that first, they lack critical support structures and second, the students come from socially disadvantaged communities. To understand the nature of these deprivations, we will now examine the critical support structures that are available at the level of schools, families, and peers.

Critical Support Structures

Schools

From our baseline study as well as observations made in the field, we found that physical access to schools is not a problem for most children, as the schools are close to the communities. The schools themselves were in various states of dilapidation. While some of the schools were in permanent structures, they were in severe need of maintenance. They also lacked essential infrastructure such as benches and chairs. For example, in many of the schools, we found that children did not have

enough benches or chairs to sit on and were sitting on thread-bare make-shift mats. In most of the rural schools, classrooms had broken floors, which were haphazardly covered by tarpaulin. This was especially hard for children in the winters, and attendance during that time was understandably low. Apart from two schools, most schools also did not have separated classrooms for each grade. Children from classes 1 to 5 studied in the same classroom, and children from classes 6 to 8 studied in another classroom. While this joining classes addressed teacher shortages where one teacher could manage multiple grades at once, the educational needs of the children were neglected as a result.

Moreover, teachers rarely gave their personal attention to students, and the relationship in most of the schools between teachers and students was highly transactional. In fact, one of the major problems that BMM currently faces is teacher apathy or absence in the schools. There appears to be very little accountability for teachers to reach the school on time or to teach their materials. Even when present, they are not always attentive to students, and often treat children differently, based on their backgrounds.

The attitudes of the teachers towards the students obviously affect the pedagogical practices within the classroom. In administering BMM, we generally found that rote learning was heavily encouraged. Consequently, children did not have age-appropriate reading and writing competencies. During one of the visits, a girl was asked to recite a poem, and she did beautifully. However, when she was asked to explain the first two lines of the poem, she was unable to do so. The culture of learning within the classroom also tilted the children towards answering the “right” answer, and so, they are very hesitant and reluctant to participate unless they know the right answer. Asking questions was not encouraged and in some cases reprimanded. Consequence to the apathy of the school authorities, we found that attendance in most of the schools was very poor. §

In terms of supportive infrastructure, in contrast to the DISE data discussed earlier, none of the schools (barring one) in Muzaffarpur had separate toilet facilities for girls. The picture was not as grim in Patna, where most schools had gender segregated toilets except for one. But as we know, accessibility is not the same as availability. In many of the schools, the toilets were locked, and in one school, the girls’ toilet was constructed so close to the boys’ open cubicle toilets that both girls and boys felt very uncomfortable going into that area. To cater to the nutritional needs of the children, on the other hand, hot Mid-Day Meals (MDMs) were provided at all the students. Over the course of our implementation, we found that attendance of students was heavily related to the serving of MDMs, in that it was very high on the days when eggs were served with the afternoon meal and it was very low when MDM was not provided. In short, schools were able to attend to some of the nutritional needs of the students, but because of the relationship with attendance, most schools did not run classes after serving the MDMs and closed two to three hours before the official closing time.

We found subtle signs of gender discrimination within classrooms. This was most apparent in seating arrangements in schools where chairs and tables were scarce. In one school, it was only the boys who enjoyed the comfort of sitting on chairs, while the girls were asked to sit on floor mats. The teachers from that school justified this distribution by saying that the boys would refuse to come to school if the situation was reversed and it was easier for the girls to adjust. These notions of sacrifice and

adjustment were invoked quite frequently in classrooms as justification to deny girls equal treatment within the classrooms. To understand whether these dynamics also played out within the communities and families, we now examine the social context of the children within their households.

Families and Households

The living conditions of the students are slightly different for students in Patna, as compared to Muzaffarpur. Many more children live in permanent housing (in terms of its construction) in Patna as compared to Muzaffarpur. This pattern holds true in terms of access to toilets. More children in Patna have access to a private toilet as compared to Muzaffarpur. As can be expected, if we look at family or agricultural assets of the households, we find that families of students in Patna have, on an average, higher assets than those in Muzaffarpur. Luxury assets were rare in both districts, especially in Muzaffarpur, where 9% of the students reported having a refrigerator at home.

In these circumstances, privacy can also be considered a luxury, especially for girls. Many children indicated that they lived in one-room houses which was shared at least by five to six other family members. This also had some implications on the kinds of activities we could incorporate in BMM. We wanted children to write diaries to enhance their writing, observational and thinking skills. However, we found that even when interested, children did not continue the practice, as they did not have access to a physical space where they could keep this diary private.

We looked at the educational support systems within the household by examining parents' educational qualifications. We found less than half of the fathers had attended school only till primary (41%) and a quarter of them had had no formal education (26%). Predictably, the literacy levels of the mothers were very poor, and only 29% of them had attended school till primary. So, many of the children in our classrooms were first-generation school-going children who did not have traditional educational support systems at home.

When we checked parents' occupation, we found that majority of the parents in both Patna and Muzaffarpur were employed in the unorganised sector (such as daily wage laborers or agriculture laborers), indicating the economic vulnerability of the household. Individual family histories and circumstances also influenced the way in which children were able to participate in class. For example, a young girl in our class reported that for a time in her life, her mother had been thrown out of their home, and had begged on the streets to survive. The girl's mother was finally allowed in the house, but the whole family appeared to be immensely affected by this. Another girl's father broke his hand and was unable to get it treated. As he was chronically unemployed, the family was thrown out of the joint family home, and the girl was sent to a residential school so that she could have a roof over her head and food to eat. Families were sometimes also low on supportive networks. As mentioned earlier, some of the children's parents were day-wage laborers and had to be at work for long periods of time. So, unless there were other family members in the household who could monitor the children, they were primarily left unsupervised and unmonitored for most of the day. This, in turn, influenced their attendance and participation in classrooms.

When we interacted with parents, they also expressed that there were challenges that children faced, but most blamed it squarely on the conditions and quality of the schools. Some of the parents complained of teachers not being attentive to their children and not coming to class. When they bothered to show up, they were often on the phone and didn't teach the required materials. As a result, parents felt that children didn't learn anything and were picking up bad habits such as using foul language, gambling, chewing tobacco and consuming alcohol. The parents also felt that the teachers and the headmaster/mistress didn't take their concerns seriously and would often talk to them very rudely. Parents also told us that even with supervision, children appeared to be addicted to TV and didn't show interest in doing anything else. In general, parents felt that there were no support systems in the school to help their children learn and fulfil their ambitions.

Peers

Support offered by peers is critical in the creation of an individual or collective identity. It can also be the basis for the development of good social and networking skills. Most of the students (81%) reported that they had friends both inside and outside school. However, a slightly larger percentage of girls (17%) reported that they had friends only in school, as compared to boys (9%), suggesting lower chances for girls to create social networks outside of their school environments. Despite having friends in and outside of the school, most of the children (72% boys and 68% girls) did not rely on them for support. Instead, most of the children reported turning to their mother for support. In fact, there are very clear indications that mothers and other female members of the household are the predominant source of affective support for children in our schools.

This is not necessarily surprising if we look at the patterns of interactions within the classrooms. Even though children were making friends outside of their caste boundaries, some of the classrooms were highly gender-segregated and reproduced caste and gender divisions. Although these caste, class, and gender divisions are not always explicitly mentioned, we have observed teachers referring to some children as simply lacking the ability to learn. As a result, children's view of themselves is not positive. In one of the self-reflection exercises conducted during BMM, children said that they were lazy, that they fought a lot, that they were not able to learn, and that they got angry. These self-concepts are often reinforced heavily by teachers and sometimes by parents, and produce particular narratives regarding social roles of boys and girls, that have an influence on their self-concept and identity. To gain an understanding of the kind of the gendered messages that are being reproduced by the schools, families, and communities, we established a baseline of gendered attitudes and belief systems.

Attitudes and Beliefs Towards Gender

To understand children's gendered attitudes and beliefs systems, we asked a series of questions related to the physical strength and capabilities of girls and boys, career aspirations, and dynamics of shame, violence, caste, and marriage. In general, we found that the children had imbibed strong patriarchal attitudes and beliefs. To understand children's attitudes towards gendered capabilities, we asked them whether a boy or a girl would win a race in a hypothetical scenario. About 72% of the

boys reported that they had a better chance of winning the race, and only 37% of the girls reported that a girl would win a race. Similarly, for academic capabilities, most of the children (65%) believed boys would be better at mathematics than girls. The stereotype that women are more emotional than men was also universally held by the group (86% of the children).

Children also endorsed stereotypical gendered livelihoods with most of them saying that men would be better chief ministers (or leaders) than women. This was also reflected in conversations related to the future. While both girls and boys expressed high aspirations, only boys were looking to specific professions which were likely to be high-paying and upwardly mobile (such as playing professional cricket or engineering). Most of the girls and boys also believed that women's rightful place rested within the home, and that it would be uncharacteristic and even "wrong" for men to cook in their household.

The knowledge that children possess is also gendered in many ways. For example, when we asked them about menstruation, over 70% of the boys did not know about menstruation, as compared to the girls. With respect to their attitudes towards domestic abuse, we found that more than half of the children thought that it was okay for husbands to beat their wives if they disobeyed husbands. Although many children did not agree that boys could also be sexually assaulted; at least 65% of them did believe that survivors of rape should not be blamed for violence. With respect to a major life decision such as marriage, we found that children's ideas were deeply influenced by caste and its associated practices of exogamy. Most of the children (63 %) believed that one is not free to choose a life partner and that the partners should be chosen by the community and the family.

In summary, two things are clear from our analysis of the baseline: first, patriarchal belief systems are deeply entrenched within children's minds, and second, boys display more confidence in their capabilities than girls do in their own. These patriarchal norms and narratives appear to have a strong hold on children, irrespective of their gender, caste and religion. This baseline data provided a pathway to engage the children through the various activities in the first two modules. The methodology that we employ constantly revises the content of the modules, based on the iterative and interactive process of implementation. Through this process, we also have a clear understanding of the obstacles and challenges posed by entrenched patriarchal social narratives and social structures that push back against ideas of autonomy, independence, and agency, especially for girls. We examine these experiences and challenges in the next section.

Experiences and Challenges

The motive of implementing the mentoring model in these particular social contexts is not with the expectation that every child will succeed (and one must question what "succeed" in any social context really means), but with the objective of providing the tools to negotiate their own lives, in whatever form that this takes. The challenges that we faced provided insight into the structural impediments to transformative educational models, which helped us to develop strategies of engagement.

Social Role

Adolescence is a particular period in the life course of an individual where children are trying to use the social cues provided to them to create an identity for themselves and to understand the dimensions of their social roles. Typically, girls are strongly socialised into notions of femininity that inherently devalue their independent identity, which deeply influences their self-image and self-esteem.

During our implementation, we did notice these patterns with the girls in the schools. In one of the interactions that we documented, some girls in the classroom were questioning other girls about their use of lipstick. The girls who were wearing lipstick declared: “We are free to do what we want. If you don’t want to wear it, then don’t wear it. If we want to wear it, we’ll wear it”. In this small exchange, it became clear that the conversation was not about the lipstick wearing, but about the nature and character ascribed to girls who wear them. This policing of girls is not uncommon and is an essential aspect of socialisation. So, the ‘lipstick wearing girls’ were not just fighting with the other girls in the classroom, they were also trying to assert a small modicum of independence in a space that is fairly restrictive.

Girls are keenly aware that their social lives are heavily constrained, as evidenced by the following incident. In one of the classes, we asked children to draw out a story that they had written. One of the girls drew a picture of a girl sitting under a tree. When asked about the story, the girl said: “This was the story of a girl who wanted to study. But she was told that she would have to get married and go away, so there was no reason for her to be educated. Her brother, instead, was sent to school and tuition classes. The girl felt sad and went to the tree to be alone. She even spoke to the tree about how she wanted to study. Finally, through her determination, the girl becomes a doctor, but the brother doesn’t do much with his life”. It is clear from the story that girls do understand the realities and restrictions of their lives and are able to clearly articulate the differences in the social ambitions of their parents, and their brothers. It is also clear that girls do not necessarily know how to get past these restrictions to pursue their imagined futures. Part of the reason that they are unable to think past the current objections to their education is because of the strong cultural force of “good children” versus “bad children”.

Most of the children feel that the role of a “good child” is to be obedient and not ask questions. In fact, one of the strongest cultural frameworks to dismantle is the high value given to obedience and conforming to parents’ wishes. When asked about the rationale for any of these rules, most of the children dithered and said that this was just a “given”. Similarly, it is often difficult to engage children in conversations related to gendered behaviour. Although boys and girls co-exist in the same space, they are not necessarily encouraged to be social with each other. As a result, girls and boys have very antagonistic and adversarial feelings towards each other. Most of the time, girls take a defensive stance and prefer to do most of the activities without the company of boys. Part of the reason is because they are keenly aware of the discrimination they face as compared to boys, as evidenced by the unequal access to school resources (benches and desks, in this instance). So, even while children want to conform to their well-prescribed social roles, and to their parents’ wishes, they struggle with it constantly. This struggle is especially harder for girls, as these impulses are intertwined with

notions of love and marriage, as we will see in the next sections.

Love and Protection

In one of our activities, children were asked to write their own stories as a way to build writing and imaginative capacities. One of the stories that emerged from the children was that of a girl who had a dark complexion. She had a sister who had a lighter complexion, but she died of an illness. After her sister's death, her parents started telling the girl that she should have died instead of her sister as it would have been easier to get the lighter skinned sister married instead of the dark one. During the discussion that ensued, the girl who wrote the story disclosed that she was actually narrating the story of her own life. Other girls agreed and reported that they had been taught *sundarta hi ladki ki pehchan hain* ("a girl's beauty is her identity"). The conditionality of affection and love provided to girls, especially based on qualities beyond their control, clearly damages the self-image of girls and their expectations of their future. In fact, many girls have reported that their parents do not really care about them and view them as a burden.

This burden, mostly associated with the costs of a marriage, is also seen as an escape route for many of the girls. Given that marriage is seen as the inevitable and natural destiny for girls, many of them pin their hope of emotional fulfilment through imagining a future where a husband will love them. Even though many of the girls realise that this future is a matter of chance and luck, some of them actively engage in creating fictional futures that involve a stereotypical "prince of their dreams", who will whisk them away to a life of security and safety.

This preoccupation with "safety and security" especially related to girls is also evident in our interaction with their parents. Parents not only want to secure good education for their children, they are also concerned about the 'nature' of the schools. Some parents showed reluctance in sending their girls to a local high school as it had a "bad" reputation of having its boys and girls mingle and have 'affairs'. The parents stated that they will "let" their daughters join the high school, only if they restrict themselves to interactions with girls. If daughters had interactions with boys, they will be locked up and not be allowed to step outside of the house. This notion is strongly internalised within girls who feel, first, that they need to be "safe" and protect themselves till they get married and, second, that after their marriage, they will be protected by someone else.

For many of the girls, this feeling comes with a high level of insecurity as the social forces that deem them to be "marriageable" are largely outside of their control. For example, in one of our schools, girls were discussing how they would not have "good futures" and that they were all "spoiled". When asked why, the girls reported that one of the girls from their village had eloped with a boy from another community. The girl was eventually found and brought back to the village. Even though she was being severely beaten, she was not listening to her parents, and wanted to go to her husband. For the girls in the class, the lesson that they learnt was that choosing love inevitably leads to violence and non-fulfilment of wishes, but more importantly, that an incident wholly unconnected to them could impact their futures and them as to be deemed "unmarriageable". This idea or notion is not just held by the girls, but also by the parents who seek to overcome this hurdle by marrying the girls before

the legal age of consent.

Marriage

We already know that there is an over-representation of child marriage in South Asia and that child marriage tends to limit the knowledge, the skills, autonomy, and social support available to girls. Girls are also likely to become pregnant earlier, and there have been strong links established between early marriage and physical abuse. It is a matter of great concern that girls in the schools that we work in do get married at very young ages.

As mentioned before, community members appeared to be apprehensive about the “eligibility” of their daughters because of the elopement of one of the girls in the community. A few weeks after this incident, we found out that one of the girls in our class, Nutan¹, was to get married. Given that Nutan was only 13 years old, we tried to talk to various authorities including the Head Master of the School (HM) and the teachers about stopping the marriage. All our efforts to delay this marriage, including contacting the local NGOs, local women’s groups, and the authorities within the education department, proved fruitless. Especially at the community and the school-level, we faced fierce resistance. In fact, the HM and the teachers in the school told us to leave the matter alone, as the interference with such an important function would not be appreciated. Needless to say, Nutan’s wedding took place as originally planned. In the aftermath of the incident, the mentors working in the schools were treated with some suspicion by the teachers and the community members as they felt that the mentors were a “bad” influence on the children.

Although we have engaged with the community post the incident to improve these relationships, we learnt an important lesson: unless there is some support from the social institutions and social structures around girls, they alone cannot fight this battle of independence and agency. It became clear to us that the focus must be on fostering the agency and freedom of the children, but not without addressing the larger social impediments that bind their existence. This incident of marriage of a child is by no means, the only one we have encountered. Our responses in the aftermath of the incident have been to push gently but firmly against the narratives of girls’ safety and security, which have the potential of putting them in harm’s way.

Violence and Death

Given the kind of constrained lives that young women lead and the pressures that they undergo, it should not be surprising that the suicide rates of young women are almost twice as much as the of men in India (152 women vs. 69 men per 1 lakh individuals) (Govt. of India, 2018). Young women between the ages of 14 and 19 are also highly likely to experience some form of physical, sexual, or psychological violence (Singh & Gururaj, 2013). We were not surprised to find that during story-telling or other articulation exercises, children routinely reported witnessing and experiencing violence in different forms. Violence (verbal and physical) was rampant in classrooms as teachers routinely hit

¹ Name changed to protect the identity of the child.

or shouted at children, and violence was used to resolve disputes, even among children.

Despite our understanding of the violent nature of their lives, we were still unprepared to deal with the death of one of our more engaged students, Aisha. As mentioned earlier, it is not unusual for children to miss classes, even two weeks in a row. So, we didn't pay much attention to Aisha's absence from the class in the first two weeks after her death. In the third week, one of the mentors noticed a group of girls huddled around a diary. When asked about it, the girls said that they were looking at their friend's photograph. Underneath the photograph was a small inscription: "I miss you. I cannot believe you are not in the world anymore." That is when we found out that Aisha had committed suicide.

When we tried to enquire about the reasons for her death, the girls responded that the shaitan ('the devil') was responsible for the death. The girls explained that Aisha's neighbour had committed suicide recently. Since then, Aisha had told her friends that the neighbour often visited Aisha in her dreams and told her to join the neighbour soon. These dreams started affecting her daily life, and in fear, her mother had brought her a taveez, a protective amulet, to ward off any evil eye. But one day, when Aisha's mother came back home from running some errands, she found Aisha sitting motionless on the floor. When we tried to verify the story, the school authorities told us that she had died of a heart attack. Then, in another conversation with Aisha's friend, she told us that the friend's father had actually helped bringing the body down, tied to the ceiling fan.

We have been trying to deal with the aftermath of this tragedy, but no one, including the children and her friends, wants to engage with the subject. Part of the reason is the issue has turned into a "political" one and the local media appears to be heavily involved. The family, the community, and the school authorities have equally been involved in hushing up the matter. Consequently, children have been actively discouraged from talking about their grief and loss, and there is considerable hostility from the school authorities when the subject is brought up. This incident has made it clear to us that emotional and mental well-being resources are sorely missing in these contexts and have to be included in successive activities so that children must not deal alone with their grief and loss.

In summary, we argue that mentoring models such as BMM have the potential to facilitate the creation of a space where children can start to engage the restrictions of their agency, independence, and freedom. Even though much of children's lives are visible to us now, this open space is necessary for children to truly recognise and examine the deeply entrenched notions of honour, social roles, and social responsibilities that they have been saddled with. We feel that only when this engagement deepens, we will be able to start the long-term and embedded process of critical thinking that we are aiming for.

Strategies for The Future

Given the resource deprived situations in which these children come from and the social attitudes that they grow up with, how does a mentoring model hope to address the kind of systemic and structural inequalities that influence these children's lives? We argue that these contexts were especially important to developing a more responsive mentoring model, because the resulting mentoring model could provide, first, positive role models with respect to adult and adolescent social relationships;

second, means and space for challenging and resisting traditional frames of knowledge, and third, through the aforementioned ways, create individual and collective identities that could potentially raise a sense of self for children and a greater confidence in their capacities to shape their own future.

Some of the lessons that we have learned through these experiences in the classroom and within the community is that perspective building within the school and the community is critical. It is important for us to engage with the social attitudes of children, explore the connections to the gendered ideas and attitudes of the teachers, and try to understand the dynamics of power relationships that exist in the community. We have also realised that we need to start incorporating mechanisms within the mentoring model that can help children shore up emotional and social resources, so that they can construct their own productive coping mechanisms to the systemic discrimination that they face.

We are also keenly aware that children currently do not feel safe in the schooling environments primarily because of their past experiences of being ridiculed or their concerns minimised. So, our current module concentrates on valuing knowledge systems, emphasising the importance of scientific method, learning from failure, and the intimate connections between systems of knowledge and identity, especially focused. This core was identified to enable children, especially girls, to build a narrative around their own competence and abilities. When children are provided with a safe space to explore their own abilities, their imagination, and their identities, critical thinking abilities arise and allow them to expand their knowledge horizons. This drives them to address the issues in their own lives and become more involved in action. Barring new challenges that we face in the field, we hope to then make the transition to the third module, there we want to specifically focus on gendered experiences and collectivised action that can sharpen their questioning of normative behaviour and attitudinal patterns.

Each of these modules could be designed in this manner only because we were able to capture the contexts and the challenges that we faced, were confronted with the fluid realities of impoverished environments. We also realised that we cannot look at the educational system in isolation; instead, we must embrace the complicated nature in which social rules, social norms, and familial regulations affect children's lives. We cannot think of nudging the children towards planning their own futures, without taking into account the stability and rigidity of social structures that govern them. In that sense, understanding the "importance of failure" was not just something we introduced in the module, but was a key lesson in developing and implementing BMM.

Moreover, given that agency is diminished by structural over determination, it is also important to ensure that mentoring models do not deviate far from the observed and articulated needs of the children, even if it is challenging. In the field, these needs or wishes can be hard to discern. For example, if we have to address the issue of girls wearing lipsticks, we can interpret the action in two ways: either we can interpret it as girls conforming to the ideals of femininity as prescribed by the larger social discourse (such as TV and movies), or we can see it as an action that declares, albeit in small ways, independence in a restricted environment. Therefore, paying attention to the contexts and challenges of implementation allows us to avoid reproducing particular forms of power hierarchies, and moves our endeavour towards a framework of transformative education. Since agency is not

singular and is bound by the forceful nature of circumstances around the individual, it is even more critical to closely examine the contexts and challenges so as to develop a truly responsive mentoring model that can work against rigid social and institutional structures. We argue that by using these forms of responsive mentoring models, we can facilitate an inclusive space that will support children to transform their own lives and create new worlds for themselves.

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Promoting Rights in School Framework: A Transformative Approach to Education and Development

Maria Ron Balsera

Abstract

Drawing on Bourdieu, Bowles and Gintis, Willis, Dewey and Freire, this paper discusses the contradictory roles of education as both an active reproducer of social inequalities and as a potential equaliser to challenge the status-quo. It analyses the conceptualisation of education as a commodity, linking it to the human capital discourse but also to Sahlberg's (2015) Global Education Reform Movement. It then presents Action Aid's Promoting Rights in School Framework as a transformative approach to education and development based on human rights and critical pedagogy. The Promoting Rights in School Framework provides participatory research and advocacy framework to education and development, offering a transformative people-centred approach in which students and their families are seen as agents of change, able to identify gaps and propose actionable rooted solutions to ultimately ensure the enjoyment of the right to education for all children. In a time when privatisation of education is offered as the solution for the gaps and inequalities in terms of availability and quality of education worldwide, Promoting Rights in School framework can serve as a referent of transformative education approach.

Introduction

Education is a multifaceted term that can be understood as public service, as a right, as a public good, or as a commodity, as an investment, as an individual asset, depending on the approach. Education often plays these roles simultaneously, with certain characteristics being more or less salient in particular times and spaces. Schools can intentionally or unintentionally oppress students, but they can also act as place of resistance where critical thinking and creativity is fostered. This chapter discusses the role of education in social reproduction drawing on Bourdieu, Bowles and Gintis, as well as Willis; contrasting it with Dewey's and Gutmann's vision of education linked to deliberative democracy or Freire's conscientisation. Then it presents ActionAid's Reflect-Action and Promoting Rights in School Framework as progressive initiatives linked to the transformative role of education. These participatory initiatives have been implemented in over 15 countries, building the capacity of communities and local civil society organisations to not only advocate for quality education, but to be able to articulate these needs through a longer-term process of promoting critical consciousness that leads to social change. The Promoting Rights in School framework merges the core obligations of the human right to education with the political process of consciousness-raising, through a participatory research methodology that enables research subjects to become agents of change. The framework's overall goal is to improve the quality of education, improve reporting on the state of education rights from citizens' perspective, and to promote evidenced based advocacy.

Equality of Opportunity and Social Reproduction

Education is often portrayed as the greatest equaliser by a wide range of actors and texts, from politicians to human right declarations, from philosophers to corporations¹, levelling the playing field in a meritocratic context which is the essence of equality of opportunities. Education is a human right which appears in the UDHR, ICESCR, CRC and other international treaties, as well as in national constitutions and policy frameworks. Education as a right is opposed to education as an investment or commodity linked to the human capital discourse, underpinned by the entrepreneurial and competitive behaviour applied to decision-making processes in education through cost-benefit calculations based on market criteria (Ron Balsera, 2011). From a rights perspective, education is an entitlement, linked to the flourishing of the human potential without discrimination and learning with others for a culture of peace and tolerance (Ron Balsera, 2011).

Yet, education has been criticised for its role in reproducing social inequalities (Bourdieu, 1977; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Ball, 2006), with schools as active reproducers legitimising the transmission of social inequalities from one generation to the next. From this perspective, individuals' heterogeneities such as sex, particular phenotypes and family socio-economic status are turned into individuals with defined class, gender, and racial roles in society, being ascribed a position in the hierarchy ladder. Bourdieu studied how the transmission of power and privileges has changed in modernity, arguing that despite the claim of equality, social class still determines the future of the individuals. He argued against the idea that school was a neutral space and suggested that instead, it shaped social class and power.

Bourdieu holds that the cultural wealth that schools transmit "only really belongs (although it is theoretically offered to everyone) to those endowed with the means of appropriating it for themselves" (Bourdieu, 1977: 488). Cultural wealth refers to education as a social asset, as a positional good, that contributes to the socioeconomic status of the individual, situating them in a determined social bracket in a stratified society. The key to access this cultural wealth requires a code that is only transmitted to the descendants of the dominant classes. The transmission of the code is "a function of the cultural competence that the receiver owes to his family upbringing, which is more or less close to the 'high' culture transmitted by the colleges and to the linguistic and cultural models according to which this transmission is carried out" (Bourdieu, 1977: 489). Thus, the educational system asks from the pupils something that it does not provide, some predisposition that one can only acquire within the family, favouring the dominant culture of those in power. Therefore, what the schooling values is the linguistic and cultural competence - of the dominant culture, disadvantaging lower socioeconomic groups and minorities - that is transmitted within the family. However, these predispositions are never explicit;

¹ See for instance the way in which the link between education and equality of opportunity has been approached from the controversial US 2001 No Child Left Behind Act, signed by President Bush, to the General Comment no. 13 (UNHCR, 1999) on the right to education, in which education is described as a multiplier of other human rights and as a vehicle for marginalised groups to lift themselves out of poverty. Philosophers such as Rawls (2009) or Sen (2009) have also pointed at the role of education as enabler of equality of opportunity; these arguments have been further unpacked by Walker and Unterhalter (2007) looking at the link between the capability approach and social justice in education. Gutmann's democratic education also reflects on the principles of equality and non-discrimination (Gutmann & Ben-Porath, 2014). However, this link is also used to promote certain products such as how some corporations promote education technology's role in levelling the playfield (<https://edtechnology.co.uk/latest-news/levelling-the-playing-field-1539183316/> last checked 18/09/2020).

they remain disguised behind words such as merit and talent, even when they are not the work of the educational system; even worse, the academic market grants legitimacy to this transmission of power and privileges. The process by which the dominant classes transmit cultural capital gaining its legitimacy through school degrees could be compared to money laundering. Since the overt nepotism of appointing people in elitist jobs is no longer socially or politically correct, wealthy families ensure their children obtain respected academic degrees that give legitimacy to their success when hoarding the most desirable positions. Great sums are thus spent, in private schools, private tutors and clubs that give them that head-start, ensuring to locate their houses in the catchment areas of reputable schools or in donations to elitist institutions that would favour certain applications.

Willis' ethnographic research (1977) was based on an 18-month observation (together with interviews and group discussions) of twelve working class white boys, lads, from a school in Birmingham (UK), plus a 6-month observation in their workplaces, conducted between 1972 and 1975. In the book, these boys do not see school as a place to learn, but as a place to have fun breaking rules, since they anticipated working in factories where school qualifications were not required, through a process of differentiation in which they would reject the illusion of the school's role in promoting social mobility. Doing well in school or following the teaching paradigm was rejected as a threat to their idea of working-class masculinity, in which manual labour was more authentic than mental labour. Willis (1977) points at how some working-class children develop resistance mechanisms, producing a culture of nonconformity, rebellion, and opposition to the discipline enforced by the school system and a physical and symbolic liberation attempt from it. However, according to Willis this counter school culture manifested in practice, language, visual expression and style, ultimately leads them to low pay grunt work.

In their book *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational reform and the contradictions of economic life* (1976), Bowles and Gintis argue that schools reproduce and legitimate the capitalist system. They argue that schools prepare children for the capitalist production by means of alienating students from each other by competing against each other, teaching them how to interact in the labour market. Equally, students are subject to the hierarchy and authority that the teachers and other educational staff members represent in the school, mimicking the hierarchy in the workplace. Students are encouraged to learn for their grades rather than for their own satisfaction, which may be seen as analogous to a job salary. Bowles and Gintis also criticised the idea of equality of opportunity since this would require a substantial negative correlation between the ownership of capital and the quality and quantity of schooling received, to neutralize the unequal effect of the rise of schooling as an economic phenomenon. This learning for grades and competition epitomises the essence of what Sahlberg calls the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM). According to him, since the 1980s, this way of understanding education promoted by international development but underpinned by private sector's interests, has been spreading like a virus. The GERM's main drives are standardisation, focus on a literacy and numeracy, teaching to the test, use of corporate management models, and test-based accountability policies (Sahlberg, 2015). These drives narrow the curriculum hindering critical thinking. They subject teachers and schools to evaluations in which their students' test results determine their success or failure, often with monetary consequences. They also paved the way for neoliberal reforms and innovative solutions from the private sector to increase performance, based

on corporate management. Competition within and between schools and countries is opposed to the idea of cooperation, leading to winners and losers. League tables with magnet schools attract students with high socioeconomic background and stigmatise schools at the bottom of the league.

Thus, these authors have in common the thesis that school is a social site that reproduces and legitimises social inequalities through complex processes which disadvantage children from lower socio-economic backgrounds, working as another cog in the capitalist machinery. The capitalist ideology has increased its influence in education policy worldwide promoting business ideas or efficiency, value-for-money, and hierarchical structures. Particularly since the 1980s in the US, this ideology has materialised into “accountability regimes based on standardised tests, public asset privatization (such as charter schools), performance pay (sometimes referred to as merit pay), the importation of business “best practices”, changes in work relations, changing systems of evaluation, an advocacy of administrative autonomy (as opposed to teacher autonomy), and a move away from civics education, physical education, arts education, and music education (Ford, 2020: 2; also Giroux, 2015; Levin, 2001; Levin, 2018). This market-imbued influence contrasts with the role of education fostering critical thinking, forming free and equal individuals able to actively participate in their communities and in a deliberative democracy (Gutmann & Ben-Porath, 2014).

Schools as Sites of Struggle

Schools may be seen as reproducers of inequality, but also as places to challenge and resist social norms and inequalities. Carnoy and Levin’s book *Schooling and work in the democratic State* (1985), holds that “the relationship between education and work is dialectical – composed of a perpetual tension between two dynamics, the imperative of capitalism and those of democracy in all its forms” (Carnoy, 1985: 4). The contradiction of opposed ideologies takes place within the school, preparing students for inequality in the labour market, but also for citizenship in a democratic society based on equality of opportunity and human rights. Therefore, the school appears to be in one way autonomous and independent, but in another way, subject to the labour market’s demands. This perpetual and dialectical tension reflects the changes in society. Thus, when social movements are strong and the market is weak, the democratic and equality of opportunity approach overshadows the correspondence or social reproduction approach –preparing students for jobs, segregating them to fit in the capitalist machinery, and vice versa–. This contradiction transpires at all levels, from international benchmarks and national policies to the day-to-day actions of teachers, parents and students themselves, underpinning fluid dynamics that can lead to reproducing or fighting inequality and domination.

Thus, education plays multiple roles, often interlinked. Unterhalter and Brighouse (2007: 78-83) study the different facets of education as a complex good, entailing instrumental and intrinsic values. From this perspective, the instrumental value of education refers to other valuable goods, like better life prospects, career opportunities and civic participation. It improves one’s opportunities in life, since schooling promotes the achievement of important levels of knowledge and skills acquisition, which play a vital role in agency, i.e. ability to make decisions and formulate plans of life (Sen, 2009b; Ron Balsera, 2014), and well-being, i.e., “person’s actual freedom to live well and be well” (Sen, 2009b: 39).

On the other hand, the intrinsic value of education refers to the way in which being educated enhances the possibility to appreciate and engage in a wide range of activities which are fulfilling for their own sake. The positional value of education conveys the processes in which the benefits of an educated person are relative to the education qualifications of others in situations of competition, linked to concepts of reputation and cultural capital. These values of education can also be categorised as individual and societal. The societal instrumental value is linked to social and economic development, whereas the societal intrinsic value can be associated to cultural manifestations (Unterhalter & Brighouse, 2007: 78-83).

Despite the critique, education is still the most promising way to achieve social mobility and foster critical thinking to challenge unjust social norms. Following Dewey's legacy of education's role for democracy and social change, Freire criticised the idea of the "banking" model of education which conceives students as passive receptors of knowledge, as subjects rather than agents, able to challenge the dominant culture with creative power. His *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (1972) paved the way for a liberating education of those oppressed, by retrieving their sense of humanity and using it to challenge their oppressors. As such, education can be a political process of consciousness-raising in which people become agents of their own liberation. As Shaul (1971) wrote in the foreword of *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, "There's no such thing as neutral education. Education either functions as an instrument to bring about conformity, or freedom." School is a site of struggle between social reproduction and liberation; the educator cannot be neutral but a socially committed intellectual in a Gramscian way, enabling students to use their education as a tool to liberate themselves and create better and fairer societies. As such, the education process needs to move away from the banking model of conformity and social reproduction to the liberation model of developing critical consciousness, that enables people to become agents of change, questioning the status quo and transforming the world.

ActionAid's Approach: Linking Learning and Power

It is estimated that there are 773 million adults without basic literacy around the world (UNESCO), most of whom are women, despite the considerable gains in the last seven decades. The importance of literacy is associated to its multiplier effect in enabling individuals to increase their agency and wellbeing and contribute to the social and economic development, having positive effects in health and nutrition, increasing the life opportunities and reducing poverty rates. Beyond the basic 3Rs (reading, writing and arithmetic), the broad conception of literacy also refers to critical thinking, creativity, and being able to use the technology in our digital world.

Based on Freire's critical pedagogy, the Reflect methodology for adult literacy fuses Freire and participatory rural appraisal. Starting in 1993, the Reflect approach was first piloted by ActionAid in three projects in Uganda, El Salvador and Bangladesh. In the subsequent evaluation, reflect proved to be both more effective at teaching people to read and write and much more effective at linking literacy to wider development (ODA, 1996). Since then, the Reflect approach has expanded to many countries driven by its application by a wide range of different national and international organisations.

The Reflect approach does not use textbooks; instead, learning circles construct maps, charts and

other diagrams to represent their reality, to critically analyse local issues and power relations. The fact that participants construct their own materials in Reflect circles leads to a strong ownership of the issues that are raised. This has led to local action and a strong link between the literacy programme and other development activities, acting as catalysts for wider processes of change (Archer & Cottingham, 1996).

The focus on adult literacy interweaves the intrinsic, instrumental and positional values of education described by Unterhalter and Brighouse. Thus, literacy is seen as political processes, with illiteracy being the result of the unjust distribution of resources and opportunities. Most of the Reflect participants have been excluded from school because of physical, economic, cultural, or linguistic barriers. Women have been overrepresented in these groups, balancing their exclusion from school in the patriarchal societies they live. The Reflect approach paves the way for the “conscientization”, what Freire describes as “the process of learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and of taking action against the oppressive elements of reality” (Archer & Cottingham, 1996: 10). In this sense, the codification of the local reality into maps, calendar, diagrams and other forms of representations, allows the participants to abstract from their lived realities and problematise power relations and their structure. “The act of knowing involves a dialectical movement that goes from action to reflection and from reflection upon action to a new action” (Freire, 1972). This consciousness raising leads to social change, to praxis by creative agents. The Reflect approach has acted as progressive education initiative, where instead of teaching the narrow version of literacy required to be a productive worker in lower rank, it promotes critical thinking and what Willis called penetration, leading to the understanding of and liberation from oppressive structures as well as flourishing of the participants.

Moved by the aim to fight poverty and oppression, ActionAid’s approach² has evolved to include a rights-based approach which is feminist and people-centred³, using a gender transformative approach at all levels that goes beyond the human rights-based approach to advance justice and equality through bottom-up processes beyond those areas where rights are presently codified (ActionAid,

² “ActionAid works to strengthen the capacity and agency of people living in poverty and exclusion, especially women, to assert their rights. We work with communities, people’s organisations, women’s and youth movements, groups and networks, social movements, and other allies to overcome the structural causes and consequences of poverty and injustice. We connect the work we do at community level with broader efforts and struggles for justice at every level, to make the greatest contribution towards a just, equitable and sustainable world.

Guided by feminist and human rights-based principles and approaches, we seek to shift and transform power, through empowerment, solidarity, campaigning, and the generation of alternatives to ensure that every person can enjoy a life of dignity and freedom from all forms of oppression. We prioritise the leadership of women and young people, especially those living in poverty and exclusion, in our efforts to achieve social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication. We create platforms for collective action and solidarity by enabling people around the world to unite and contribute to social justice struggles as citizens, supporters, staff, and volunteers.

Around the world, we are rooted in the communities where we operate and proudly uphold our primary accountability to the people most affected by unequal power relations” (ActionAid, 2020: 7). For more information, see <https://actionaid.org/publications/2020/action-global-justice-practice#download>

³ ActionAid embraces a transformative feminist leadership that arises, from its wider commitment to intersectional feminism as an ideology, an analytical framework and a social change strategy. Feminism’s main goal is to dismantle patriarchy (male dominance) by transforming the ideologies, institutions and structures that reproduce it. Intersectional feminism shows us that in order to defeating patriarchy, we need to acknowledge and fight the other forms of oppression that reinforce it –not just discrimination based on gender, but also race, class, caste, sexuality, age, physical ability etc. See feminist research guidelines for more information, <https://actionaid.org/publications/2020/feminist-research-guidelines>

2020: 11). To address the structural causes of poverty and to challenge and defeat patriarchal power, we need decision makers to shift their views and actions. We need the evidence to call out how and where power negatively manifests and reproduces, impacting people differently depending on their intersecting identity. ActionAid is committed to diversifying whose knowledge counts, starting with people's role in shaping the priorities and evidence itself. In this sense, the research itself can be activism as it is where - through reflection-action cycles - the change starts to happen.

ActionAid sees research and policy analysis, combined with collective action, and ongoing reflection - as necessary to build evidence-based alternatives to convince and compel decision-makers to change -. Privilege and power are not necessarily fixed and go beyond individual identities to look at the relationships between people and their history and relationship with institutions of power. That is why ActionAid adopts an intersectional feminist approach (ActionAid, 2020) to interrogate power dynamics, and support programming and practises that break down those structures. In a nutshell: "We believe that an end to poverty and injustice can be achieved through purposeful individual and collective action, led by the active agency of people living in poverty and supported by solidarity, credible rights-based alternatives and campaigns that address the structural causes and consequences of poverty⁴."

Promoting Rights in School Framework

Following a human rights approach, education is aimed to promote, support and protect the innate dignity of every child (UNESCO, 2019). When education is looked at through the human rights lens, it possesses the following characteristics: it is a universal inalienable right with the State as the corresponding duty-bearer; as a multiplier of other rights, it is a key right and a high priority for States to meet their obligations to fulfil this right, that encompasses a broad normative scope (UNESCO, 2019). Tomasevski (2001) elucidated governmental human rights obligations in education, structured into a simple 4-A's scheme - making education available, accessible, acceptable, and adaptable.

The Promoting Rights in Schools (PRS) framework (ActionAid, 2010), which ActionAid developed in collaboration with the Right to Education Initiative, in 2010, synthesises complex human rights treaties into a practical resource for the participatory collection of rights-based evidence in individual schools that can drive policy reform at all levels. It merges the core obligations of the human right to education with the political process of consciousness-raising, through a participatory research methodology that enables research subjects to become agents of change. The framework's overall goals are to improve the quality of education, improve reporting on the state of education rights from citizens' perspective, and to promote evidenced based advocacy. PRS has been implemented in over 15 countries in the last ten years as an innovative participatory action research framework, built around 10 core dimensions of the right to education (each with a set of indicators that can be assessed at school level). This provides an interlinked structure for evidence-based policy engagement at school, district, national and international levels. At community level, the process involves a wide range of different stakeholders including local authorities, teachers, school management committees,

⁴ As outlined in ActionAid's strategy Action for Global Justice (2028)

parents, children, and local civil society representatives, assessing their local school with a strong focus on both quality and equality. Following compilation and analysis of the data, the results are then validated in feedback sessions with schools and communities, that lead to evidence-based school improvement plans. The data across schools is then collated upwards and used at district and national levels to inform changes in policy and practice.

This approach, therefore, supports linking programme work at the school level with advocacy and policy efforts in national and international forums. The aim is to build the capacity of communities and local civil society organisations not only to advocate for quality education, but to be able to articulate these needs through a longer-term process of promoting critical consciousness that leads to social change.

The PRS' 10 Rights Charter (ActionAid, 2010, 2020 new edition forthcoming) sets all schools must respect the following ten fundamental rights:

1. Right to free and compulsory education: There should be no charges, direct or indirect, for primary education. Education must gradually be made free at all levels.
2. Right to non-discrimination: Schools must not make any distinction in provision based on sex, race, colour, language, religion, political opinion, nationality, ethnicity, ability, or any other status.
3. Right to adequate infrastructure: There should be an appropriate number of classrooms, accessible to all, with adequate and separate sanitation facilities for girls and boys. Schools should be built with local materials and be resilient to natural risks and disasters.
4. Right to quality trained teachers: Schools should have a sufficient number of trained teachers of whom a good proportion are female; teachers should receive good quality pre-service and in-service training with built-in components on gender sensitivity, non-discrimination, and human rights. All teachers should be paid domestically competitive salaries.
5. Right to a safe and non-violent environment: Children should be safe on route to and in school. Clear anti-bullying policies and confidential systems for reporting and addressing any form of abuse or violence should be in place.
6. Right to relevant education: The curriculum should not discriminate and should be relevant to the social, cultural, environmental, economic, and linguistic context of learners.
7. Right to know your rights: Schools should teach human rights education and children's rights in particular. Learning should include age-appropriate and accurate information on sexual and reproductive rights.
8. Right to participate: Girls and boys have the right to participate in decision making processes in school. Appropriate mechanisms should be in place to enable the full, genuine, and active participation of children.

9. Right to transparent and accountable schools: Schools need to have transparent and effective monitoring systems. Both communities and children should be able to participate in accountable governing bodies, management committees and parents' groups.
10. Right to quality learning: Girls and boys have a right to a quality learning environment and to effective teaching processes so that they can develop their personality, talents and physical and mental abilities to their fullest potential.

The PRS objectives are:

1. To develop a participatory and empowering process with parents, children, teachers and others, that will generate rigorous data on one or more of the 10 core education rights.
2. To produce school-level reports that catalyse future action on education rights.
3. To consolidate reports at district and national levels as a basis for people-centred advocacy.
4. To identify both the positive progress that has been made on education and the challenges that remain.
5. To popularise knowledge of the 10 core education rights and their basis in international conventions / treaties and in the national constitution / legislation.

Thus, the overall goal of the PRS initiative is to engage citizens in improving the quality of education. The Charter and indicators support the development of local, district and national reports on the state of education rights, based on citizens' perspectives and mobilisation. Our research to action approach promotes evidenced-based advocacy and campaigning, which we hope will lead to sustainable change.

Over the past 10 years, the PRS framework has been rolled out in a range of countries in Africa and Asia, with many national and cross-country independent evaluations conducted. This has validated the approach in diverse settings and helped a continuing process of revision and adaptation. Findings from external evaluations include:

PRS helps raise awareness, e. g. "the participatory data collection process provided community-level stakeholders with an awareness and understanding of the actual situation in their schools and in the wider education environment" (Figue, 2013; Cozens, et al., 2018: 14).

Gender equality and enrolment, e. g. "increased enrolment rates in the three African countries" (Cozens et al., 2018:16). The Malawi target schools showed a 14% increase in the enrolment of both boys and girls. In Tanzania, the target schools had a 24% increase in girls' enrolment (Cozens, et al., 2018: 17).

Reducing drop-out rates, e. g. "The overall numbers of children dropping-out in the target schools reduced in all four countries." Drop out fell to close to zero in Tanzania and approximately halved in the other three countries (Cozens, et al., 2018: 20).

Promoting inclusion of children with disabilities, PRS has a positive impact sensitising both communities and school staff. participation of learners with disabilities in class, clubs and activities improved

(Figure, 2013; Cozens, et al., 2018).

Empowering key stakeholders, “The results validation processes were recognized as a valuable way of disseminating findings and encouraging community ownership; they also gave added confidence to those presenting and defending the findings” (Cozens, et al., 2018: 14).

Data collection and analysis, “The possession of validated findings from grass-roots level and their use in Citizen Education Reports and in advocacy processes were considered well worth the investment by the four countries” (Cozens, et al., 2018: 14).

Relevance, “Using the PRS framework as a general framework for the project meant that it had a solid rights-based approach and addressed neglected education rights of the selected target groups in a holistic way” (Figure, 2013).

Discussion

Moving away from a capitalist concept of education as an investment to be made under actuarial schemes of cost-benefit and competition, a commodity to be traded, or a site that reproduces and legitimises inequalities, both Reflect and PRS promote education as a right to resist and fight oppression, fostering agency and well-being. Both Reflect and PRS frameworks provide progressive alternatives to the banking model of education, empowering disadvantaged groups to critically analyse and confront inequalities, power imbalances and to claim their rights. These two frameworks follow a human rights based approach to development, that centres on active agency, supporting people living in poverty (particularly women and young people) to become conscious of their rights, to organise and claim their rights, and to hold duty bearers to account, built on international human rights law, that go beyond a legal or technical approach to rights (ActionAid, 2020). Both frameworks often work simultaneously with parents or guardians, children, teachers and others, reflecting about their situation and the structural causes of poverty and injustice, and becoming agents of change through participatory and empowering processes that generate rigorous data to be used to confront structural disadvantages, including patriarchal norms that intertwine with class, ethnicity and other ascribed social identities.

As such, these initiatives aim to raise awareness and mobilise poor communities to claim their right to the broad concept of literacy that a progressive education should engender. Going beyond a legalistic and technical approach to the right to education, Reflect and PRS work to provide tools, knowledge, and capacities, so that people living in poverty and exclusion can organise themselves to claim their rights, denounce when their rights are being violated, free themselves from oppression, and act in solidarity to transform the world.

The PRS’s participatory action research approach should be used to inform policies, particularly to reach the Sustainable Development Goal 4, to “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. Education institutions should be designed to redress disadvantage, levelling the playing field, and enabling individuals to achieve their full potential and contribute to social change, rather than being sites of social reproduction of inequalities. Diverse

and intersecting inequalities impact children's enrolment, retention, and achievement in schools, but evidence on these is rarely contextualised and even more rarely informs decision making. PRS can be used to improve evidence-based, gender-responsive policy-making and more effective policy enactment at school, district and national level - contributing to build more accountable, equitable and inclusive schools and education systems.

Conclusion

Education can play the role of active reproducer of social inequalities or that of a social equaliser that challenges injustice and promotes social change. As such, equality of opportunity and upward mobility are linked to the development of the human personality and wider social empowerment in the rights-based approach. On the other hand, schools can also reproduce the unequal, hierarchical relations within society, the family, and the workplace (Carnoy & Levin, 1985). The neoliberal approach to education infused by the human capital discourse sees education as a commodity subject to market forces, excluding those who cannot afford it. The constant struggle between these trends produces diverse ways of understanding education, in terms of responsibilities, financing, and provision, leading to different groups being prioritised or excluded.

Following a human rights approach infused by Freire's notion of consciousness-raising, the Promoting Rights in School framework offers a transformative people-centred approach, in which students and their families are seen as agents of change, able to identify gaps and propose actionable rooted solutions to ultimately ensure the enjoyment of the right to education for all children. Its dialectical process unveils the interlocking relationships and complex systems of inequalities that affect the enrolment, learning and progression in and through school, of children subject to discrimination. PRS results in grounded solutions aimed to mitigate these processes, levelling the playing field, and enabling individuals to achieve their full potential and contribute to social change. Underpinned by human rights and critical pedagogy, it provides a fruitful participatory research and advocacy framework to education and development. In a time when privatisation of education is offered as the solution for the gaps and inequalities in terms of availability and quality of education worldwide, PRS can serve as a referent of transformative education approach encompassing human rights and critical pedagogy to strengthen education's role in levelling the playing field, enabling social mobility, and supporting the development of human potential by meeting the learning needs of each and of every individual.

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**Part II:
Transformative Education and
Institutional Change**

The Influence of the Institutional Model on the Achievements of the State Institute of Education, Science, and Technology of Maranhão (IEMA) and its Role as an Instrument for Transformative Education

Marcos Eduardo Miranda Santos, Eneida Maria Erre Araújo, and Jhonatan Uelson Pereira Sousa De Almada

Abstract

The State Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Maranhão (IEMA) is a public institution that aims to offer high level professional, scientific and technological education. Its institutional model stimulates a critically oriented pedagogical action, changing conventional teaching-learning practices. In this sense, this study sought to demonstrate the importance of this model as a tool for transforming education, based on the achievements obtained and the perception of the school community. IEMA's institutional development reports and official website were reviewed to survey all the institute's achievements from its founding to the present year. Also, the perception of the school community about the Model's contributions to the institution's success was diagnosed through questionnaires. The Institutional Model is identified by the school community as a determinant for the educational indicators and results achieved at the institute.

The replication of the Model in the education networks of Maranhão and other Brazilian states is encouraged. In this way, the concept of transformative education, still little explored in Brazil, expands, proving that it is possible to make a public school of excellence.

Keywords:

Institutional Model, Professional Education, Public School, Quality Education, Youth Protagonism

Introduction

When it comes to public schools, the reality evidenced from research by the National Institute for Educational Studies and Research "Anísio Teixeira" (INEP) points out that in Brazil, out of every 100 students who enter basic education, only 86 complete the initial years of elementary school. This number decreases to 76 when it comes to the completion of the final years of this same stage of education, dropping to 59 the number of students who complete high school (BRASIL, 2018).

In the state of Maranhão, out of every 100 students who start basic education, 84 complete only elementary school I, 67 complete elementary school II, and only 54 finish high school. Of the latter, only 27.5% have adequate knowledge of Portuguese, a reality that is further aggravated when the subject is mathematics, where only 7.3% achieve adequate learning at this stage of education (BRASIL, 2018).

Given this reality, the State Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Maranhão (IEMA),

created by Provisional Measure No. 184, of January 2, 2015, and subsequently transformed by Law No. 10213, of March 9, 2015, has used an innovative management model that integrates the theoretical, practical, and technical basis through the guidelines of the Common National Base, Diversified Part and Technical Base, with which it has achieved excellent results concerning the promotion of free, public, comprehensive, and vocational education.

The IEMA Institutional Model consists of the Relevance Model, the Pedagogical Model, and the Management Model. The Relevance Model has the following principles: continuous improvement, evidence-based practice, and applied research. The Pedagogical Model, in turn, follows these principles: protagonism –students, supported or not by their educators, assume the main role of the actions they perform -; the 4 Pillars of Education, the Pedagogy of Presence, the Interdimensional Education –consideration of the dimensions of corporeality, spirit, and emotion in human formation and not just cognitive formation -, and the Transformative Insertion –decision-making to intervene and transform reality (MARANHÃO, 2019).

Regarding the Management Model, the principles are first, the Virtuous Cycle –the results that the school delivers to the community must be satisfactory; with this, is expected that there will be an increase in investments for education, which, in turn, will increase the chances of improving school operationalization and thus, the prospect of achieving good learning outcomes to be delivered to society; second, Education through Work; third, communication, and fourth, social relevance – setting priorities in the application of available resources and achieving socially relevant results (MARANHÃO, 2019).

IEMA's Institutional Model contemplates the young person in its multiple dimensions, allowing them to emancipate themselves through education and transform their reality. In this sense, the school is invited to organize its curriculum to attend a differentiated formation in which, by identifying the elements of its culture, the student can, through a process of socialization of the elaborated knowledge, appropriate the knowledge as an active elaboration of the subject, in interaction with the object of knowledge and other subjects (Saviani, 2007). IEMA Institutional Model is based on pedagogical innovation, which comprises education as a fundamental right of the human person, as it is a necessary condition for life in today's society, going beyond schooling and occurring in different spaces (Barcelos, 2014).

In this sense, the Institutional Model is an effective tool for promoting transformative education, as it stimulates a critically oriented pedagogical action, changing the conventional practices of those who learn while teaching and those who teach while learning. Transformative education is an epistemological action and, as such, requires curiosity, audacity, rigor, critical awareness, rupture, dialogue, and listening (ICE, 2015).

The transformative educational practice is the affective coexistence between those who, at the same time, teach and learn, assuming the act of knowing beyond the sensitive (immediate) knowledge, breaking conceptions that deny education as a gnoseological act, in an environment favourable to epistemology (Freire, 1996). Thus, the competent discourse of education does not solve anything if the pedagogical action that corresponds to it is impermeable to changes. Transformative education

is not in the formal changes, although necessary, but in the vigilant posture against the practices of dehumanization, in which the know-how to do of critical self-reflection must be compatible with the know-be, in opposition to individualism, competitiveness, and formalist criteria of competence and/or evaluation (Vieira, et al., 2010). In this conception, there must be a commitment to solidarity and an ethical transforming practice that goes beyond mere agreement with discourses, objectives, policies, content, or projects (Freire, 1996).

Therefore, assuming that the IEMA Institutional Model has promoted changes in the educational paradigm of the state of Maranhão, this study sought to demonstrate the importance of this model as an instrument of transformative education, by surveying the institution's achievements over its five years of creation and how they influence students' academic performance.

Methodology

The research was qualitative and exploratory and was based on the theoretical-methodological assumptions of documentary research and case study. Documental research looks for information in documents that have not received any scientific treatment, such as reports, newspaper reports, and magazines, among others (Mogalakwe, 2006). In turn, a case study is a scientific research strategy that analyzes a real phenomenon considering the context in which it is inserted and the variables that influence it (Thomas, 2015).

IEMA's institutional development reports and the official website (<http://www.iema.ma.gov.br/>) were analyzed to survey all the institute's achievements between 2015 (date of its foundation) and 2020. Achievements were classified into three categories: Management achievements, Students achievements, and Teachers achievements. Also, the educational indicators (approval, fail, dropout, attendance, transfer, and death) of the years 2017-2018 were evaluated to assess, though the percentage of each indicator, the impact of IEMA achievements on school development. Each category describes successful practices carried out by actors from the IEMA school community, who were recognized and awarded at events outside the institute.

Sá-Silva, et al. (2009) argue that the use of documents in investigating cultural processes should be encouraged because they may reveal events that help to understand contemporary sociocultural situations. Documents –whether primary or secondary sources– reveal a wealth of information that can help researchers advance knowledge production in various fields of the humanities and social sciences (Triviños, 1987).

Finally, a form was applied through the Google Forms platform with the Institute's teachers and students. The form had two questions: "In your opinion, does the Institutional Model of IEMA contribute to the achievements of the students and teachers of the institution?", and "How does the Institutional Model contribute to the high performance of IEMA?" The answers were categorized and plotted on a graph.

Results

Regarding the category Achievements of management, IEMA obtained significant results in the period 2015-2019, reaching 26 units (17 Full Units and 13 Vocational Units) and partnerships that comprised around 100 municipalities of Maranhão, totaling 4184. Students enrolled in high school and 26 000 professionally qualified Maranhão. IEMA currently accounts for 10,55% of high school vocational education in the state of Maranhão. Initial and continuing education courses were rated “Good” by 93% of graduates.

Some actions of educational, scientific and technological relevance carried out by IEMA stand out: a) the recognition as an Associated School of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); b) 44 projects approved by IEMA and 33 projects approved by partners at the Maranhão Foundation for Research and Scientific and Technological Development (FAPEMA) and the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq/Brazil); c) holding the National Seminar on Vocational Education, the National Congress of the Brazilian Association of Technological Research and Innovation Institutions (ABIPTI/Brazil), and the International Seminar on Educational Robotics; d) as participant in the National Science and Technology Week (SNCT/Brasília) and in the Annual Meetings of the Brazilian Society for the Progress of Science (SBPC); e) practice selected for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Platform; f) practices selected for the UNESCO Socio-Emotional Practices Map; g) practices selected for the Quintessa Sustainable Cities Map and the Vedacit Institute; h) Glass Zero initiative selected as a good national solid waste management practice by the Ministry of Environment (MMA / Brazil) and UN Environment.

In the category Student achievements, the following stand out: a) elected representative in the Mercosur Youth Parliament (PJM); b) “Runner-up” students and 3rd place in Youth Robotics Tournament (TJR) categories; c) bronze medal at the International Mathematical Olympiad of Asia; d) awards in the Visual Arts category at the UN competition in Brazil; e) gold, silver and bronze medal at the Brazilian Astronomy and Astronautics Olympiad (OBA); f) gold, silver, bronze medal and honorable mention at the Brazilian Rocket Show (MBFOG); g) silver and bronze medal at the Brazilian Geography / Earth Sciences Olympiad; h) 3rd place in FIRA Roboworld Cup in DRC Explorer mode (Taiwan); i) 1st, 2nd and 3rd places and Super Time title at the International Robot Tournament (ITR); j) 4th place in Dance mode and 5th place in Robot Race in RobôParty (Portugal); l) First Lego League (FLL) highlight; m) silver medal at SBPC Jovem; n) bronze medal and honourable mention at the Brazilian Olympics of Public Schools Mathematics (OBMEP); o) gold and bronze medals at the International Mathematical Olympics Without Borders (IOMF); p) students awarded as National Highlights in the Innovates School Challenge of the Telephonic Vivo Foundation; q) drawings of students awarded in the CEAT 50 Years Competition; r) 3rd place in the International Letter Writing Contest of the Universal Postal Union (UPU); s) poetry of students selected in the Game of Words Publishing Contest.

For the Teaching achievements category, we highlight the recognition of teachers from outside the institution: a) awarded professor at the Brazilian Public Schools Mathematics Olympiad (OBMEP); b) honourable mention in the FAPEMA Award; c) selected teacher at Tech Camp Brasil; d) teachers selected for the Professional Development Program for English Language Teachers in the United States

(PDPI) - CAPES and Fulbright Commission Brazil; e) 3rd place awarded professor at the Scholarship Essay Competition Reach Cambridge; f) teacher selected for the Pedagogical Mission in Parliament promoted by the Chamber of Deputies.

As for educational indicators, a high percentage of approval and attendance of IEMA students was found, in detriment of a low percentage of failure and dropout (Figure 1).

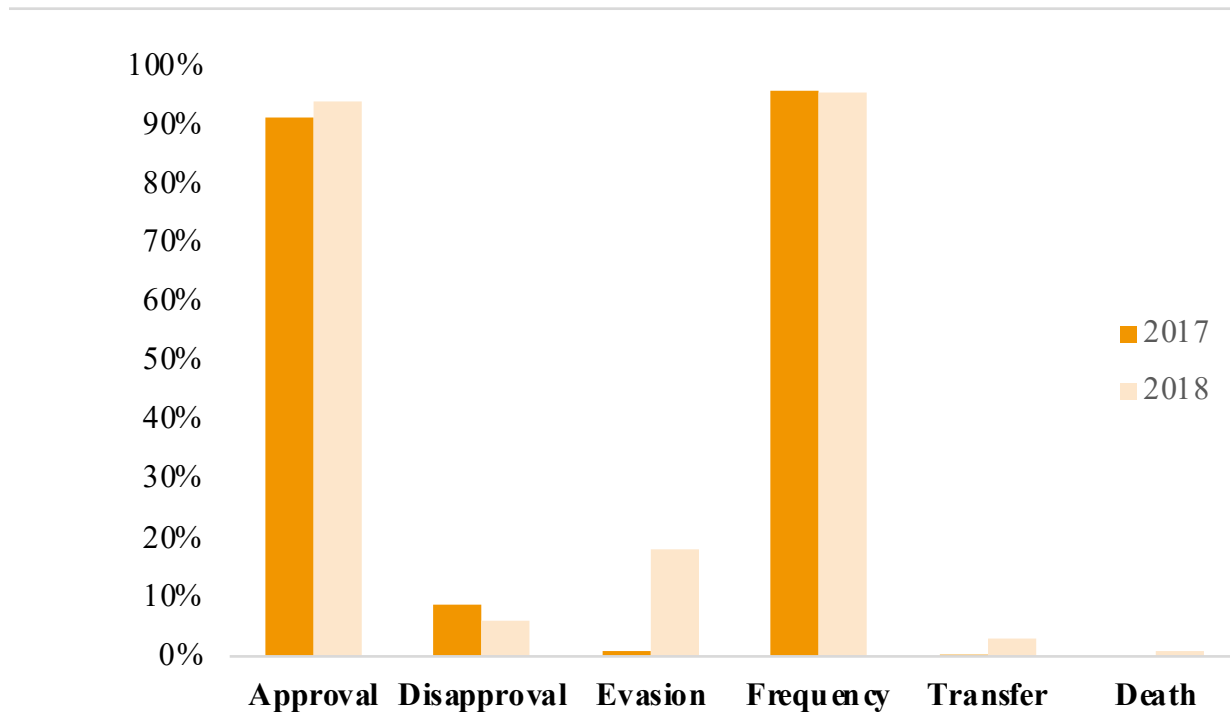


Figure 1. IEMA educational indicators in the years 2017-2018

The questionnaire had a total of 4685 responses (414 teachers and 4271 students), representing 49% of the IEMA school community. All participants answered yes to the first question, attesting that they believe the Institutional Model contributes to IEMA’s achievements. This means that IEMA’s school community approves the Institutional Model and believes that it contributes to the achievements that the institution has achieved over the years. The answers to the second question were listed in the following categories:

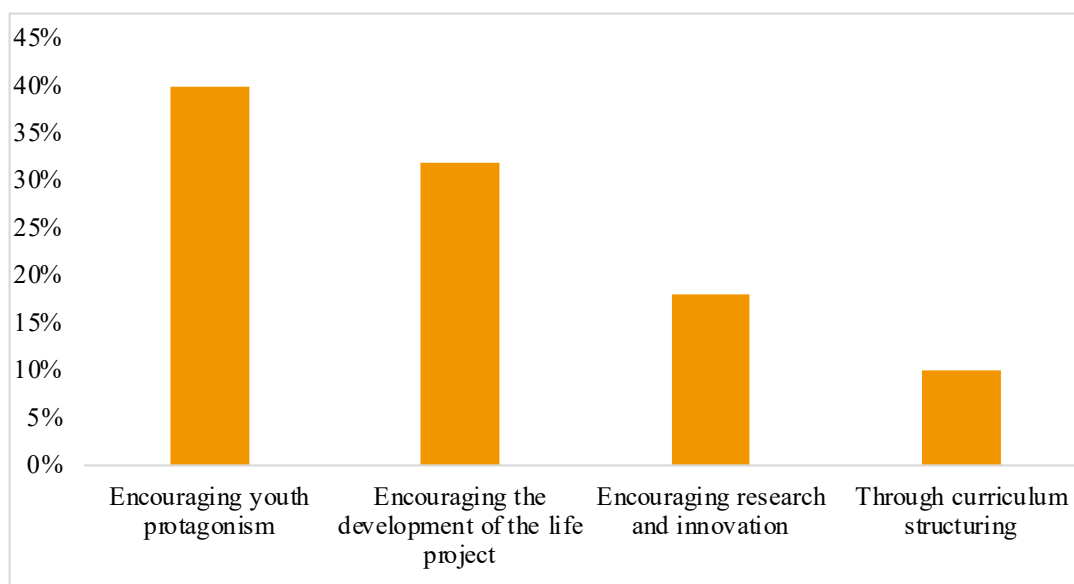


Figure 2. How does the Institutional Model contribute to the high performance of IEMA.

The achievements of IEMA have a positive reflection on the development of its students, having seen the high percentage of positive indicators. The success of IEMA as a public educational institution is associated with the Life Project methodology, which is composed of structured classes, taught in the first two years of high school, focused on self-knowledge, values formation, social responsibility and skills. 21st Century is a guide for students in what their “focus” is, their dream, consolidating at the end of high school their life project, with objectives, goal setting, and deadlines.

Discussion

IEMA, as an educational institute, acts as a social space that celebrates learning, lives the charm of building human emancipation, consolidates relationships, and contributes to humanity. Through its democratic management, it guarantees a practice of emancipating the construction of personal and humanitarian existence (Paro, 1998).

In IEMA’s Institutional Model, the concept of human emancipation is approached according to the perspective of Paulo Freire, for whom the term cited meant a great political achievement that could only be maintained in human praxis as a continuous struggle for the liberation of individuals (Freire, 2001; ICE, 2015a). In this perspective, in emancipatory education, the different forms of oppression, domination, and exclusion in the neoliberal world are considered, so that students, aware of the socioeconomic reality in which they are inserted, are imbued with political intentionality aimed at social transformation (Freire, 2001).

The achievements of IEMA are largely possible by organizing its institutional model, which leads the student to experience knowledge as a starting point, within a meaningful context for the student, so that he/she perceives the relationship between the world. Work and knowledge, its characteristics, and the transformation of science into a historically productive force, and which characteristics will most contribute to their professional choices (Moura, 2010).

All IEMA student achievements are directly or indirectly related to the Student Life Project, which is thought out of their need and managed, taking into account a concrete and unique situation, in which circumstances are inserted in a historical context, social and personal. From this perspective, as recommended by the Institutional Model, the IEMA, as a potentially favourable place for students to interact with their peers, teachers, managers, and coordinators, in short with the diversity of life experiences, values, and cultural differences that characterize educational spaces, allows students to decide on the directions of their lives, about their duties and responsibilities, which precede life after high school (ICE, 2015a).

Each student’s life project is managed taking into consideration the student’s life context, with singularities and peculiarities. The school is a potentially favourable place for such elaboration because of the experiences provided and because it is an environment in which the student spends much of his life (Micotti, 1999). As a result, the goals that guide each project must be seen and defined within the context and taking into account the values that guide the life of each subject.

According to ICE (2015b: 45):

Having a Life Project is to reflect on what you want to be in the future and to plan concrete actions to get there. It is the line between being and wanting to be. In this process, some learning is important for students to realize that their path connects with a collective project: they need to feel integrated and accepted by their teachers and peers, with confidence to face the challenges of each step towards the future ahead. (Authors' translation)

From this perspective, it is important to highlight the relationship of transformative education with IEMA's institutional model and the achievements that it makes. Each subject plays an active role in building his or her Life Project, and the students is offered a situation in which he or she is comfortable moving forward, retreating, improving, or changing their mind on this high school path. It is important to highlight that the IEMA student composing his or her Life Project is not defining a career but building a path for personal fulfillment, outlining goals that give meaning to life. For Costa (2011: 7):

[...] it is not enough to ensure student access and permanence in school. Rather, this place has to be endowed with meaning and meaning for life. The student must recognize in the school the place where he or she will find the conditions, the people, and the ways in which to be able to act in the world from the own repertoire, enriched by what the school assures him or her in the form of opportunities and choices. (Authors' translation)

It is observed that all these actions are designed for the necessary permanence of the student in the school environment so that he or she obtains appropriation of values, and thus, performs his role of a citizen with discernment, in a society that, in the twenty-first century, still walks the paths of social exclusion (Freire, 2001).

From this perspective, IEMA intention is to form a new generation of Maranhão, prepared for the challenges of the twenty-first century, thus contributing to the promotion of the right to an educational background. This expectation led the institution to elaborate a set of actions for the IEMA Full and Vocational Units, in line with the UNESCO Associated School proposal and co-responsible for the fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda, with the Sustainable Development Goals.

IEMA is part of the UNESCO Associated Schools Program and has committed to meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, as one of the fundamental principles of the work of IEMA is its commitment to the socioeconomic development of the United Nations, there where the Full and Vocational Units are located; hence, the concern with the employability, innovative ideas, and entrepreneurship of its graduating students, to involve them concretely in the process of facing economic and social inequalities (Saviani, 1989).

IEMA encourages students to become integral citizens, able to apply their knowledge daily through strategies advocated in the institutional model that, combined with the constant incentive for students to stand out, contribute to delineate a young person's dreams and goals, beyond the ordinary, and aimed to be the difference in their city, becoming protagonists of its history (Saviani, 1989).

For Gomes (2011: 15), the term protagonism “... refers to our ability to participate and influence the course of events, playing a decisive and transformative role in the scenario of social life. Being a protagonist means not being indifferent to the problems of our time” (authors’ translation).

Thus, in the context of the State Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Maranhão, when addressing full-time technical high school, it is found, in addition to expanded time and permanence of students in the Institute, the expansion of space in various dimensions, the establishment of partnerships, and the interaction between the local community, teachers, and students in the promotion of socio-educational actions, to alleviate dropout, failure, repetition, and distortions age/grade level, that is, all the attributes that true integral education requires (Masseto, 1997; Saviani, 1989, 2009).

The institution seeks to ensure the student’s permanence in school, through learning from sports, artistic, literacy, environment, socialization projects, among many other actions, which guarantee a dropout rate of almost zero in IEMA, that as a fruit of the efforts of students and teachers, has been recognized nationally and internationally.

Final Considerations

The school must be an open space, in permanent construction and reformulation of proposals and strategies that ensure the learning of all at different times, levels and places. It must be an environment that welcomes a plural and diverse public, and to which different groups, desires, cultures, knowledge, subjects converge. Thinking about the challenge of proposing a quality, innovative teaching, that values protagonism, IEMA adopts an institutional model that respects the culture of the school community through the realization of each social and cultural reality.

It is observed, therefore, that education has been a priority of the Government of Maranhão, which is aware that facing the problems related to basic education goes through effective educational policies and, therefore, has invested in programs that promote a level playing field, considering the economic, regional, and social disparities of the state. The outstanding achievements reflect concern and constant commitment of IEMA as an educational institution of excellence. For the present and the coming years, the Institute’s strategy is to continue to be creative in its actions, to develop fundraising projects, to strengthen partnerships with the private sector, and to compete for all opportunities at the national and international levels.

IEMA has adopted measures to break with the typical cognitive model of education, merging non-cognitive and life oriented transferable skills, following an interdisciplinary approach. Based on what was researched, the Institutional Model was identified as a success factor, as well as determinant, for the educational indicators and results achieved from 2016 to 2018 at the State Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Maranhão.

Thus, due to the success of the IEMA model, proving that it is possible to make a public school of excellence, we encourage its enforcement in the education networks of Maranhão and other Brazilian states. In this way, the concept of transformative education, which is still little explored in Brazil, will broaden.

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Los Desafíos de la Actuación Profesional: Obstáculos y Dificultades Vividas en las Prácticas Supervisadas en Escuelas Públicas del Municipio de “Benjamin Constant”, Amazonas (Brasil)

Francisca Carla Ferreira das Chagas, Vandrezza Souza dos Santos, Antônio Vagner Almeida Olavo, and Carmen Pineda Nebot

Resumen

Este estudio tiene como objetivo presentar los desafíos profesionales encontrados en escuelas públicas del municipio de “Benjamin Constant”, AM, a partir de las prácticas supervisadas. Metodológicamente es una investigación descriptiva; bibliográfica al estar basada en el informe de la práctica supervisada, además de que se utilizó el método participativo. Tuvo como objeto de estudio dos escuelas, una de enseñanza primaria y la otra de enseñanza secundaria. Como resultado del análisis se definieron la interinidad, la observación, la supervisión del profesor colaborador, la metodología utilizada, la participación de los alumnos y la formación continua de los profesores. Se concluyó que existieron factores directos e indirectos que influyeron en la práctica supervisada.

Palabras clave:

Enseñanza-aprendizaje, interinidad, observación vivencias escolares

The Challenges of Professional Action: Obstacles and Difficulties Experienced in Supervised Practices in Public Schools in The Municipality of “Benjamin Constant”, Amazonas (Brazil)

Abstract

This study aims to present the professional challenges that were found in public schools in the municipality of “Benjamin Constant”, AM, based on supervised practices. Methodologically it is a descriptive investigation; bibliographic, as it is based on the report of the supervised practice, in addition to the participant method. The object of study were two schools, one of primary education and the other of secondary education. As analysis, the interim, the observation, the supervision of the teacher-collaborator, the methodology used, the student participation and a continuous teacher training were defined. It was concluded that there were direct and indirect factors that have influenced supervised practice.

Keywords:

Teaching-Learning, Observation, Interim, School Experiences

Introducción

En la enseñanza superior, entre los diversos métodos de aprendizaje dirigidos a la práctica, están las prácticas supervisadas, reguladas en Brasil por la ley 11788 de 25 de diciembre de 2008, desarrollada normativamente por las instituciones y en el Proyecto Político Pedagógico, relacionado con los cursos de grado, licenciatura, tecnológicos y técnicos. Según la citada ley, las prácticas supervisadas se clasifican en a) prácticas no obligatorias, que son aquellas realizadas por el estudiante como actividad opcional, y b) prácticas obligatorias, que están definidas en el Proyecto Político Pedagógico para el curso con una carga horaria obligatoria, siendo un requisito para la obtención del título. Siendo obligatoria o no, la formación práctica tiene como objetivo el aprendizaje de conocimientos propios de la profesión, sea la de profesor o no.

De ese modo, como posibilidad de mejorar la formación docente, las prácticas obligatorias son aplicadas en los cursos de licenciatura y diplomatura de las Instituciones de Enseñanza Superior, (IES), de igual modo que en los cursos técnicos y tecnológicos. En la licenciatura, las prácticas obligatorias son consideradas un espacio en el que los alumnos tienen la posibilidad de perfeccionar las prácticas pedagógicas (El Tassa, et al., 2015), aplicando las teorías y los métodos estudiados en las aulas (Scalabrin & Molinari, 2013; Ferreira et al., 2016; Souza, 2016; Saraiva, et al., 2017), además de servirles para captar en profundidad diferentes realidades (El Tassa, et al., 2015). En el contexto estudiado, se vivieron diferentes situaciones sociales, económicas y culturales, pues se trata de escuelas localizadas en la triple frontera, en la Amazonia brasileña, en la cual, están presentes diferentes etnias y nacionalidades en un mismo territorio.

Además del desarrollo de diversas posibilidades en el campo de la formación, las prácticas son percibidas como un componente curricular importante de conocimiento para la formación docente, haciendo posible el desarrollo de características indispensables como la construcción de identidad, los saberes y las actitudes del ejercicio profesional (Pereira & Weckerlin, 2015; Souza, 2016). Las prácticas son una fase importante en la vida académica, pues los alumnos en prácticas tienen la oportunidad de aplicar la observación, la investigación, la evaluación, la planificación y la actividad pedagógica, que integran la teoría y la práctica (Felipe, 2016). Además de eso, las prácticas proporcionan al alumno una visión crítica-reflexiva, lo que las hace una estrategia de enseñanza, para conocer y experimentar las contingencias de la vida cotidiana escolar (Ferreira, et al., 2016), por medio de las relaciones pedagógicas, sociales y culturales existentes (Wiziack & Machado, 2017).

Por lo expuesto, es posible afirmar que las prácticas son una acción que hacen posible que el alumno pueda aplicar los conocimientos teóricos adquiridos en los contenidos abordados en las instituciones de enseñanza, además de proporcionarle experiencias sobre la marcha cotidiana de las escuelas, guiando al alumno hacia una mirada reflexiva.

El estudio empírico se realizó en dos escuelas públicas del municipio de “Benjamin Constant”, AM, una de ellas del estado y la otra municipal. “Benjamin Constant” es un municipio localizado en el estado del Amazonas, en la triple frontera que comprende Brasil, Colombia y Perú. Entre las diversas problemáticas encontradas en las escuelas durante la realización de las prácticas supervisadas, destacan

la falta de motivación de los alumnos cuestiones socioeconómicas la ausencia de infraestructura en las escuelas para alumnos con deficiencias y los embarazos de adolescentes, que según Lima (2017) pueden ser un factor determinante en la escolarización del género femenino.

Frente a lo expuesto, los investigadores nos planteamos cuáles son los desafíos a los que se enfrentan los alumnos, en la actuación profesional de las prácticas, en las escuelas públicas del municipio de “Benjamin Constant”, AM.. Para responder a esta cuestión se elaboró un marco teórico sobre las prácticas supervisadas, identificando sus actores, funciones, desarrollo de habilidades y desafíos. Posteriormente, se construyó un análisis teórico-empírico de los obstáculos de las prácticas obligatorias, teniendo como criterios de análisis la Interinidad, la Observación, la Supervisión del profesor colaborador, una Metodología interactiva, el Uso de las nuevas tecnologías aplicadas a la enseñanza, la Participación de los alumnos y la Formación continua de los profesores. Por último, se analizaron los resultados obtenidos.

El estudio tiene relevancia social y académica. En lo que respecta al ámbito social, permite diagnosticar problemas sociales, estructurales y de la cotidianidad escolar, así como presentar los principales desafíos a los que se enfrentan los alumnos de una universidad pública, en el ejercicio de las prácticas. Como efecto, podrán surgir políticas públicas dirigidas a solucionar los problemas identificados y la reestructuración de las prácticas en el ámbito de la enseñanza, mejorando la calidad del aprendizaje de los alumnos de la enseñanza superior. En el ámbito académico, se incorporará un conjunto de estudios acerca de las prácticas, además de presentarse experiencias vividas por alumnos en una universidad pública del interior del Amazonas.

Las prácticas y sus desafíos

Existen diversos actores que forman parte directa o indirectamente del contexto de las prácticas, entre ellos están la escuela, el alumno, el alumno en prácticas, el profesor colaborador y el orientador, en el cuadro 1 se muestran las funciones en las prácticas supervisadas.

Cuadro 1. Actores implicados y sus funciones en las prácticas supervisadas

Actores	Papel en las prácticas supervisadas
Escuela	“Las escuelas que lo permiten deben disponer de profesores en la escuela, llamados por nosotros profesores supervisores” (Gondim & Segatto, 2015).
Alumno	Participar de las clases y debates (Oliveira & Faria, 2011).
Alumno en prácticas	Observación, investigación, evaluación, planificación y actividad pedagógica que integran la teoría-práctica (Felipe, 2016).
Profesor Colaborador	“Cabe al profesor supervisor asistir a la clase, y mediante una guía, hacer críticas o elogios al desarrollo y desempeño del alumno-maestro durante la interinidad de las clases” (Souza, 2011).
Orientador	“[...] responsable de la orientación de las actividades de forma que garantice el cumplimiento de los requisitos de lo que está siendo realizado” (Souza, et al., 2007).

Para que las prácticas supervisadas funcionen de forma plena, debe existir una interacción entre los actores de un modo armónico, donde cada uno cumpla su función, como se indica en el cuadro 1. En este sentido, el profesor supervisor que será tratado en este estudio como colaborador puede convertirse en una referencia positiva o negativa para el alumno en prácticas (Santos, et al., 2016). Los profesores colaboradores, generalmente son los responsables de la disciplina, que basándose en sus experiencias deben supervisar y orientar las actividades de los alumnos en prácticas. La falta de esta supervisión y orientación puede conducir a experiencias negativas.

En las prácticas los alumnos participan de actividades como observación e interinidad, que hacen posible prácticas reflexivas y críticas en la escuela (Molinari & Delgado, 2013). De ese modo, en la observación los alumnos en prácticas deben tener la sensibilidad de ir más allá del contexto escolar, observando e investigando el ambiente como las cuestiones socioeconómicas de los alumnos y sus principales dificultades para la enseñanza-aprendizaje.

Los alumnos en prácticas también tienen la posibilidad de proponer proyectos sociales con carácter educativo, como el combate al prejuicio, cuestiones relacionadas con la educación sexual y también pueden realizar refuerzo escolar. En la interinidad se deben emplear técnicas actuales de enseñanza y aprendizaje, atrayendo a los alumnos de la escuela a los temas abordados.

Las prácticas supervisadas permiten una discusión de las dificultades y las posibilidades encontradas en la red pública de enseñanza (Silva, et al., 2017). Esa discusión se produce en la enseñanza primaria, la media, la técnica y la superior y retoma estructura, metodologías, tecnologías utilizadas y situaciones vividas por los alumnos en prácticas.

En este contexto, los juegos promueven el aprendizaje y la transferencia de conocimiento, para eso, es necesario articular los contenidos abordados con fundamentos teóricos y metodológicos (Silva, et al., 2016). Los alumnos en prácticas pueden estimular a los alumnos de la escuela a aprender jugando, abordando de forma lúdica los contenidos e identificando las principales dificultades de la enseñanza-aprendizaje.

Para que los alumnos en prácticas desarrollen competencias y habilidades, es indispensable que haya un proceso de supervisión (Silva & Nascimento, 2016), que se produce por medio de orientaciones y la dirección de actividades prácticas en el ámbito de la docencia, realizada por profesionales de la educación. Esa supervisión generalmente es realizada por un profesor orientador del curso de licenciatura o diplomatura de una IES, que debe acompañar la planificación y las actividades que son realizadas por los alumnos en prácticas. No obstante, es necesaria infraestructura como vehículos, sobre todo tratándose del contexto amazónico, donde el transporte en buena parte se realiza por medio de barcos.

Entre las habilidades necesarias en el contexto contemporáneo para los profesores, es importante el dominio de las tecnologías de la comunicación e información aplicadas a la educación. En las prácticas supervisadas, los alumnos en prácticas tienen la posibilidad de aplicar en el contexto escolar las tecnologías estudiadas en la universidad. De esta forma según Scalabrin y Molinari (2013), las prácticas permiten aprender las primeras nociones del mundo educativo. Además de la experiencia,

Nascimento (2014) afirma que los recursos tecnológicos permiten clases atractivas y estimulan el desarrollo del aprendizaje. De ese modo, los alumnos en prácticas pueden utilizar las tecnologías como un medio de enseñanza-aprendizaje, promoviendo la interacción de los alumnos de un modo atractivo.

Los educadores con prestigio sugieren políticas dirigidas a una educación basada en innovación progresista, sin embargo, para eso es necesario realizar un programa de formación de los profesores, una renovación técnica y de métodos pedagógicos (Araújo & Petrenas, 2008). De esa forma, la formación puede llevar a los profesores a obtener la competitividad y optimización de los resultados (Pereira, 2017). No obstante, existen pocas inversiones para la formación continua de los profesores (Santos & Menezes, 2015).

Como propuesta de mejora de los problemas de la enseñanza en Brasil, surge el Plan Nacional de Educación 2014-2024 (PNE), que según Barros, et al., (2018) posee directrices que deben ser cumplidas por la Unión, los estados, el Distrito Federal y los municipios. Las directrices del Plan Nacional de Educación 2014-2024 son:

I - erradicación del analfabetismo; II - universalización de la atención escolar; III - superación de las desigualdades educativas, destacando la promoción de la ciudadanía y la erradicación de todas las formas de discriminación; IV - mejora de la calidad de la educación; V - formación para el trabajo y para la ciudadanía, con énfasis en los valores morales y éticos en los que se fundamenta la sociedad; VI - promoción del principio de gestión democrática de la educación pública; VII - promoción humanística, científica, cultural y tecnológica do País; VIII - establecimiento de meta de aplicación de recursos públicos en educación en proporción al Producto Interior Bruto - PIB, que asegure la atención de las necesidades de expansión con nivel de calidad y equidad; IX - valorización de los (as) profesionales de la educación y; X - promoción de los principios de respeto a los derechos humanos, la diversidad y la sostenibilidad socioambiental. (Brasil, 2014)

Las directrices del Plan Nacional de Educación 2014-2024 citadas anteriormente, pueden ser cumplidas por los alumnos en prácticas, pues son resultantes de problemas a los que se enfrenta la educación en todo o país. Como se muestra en el Observatorio del Plan Nacional de Educación, los indicadores han mejorado, como el aumento de jóvenes de 16 años con enseñanza primaria completa, de jóvenes de 15 a 17 años cursando la enseñanza secundaria, de alumnos con hasta el 3.er año de enseñanza primaria con buen nivel en lectura y escritura (OPNE, 2019). Sin embargo, esa realidad no se produce en todo el territorio nacional, ya que aún siguen existiendo regiones, como la estudiada, que no han conseguido esas mejoras en la educación, y se observan en ellas algunas deficiencias como dificultad para la lectura y escritura en los alumnos de la enseñanza primaria y media, así como un desequilibrio edad-curso.

Material y métodos

Para describir y analizar las dificultades a las que se han enfrentado los alumnos en las prácticas, con base en la investigación bibliográfica, se delimitaron las categorías Interinidad, observación, supervisión del profesor colaborador, metodologías utilizadas, participación de los alumnos y formación de los

profesores (cuadro 2).

En la investigación empírica se buscó describir y analizar las dificultades enfrentadas en la realización de las prácticas supervisadas. La recogida de datos se realizó por medio del informe de la alumna en prácticas de la Licenciatura en Biología y Química de la Universidad Federal del Amazonas (UFAM), - una de las autoras del artículo - y de la observación realizada por ella misma en dos escuelas públicas. En la primera escuela, de enseñanza primaria, las prácticas se realizaron en la asignatura de ciencias del 7.º al 9.º año; y en la segunda escuela, de enseñanza secundaria, las prácticas supervisadas se realizaron en las asignaturas de biología y química, en los cursos 1.º y 2.º de enseñanza secundaria. Este estudio se caracterizó por un enfoque cualitativo.

Cuadro 2. Modelo de análisis teórico-empírico de los obstáculos en las prácticas supervisadas

Categoría	Criterio de análisis	Autores
Desafíos de las prácticas supervisadas	Interinidad	Souza (2011); Molinari y Delgado (2013).
	Observación	Felipe (2016); Molinari y Delgado, (2013); Neri (2015).
	Seguimiento del profesor supervisor colaborador	Gondim y Segatto, (2015); Souza, (2011); Santos, et al. (2016).
	Metodologías utilizadas	Silva, et al. (2016); Nascimento (2014); Scalabrin y Molinari (2013).
	Participación de los alumnos	Oliveira e Faria (2011)
	Formación continua de los profesores	Araújo y Petrenas (2008); Pereira (2017); Santos y Menezes (2015)

Estas prácticas se produjeron durante el período de 05/03/2018 a 03/07/2018, y se realizaron las transcripciones de lo que se percibió.

La licenciatura de Ciencias se creó en 2007 (resolución 068/2007) en “Benjamin Constant” dentro del proyecto UFAM MULTICAMPI, de la Universidad Federal del Amazonas. El curso consta de 4280 horas, de las cuales, 420 horas pertenecen a las disciplinas de la Práctica Supervisada de Enseñanza. En la práctica, además del profesor orientador del centro de formación, el alumno tendrá la supervisión de un profesor directamente en la escuela donde se realiza la práctica, para conseguir que el proyecto de práctica sea planeado y evaluado conjuntamente por el centro de formación y la escuela. La supervisión de la práctica debe ser entendida como asesoría dada al alumno, por el profesor orientador y por un profesor de la institución de enseñanza donde se realiza la práctica.

Se considera como evaluación discente, los aspectos de frecuencia, asiduidad, comportamiento en los ambientes escolares, entrega de documentos e informes finales, preparación de clases, dirección y socialización de las experiencias por medio de seminarios. La Universidad señala una relación de documentos que deben ser entregados por el alumno en prácticas y evaluados por el profesor

orientador. Si el alumno en prácticas las interrumpe antes del período previsto le son exigidos los siguientes documentos: rescisión del documento de compromiso, informe de síntesis de actividades y documento de realización de la práctica obligatoria.

En cuanto a la localización del estudio, las escuelas están en el municipio de “Benjamin Constant”, en la microrregión del Alto Solimões en el estado de Amazonas, que tiene frontera con Perú y Colombia. Según el Instituto Brasileño de Geografía y Estadística (IBGE) (2019), se estima que el municipio estudiado tenía 42 020 habitantes en 2018, con una renta per cápita de 6602,92 R\$ y con un Índice de Desarrollo Humano Municipal (IDH) de 0,574 (IBGE, 2019). La tasa de escolarización de 6 a 14 años es del 89,6%, y el Índice de Desempeño en la Educación Básica (IDEB) es de 4,5 y 4,0 en los últimos años. En 2017 según los datos del IBGE (2019), el municipio tenía 8722 alumnos matriculados en la enseñanza primaria, distribuidos en 59 escuelas, con 477 profesores y con un ratio de 18 alumnos por profesor, y en la enseñanza secundaria había 2138 matrículas distribuidas en 3 escuelas, que contaban con 116 profesores, con un ratio de 18 alumnos por profesor.

El municipio de “Benjamin Constant” se encuentra a 1118 km en línea recta de Manaus (1638 km por vía fluvial), que es el principal centro urbano y capital del Amazonas. El principal acceso al municipio es por vía fluvial, y existen dos carreteras, una que lo une al municipio de Atalaia do Norte y otra es la Transamazónica, que no se terminó por cuestiones ambientales. La única vía aérea es a través del municipio de Tabatinga, al que solo se puede llegar en barco.

Esta región está rodeada por territorios indígenas de diversas etnias, como los Ticunas, Cocama y Cambeba, que suponen 9833 habitantes (IBGE, 2010) que viven en la ciudad de “Benjamin” o en comunidades de las riberas del río, que son aproximadamente 62. También hay presencia de peruanos, que influyen de modo directo o indirecto en la cultura y en las cuestiones económicas, políticas y sociales del municipio. La economía local gira en torno a la agricultura, la pesca, el comercio y los servicios públicos, siendo la tasa de ocupación formal del 5,3% (IBGE, 2019), aunque es cierto que existen muchas personas trabajando en el comercio informal. Hay también un número elevado de familias que reciben beneficios sociales como la Bolsa Familia, programa federal para la erradicación de la pobreza, que actualmente atiende a 5351 familias, con un total de 24 986 beneficiarios (MDS, 2019).

En el municipio estudiado existe el Instituto de Naturaleza y Cultura (INC), de la Universidad Federal del Amazonas (UFAM), que cuenta actualmente con 6 carreras, entre ellas las diplomaturas de Administración y Antropología y 4 licenciaturas, que son Lengua Portuguesa y Española y Literatura Portuguesa y Española, Biología y Química, Ciencias Agrarias y del Ambiente, y Pedagogía. A continuación, en la figura 1, presentamos la localización del municipio de “Benjamin Constant” en el mapa de América del Sur.

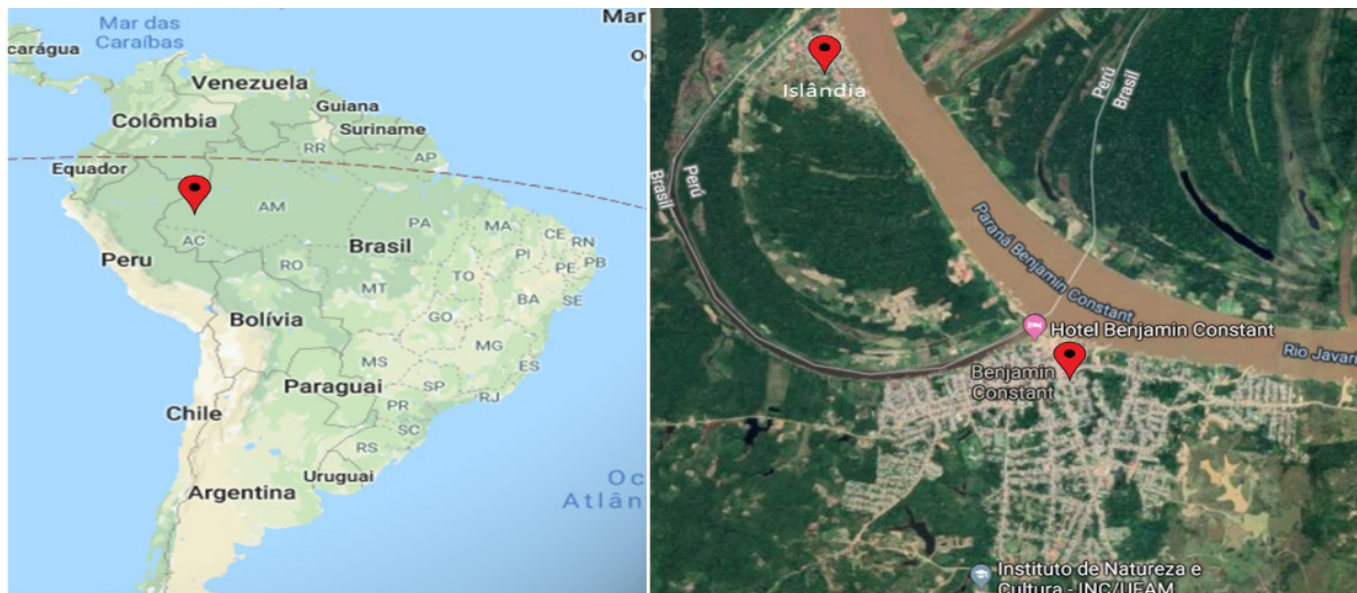


Figura 1. Localización del municipio de “Benjamin Constant” en el mapa de América del Sur y al lado, mapa que detalla los municipios de Benjamin Constant (Brasil) y de Islândia (Perú)

Fuente: Google Maps (2019), adaptado por los autores

La Escuela 01 es una escuela pública municipal que imparte enseñanza primaria; en 2018 tenía un total de 852 alumnos, distribuidos entre la enseñanza primaria y la Educación de Jóvenes y Adultos (EJA). Tiene como nota del IDEB 3,5 (la meta del PNE es del 5,5). Como estructura la escuela posee una biblioteca, laboratorio de informática (cerrado), campo de deportes, 10 aulas y 79 funcionarios, entre porteros, servicios generales, administrativos y profesores.

La Escuela 02 se trata de una escuela pública del estado que imparte enseñanza secundaria; en 2018 tenía un total de 1123 alumnos. Como estructura cuenta con un comedor, laboratorio de ciencias e informática (cerrado), campo de deportes, 16 aulas y 65 funcionarios, entre porteros, personal de servicios generales, persona que distribuye las meriendas y profesores.

Resultados y discusión

Las prácticas supervisadas forman parte de la matriz curricular de la Licenciatura en Ciencias: Biología y Química, del Instituto de Naturaleza y Cultura de la UFAM, y para su realización es necesaria la documentación indicada a continuación en el cuadro 3.

Cuadro 3. Documentación necesaria para la realización de las prácticas obligatorias según la resolución CEG n.º 067/2011, UFAM

Documentación	Responsable
Convenio	Coordinador de las prácticas de la licenciatura / Departamento de Programas Académicos de la UFAM
Acuerdo de compromiso	Supervisor de las prácticas / Alumno en prácticas / Departamento de Programas Académicos de la UFAM
Plan de las practicas	Supervisor de las prácticas / alumno en prácticas
Seguro	Departamento de Programas Académicos de la UFAM
Completar los formularios de evaluación del desempeño del alumno en prácticas y remitirlo al profesor-orientador	Supervisor técnico / profesor colaborador

Las prácticas supervisadas requieren en una primera etapa conocer la disponibilidad de las escuelas para recibir a los alumnos en prácticas, posteriormente elaborar un acuerdo de compromiso, completar el formulario del seguro de vida y elaborar un plan de prácticas supervisadas. En las escuelas en que fueron realizadas las prácticas no fue necesaria la firma de convenios, ya que en ellas ya existía esa colaboración con la UFAM.

Según Pereira y Weckerlin (2015), las prácticas supervisadas son un campo de conocimiento y un importante elemento curricular de los cursos de formación docente, que hacen posible el desarrollo de características indispensables para la actuación profesional. Además, sirven para que los alumnos puedan relacionar la teoría con la práctica (Scalabrin & Molinari, 2013; Souza, 2016). Para eso es necesario un compromiso de las instituciones (escuelas y universidades), profesores (colaborador y orientador) y alumnos (alumnos en prácticas y alumnos de la escuela). A continuación, presentamos los desafíos que afrontan los alumnos en prácticas en la enseñanza primaria y media en las escuelas del interior del Amazonas.

Escuela 01: Enseñanza Primaria

En cuanto a la metodología utilizada por las prácticas supervisadas, en lo que respecta a la interinidad, en la Escuela 01, fueron realizadas prácticas en la asignatura de ciencias, del 7º al 9º año de la enseñanza primaria y fueron abordados los siguientes temas: ecosistema, teorías de la evolución de los seres vivos, materiales y sus propiedades. Las clases estaban compuestas por entre 20 y 25 alumnos de diferentes edades y géneros.

Según Molinari y Delgado (2013) la interinidad, además de la observación, hace posible una práctica reflexiva y crítica en la escuela.

En este sentido, por medio de la observación, se constató que gran parte de los alumnos eran de renta baja y tenían dificultades para leer y escribir, sin embargo, estaban interesados en aprender. Se identificó a una alumna con 5 meses de embarazo y a un alumno con deficiencia motora y del habla.

En cuanto a la infraestructura, se observó que la escuela no dispone de tecnologías asistidas ni de elementos de accesibilidad, teniendo en cuenta que la escuela tiene dos pisos. Sin embargo, existe sensibilidad de la Dirección para que este grupo funcione en el piso inferior, con el fin de que pueda participar sin dificultades el alumno con deficiencia.

Según Neri (2015), los principales motivos que llevan a los alumnos a no proseguir los estudios son la situación socioeconómica de la familia y la falta de infraestructuras en el caso de personas con algún tipo de deficiencia. En lo que respecta a la lectura, se supone que con la ejecución del PNE (2014-2024) pueda haber una mejora en este tema, visto que, en la primera directriz, se plantea la erradicación del analfabetismo antes del final del 3.er año de la enseñanza primaria. Otro hecho preocupante son los embarazos adolescentes que, como ya se indicó anteriormente, pueden ser determinantes para la escolarización de las alumnas.

Por ello, es necesaria la formación de profesores y alumnos en prácticas que les permitan trabajar metodologías que incluyan a adolescentes durante y después del embarazo en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje y también realizar un trabajo dirigido a la educación sexual, para que alumnos que estén entrando en la adolescencia se conciencien sobre el uso de preservativos, enfermedades de transmisión sexual y la necesidad de seguimiento médico.

En cuanto al seguimiento del profesor colaborador, los alumnos en prácticas fueron recibidos por el administrador de la Escuela y dirigidos por el profesor, el cual estuvo presente en las interinidades, realizando orientaciones y evaluaciones, garantizando el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje y la transferencia de experiencia. Según Souza (2011), el profesor supervisor tiene la función de asistir a la clase, haciendo críticas y elogios, mediante una guía, a los desarrollos y el desempeño del alumno durante las interinidades. Se comprende la necesidad de supervisión del profesor colaborador, ya que es un actor importante tanto para los alumnos como para los alumnos en prácticas.

Sobre la metodología de las interinidades, se utilizó tanto en las clases teóricas como prácticas un sistema lúdico por medio del caza-palabras, de dibujos y comics; además de eso, hubo discusión sobre los temas abordados con la participación de los docentes, metodologías que permitieron la inclusión de la alumna embarazada y del alumno con deficiencia motora. Según Silva, et al., (2016), los juegos favorecen el aprendizaje y la transferencia de experiencia. Todos los juegos y materiales didácticos utilizados fueron elaborados por la alumna en prácticas.

En lo que se refiere al uso de las tecnologías, se utilizaron proyectores, notebook, slides y pizarras, llevados por la alumna en prácticas. Se observó que las escuelas carecen de recursos dirigidos a las tecnologías de la información y de la comunicación, como proyectores, internet, ordenadores y libros digitales. Los recursos tecnológicos hacen posible la utilización de imágenes, vídeos y sonido, lo que facilita el aprendizaje de los alumnos, haciendo los temas más visuales y mejorando la enseñanza-aprendizaje. Según Nascimento (2014), los recursos tecnológicos son importantes para la mejora de la educación, pues hacen posible una clase más estimulante.

Por ello, el gobierno municipal o la escuela, por medio de las asociaciones de padres y profesores, deben buscar recursos para inversiones en tecnologías digitales y no digitales en la escuela. Las

tecnologías aplicadas de modo correcto pueden aumentar la motivación de los alumnos por aprender, propiciando el entendimiento de los temas y enfrentando los problemas planteados en el ambiente escolar como la fuga y la repetición de alumnos por bajos resultados. Sin embargo, conviene resaltar que las tecnologías no son un fin en sí mismo, sino un medio de enseñanza-aprendizaje.

En relación con la formación continua, se constató la necesidad de inversiones, principalmente en las nuevas metodologías de enseñanza-aprendizaje; esta situación se plantea por los relatos de los alumnos que explicaron que existen profesores que utilizan métodos de difícil comprensión y sus clases son predominantemente teóricas. Recientemente hubo un curso sobre inclusión digital para profesores de las escuelas, realizada por el Instituto de Naturaleza y Cultura de la UFAM, en el que hubo pocos participantes, alegando poca disponibilidad de tiempo. Según Araújo y Petrenas (2008), es necesario desarrollar políticas dirigidas a la educación basada en la innovación y la formación de los profesores, para renovar sus métodos pedagógicos.

Respecto a la participación de los alumnos, esta se produjo de forma activa por interacción con la alumna en prácticas por medio de juegos y discusiones sobre los asuntos tratados. Según Oliveira y Farias (2011), es necesaria la participación de todos los alumnos de la escuela en la experiencia de las prácticas supervisadas. La escuela debe fomentar su participación activa por medio de juegos, teatro, clases prácticas, feria de ciencias, visitas a instituciones e implementación métodos de enseñanza-aprendizaje como la educación emprendedora. En este ambiente, la escuela puede utilizar las expertises de los alumnos en prácticas para ayudar en la implementación de metodologías innovadoras, así como en la promoción de eventos en que se fomente el conocimiento, como la feria de ciencias y el workshop de formación para profesores.

Ante lo expuesto, podemos concluir que los principales desafíos y obstáculos en la actuación de las prácticas supervisadas en la Escuela 01, se incluyen en los criterios de análisis Observación (cuestiones sociales, dificultades de lectura y escritura, así como la ausencia de infraestructura para alumnos con algún tipo de deficiencia), Tecnologías utilizadas y Formación continua.

Escuela 2: Enseñanza Secundaria

En la Escuela 02, se realizaron prácticas en las disciplinas de biología y química, en las clases de 1º y 2º niveles de la enseñanza secundaria; fueron abordados los siguientes temas: bacterias y dolencias asociadas. Las clases estaban compuestas por 30 a 40 alumnos de diferentes géneros y edades. Los desafíos inicialmente enfrentados fueron la poca participación y la falta de supervisión del profesor colaborador durante las interinidades, en la asignatura de química, lo que dificultó el feedback sobre las acciones de los alumnos en prácticas y consecuentemente, la realización de algunas actividades. Otro punto fue la falta de respeto de algunos alumnos de la escuela hacia los alumnos en prácticas. Según Souza (2011), las interinidades deben ser supervisadas y/u orientadas por profesores colaboradores. Sin embargo, el profesor de la asignatura cumplió solo parcialmente el papel de profesor colaborador (Gondim & Segatto, 2015), como se mostró en el cuadro 1.

Ese hecho posiblemente ocurrió, debido a que en el municipio de “Benjamin Constant” solo existen 3 escuelas de enseñanza secundaria, las cuales son bastante requeridas para la realización de prácticas,

a causa de la presencia de la Universidad del Estado del Amazonas (UEA), en el municipio próximo de Tabatinga, y de la UFAM en el propio “Benjamin Constant”. Se observa que es necesaria, como ya se señaló anteriormente, una mayor relación de las universidades con las escuelas, preparando a los profesores para actuar en las prácticas supervisadas. Además, es necesario invertir en estructura, para que la Universidad pueda realizar supervisiones presenciales durante todo el proceso de interinidad, principalmente mediante transporte en vehículos terrestres y acuáticos.

En la observación se constató la falta de motivación de los alumnos hacia los estudios, la que justificaron por la falta de infraestructura, la metodología de enseñanza-aprendizaje y la discriminación en el espacio escolar. Otras dificultades observadas fueron dificultad en la escritura y la lectura, desequilibrio edad-curso, cuestiones sociales como embarazo en la adolescencia, un alumno con deficiencia auditiva y una joven que llevaba a su hijo a las clases, por no tener con quien dejarlo.

Para reducir estos desafíos, la comunidad escolar juntamente con los alumnos en prácticas puede, por medio de colaboraciones con la Secretaría Municipal de Salud u otros actores, realizar charlas de educación sexual, obtener apoyo de psicólogos en el espacio escolar y la aproximación de profesores y alumnos para el diálogo sobre determinados temas.

Creemos que cuando se alcancen las metas establecidas en el PNE 2014-2020, podrá haber una disminución de los problemas arriba descritos. En cuanto a la infraestructura de la Escuela, se observó que los laboratorios de informática y de biología y química estaban cerrados y algunos equipamientos obsoletos y/o estropeados por falta de mantenimiento, materiales y profesionales para la actualización de los laboratorios. Según Molinari y Delgado (2013), las prácticas supervisadas proporcionan observación y reflexión crítica sobre el ambiente escolar. La observación realizada por la alumna en prácticas fue más allá del ambiente de la clase y la escuela, partió de una mirada crítica sobre las cuestiones sociales y económicas de los alumnos, que se reflejan en la vida cotidiana de la comunidad escolar.

Hay que resaltar que, en la Licenciatura, las asignaturas no enseñan a ocuparse de esas problemáticas, siendo un desafío al que se enfrentan los alumnos en la realización de las prácticas. La alumna en prácticas buscó realizar metodologías alternativas con el alumno con deficiencia auditiva, que sabía leer algunas palabras, utilizando además imágenes. A la joven que tenía al hijo en la clase, la alumna en prácticas le presentó los contenidos por medio de esquemas impresos y distrajo al niño en el momento de las actividades, con pinturas, juegos por medio de aplicativos del móvil y videos.

En relación con la metodología utilizada en las prácticas, se realizaron clases teóricas y prácticas con juegos no digitales y experimentos. Los juegos ayudan a impulsar el aprendizaje además de la transferencia de conocimiento (Silva, et al., 2016), siendo una metodología interactiva entre los alumnos de las escuelas y los alumnos en prácticas, además de estimular a los actores (alumnos y profesores) a un aprendizaje interesante y dinámico. De este modo, los juegos y la experimentación fueron un atractivo. Se constató por medio de la metodología empleada que los alumnos son más receptivos a la práctica que a la teoría.

En cuanto a los recursos tecnológicos, se utilizaron también retroproyectores, notebook, slides y pantalla, que llevó la alumna en prácticas. La escuela carece de recursos digitales y las pantallas están estropeadas, siendo muchas veces difícil comprender lo que se refleja en ellas; además, en la escuela existen solamente tres proyectores. Otra cuestión observada es que en la escuela no existe navegabilidad de internet y el laboratorio de informática está cerrado, lo que imposibilita algunas investigaciones y actividades. Los recursos tecnológicos utilizados en las prácticas eran de la alumna en prácticas o de los profesores orientadores. Estas herramientas tecnológicas facilitan la utilización de imágenes, vídeos y sonidos relacionados con los contenidos tratados, siendo un medio importante para la enseñanza y el aprendizaje.

En esta escuela es necesaria la inversión en recursos tecnológicos digitales y no digitales, además del mantenimiento y la compra de materiales para el funcionamiento de los laboratorios existentes y la contratación y/o formación de profesores que puedan trabajar con las tecnologías digitales y no digitales, posibilitando diferentes métodos de enseñanza-aprendizaje. Hay que destacar que la utilización del móvil está prohibida en el centro escolar.

Sobre la participación de los alumnos, hay que señalar que fue baja; no prestaban en muchos casos atención a los temas abordados, hacían pocas preguntas y algunas veces faltaban el respeto a la alumna en prácticas. Sin embargo, existían algunos alumnos que querían participar, pero eran estorbados por otros compañeros. Según Oliveira y Faria (2011), en la realización de las prácticas es indispensable la participación de los alumnos. Para ello, es necesario que los alumnos de las escuelas comprendan la importancia de las prácticas y del alumno en prácticas en la escuela.

En este sentido, se demostró que es necesaria la preparación, en relación con las prácticas, de los profesores de las escuelas, para que estos comprendan la importancia del alumno en prácticas para la escuela y se la transmitan a sus alumnos. Se destaca que el mayor interés que se percibió de los alumnos por la participación se relacionaba con las notas, alcanzar la media final, simplemente para pasar de un curso a otro y no por aprender.

Se observó también que existen alumnos que no tienen perspectivas de continuar los estudios. En este sentido, las Universidades presentes en la región pueden realizar charlas dirigidas a la empleabilidad y a la importancia, en este tema, de la enseñanza superior; además, pueden ampliar la relación con la escuela por medio de la enseñanza, la investigación y los cursos de extensión. Este problema ya se percibe en los datos del PNE, que revelan que la enseñanza secundaria en Brasil está por debajo de lo deseado por el índice, situación que demanda una atención urgente de transformación, con el fin de que los estudiantes de ese nivel puedan proseguir sus estudios, así como prepararse para el mercado de trabajo, y se plantea la necesidad de una planificación que tenga en cuenta la realidad del país, especialmente en su diversidad territorial, de modo que ese nivel de enseñanza haga posible el desarrollo de lo local (Barros, et al., 2018).

En relación con la formación continua de los profesores, se constató la necesidad de esta, principalmente en lo que se refiere a los nuevos métodos de enseñanza-aprendizaje, así como a la importancia de la utilización de las nuevas tecnologías aplicadas a la educación. Se cree que por medio de la formación y la utilización de las tecnologías en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje será posible estimular a

los alumnos a participar. Cabe retomar aquí la referencia a la directriz del PNE, sobre formación de los profesores, ya mencionada.

Con base en lo presentado, se puede afirmar que los principales desafíos enfrentados en la Escuela 02 corresponden a los criterios de análisis Observación (falta de motivación de los alumnos, dificultad de lectura y escritura, desequilibrios edad-curso, cuestiones sociales, alumnas embarazadas y madres que llevan a los hijos a las clases, además, una escasa perspectiva de continuidad de los estudios), Seguimiento de los profesores supervisores, Recursos tecnológicos, Participación y Formación continua.

Consideraciones finales

Las prácticas supervisadas son una importante herramienta de enseñanza-aprendizaje, que proporciona a los académicos el contacto directo con su futura profesión. De ese modo, es posible conocer en el curso de la licenciatura, los desafíos ligados a estas acciones, como la interinidad, la observación, el seguimiento por el profesor supervisor, la metodología interactiva, el uso de tecnologías en la enseñanza-aprendizaje, la participación de los alumnos y la formación continua de los profesores.

En respuesta a la cuestión planteada, se concluye que las principales dificultades afrontadas por los profesores en la actuación profesional en las escuelas públicas, en el municipio de “Benjamin Constant”, contienen factores directos e indirectos. Los factores directos son dificultades en la lectura y escritura, falta de motivación por parte de los alumnos, seguimiento del profesor colaborador, falta de recursos tecnológicos y de formación continua para los profesores de las escuelas, experiencia insuficiente para trabajar con alumnos con deficiencia y laboratorios cerrados. Los factores indirectos son baja renta, embarazo en adolescentes, desequilibrios curso-edad y madres que llevan a los hijos a las clases.

Para superar tales desafíos, los alumnos en prácticas buscan incluir en sus aulas las nuevas tecnologías de la información y de la comunicación, así como metodologías interactivas para estimular la participación de los alumnos.

Por último, hay que señalar que la educación es un elemento fundamental para la transformación de la sociedad, en las especiales circunstancias económicas, sociales y de aislamiento de este territorio hacen, para lo cual es necesario incorporar a todos los posibles actores que puedan colaborar para ello.

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La Trampa de la Alfabetización Digital para la Transformación Social en el Siglo XXI: El Neoanalfabetismo: El caso de Ecuador durante el gobierno de la Revolución Ciudadana (2007-2017)

Isabel Gil

Resumen

Este artículo cuestiona el axioma que sostiene que la mera incorporación de las nuevas tecnologías de la información y/o comunicación (NTIC) transformarán la educación tradicional. La posición de la autora es que la simple incorporación de las NTIC a la educación no supone cambio trascendental alguno si no se repiensa el significado mismo de esta. Como ejemplo, tomamos la incorporación acelerada de las NTIC en el proceso de alfabetización generalizada que vivió Ecuador durante el gobierno de la Revolución Ciudadana (2007-2017). Este proceso masivo de alfabetización y alfabetización digital supuso la aparición de un nuevo fenómeno, el neo-analfabetismo, el cual revela graves riesgos para la educación formal y la transmisión de contenidos orales, en la medida que ha provocado un vaciado de contenido crítico.

Palabras Clave:

Educación, NTIC,
Transformación Social

Abstract

This article questions the axiom that establishes that the mere incorporation of new information and/or communication technologies will transform traditional education. The author believes that the simple incorporation of NICTs into the educational work does not imply any transcendental change if the very meaning of education is not rethought. As an example, we take the accelerated incorporation of the NTICs in the process of generalized literacy that Ecuador lived during the government of the Citizen Revolution (2007-2017). This massive process of digital literacy and literacy meant the emergence of a new phenomenon, neo-illiteracy, which has implied serious risks for formal education and the transmission of oral content, to the extent that it has caused the emptying of critical content.

Key Words:

Education, NTICs,
Social Transformation

Introducción: la Revolución Ciudadana en Ecuador (2007-2017) y su “revolución” educativa¹

Durante el primer decenio del siglo XXI, emergen gobiernos pos-neoliberales en América del Sur, en el marco del “socialismo del siglo XXI”. En Ecuador, este “socialismo del siglo XXI” adquirió la denominación de “Revolución Ciudadana”, la cual fue abanderada por la presidencia de Rafael Correa Delgado durante el período 2007-2017. La Revolución Ciudadana (RC) priorizó, entre otras cuestiones, la restauración del control del Estado sobre el sector público, de modo que el primero recuperó su rol y su rectoría, considerablemente mermados bajo gobiernos neoliberales previos.

La Revolución Ciudadana, en un primer momento, se instala en la lógica de gobiernos progresistas de América del Sur, en el marco del sistema-mundo capitalista colonial, donde Ecuador se encontraba inserto en posición periférica como exportador de productos primarios.

Los gobiernos progresistas de la región en el nuevo siglo se entienden como “aquellos gobiernos que articulan discursos críticos y buscan la introducción de innovaciones –de perfil variado– en el horizonte de las ‘políticas neoliberales’ prevaletes en la región desde 1990” (Hillebrand & Lanzaro, 2007: 14). Estos gobiernos implicaron una lógica de gobernabilidad anti-neoliberal de corte populista de “nuevo cuño” (Hillebrand & Lanzaro, 2007). Esta forma de gobernabilidad se gesta a través de la confluencia de diferentes actores y movimientos sociales anti-sistémicos, que provocarán, entre otras cuestiones, el surgimiento de un nuevo marco jurídico-político para el país, el cual amplía y expande derechos para la ciudadanía, tanto derechos colectivos como derechos político-sociales, e, incluso, expande derechos a la propia naturaleza. Ello permite mejorar las condiciones de vida de la población en general, al menos en un primer momento de coyuntura económica favorable. Boaventura de Sousa afirmará: “... no cabe duda de que Correa ha emprendido la mayor redistribución de la renta de la historia de Ecuador, contribuyendo a la reducción de la pobreza y al fortalecimiento de las clases medias. Nunca tantos hijos de las clases trabajadoras llegaron a la universidad” (2014, párr.3). En este sentido, emerge una nueva clase social en el país, la “clase media de origen popular”, así definida por García Linera y recogido por Serrano (2016), al amparo de las reformas político-sociales-culturales-económicas llevadas a cabo en el país.

La pobreza, en las diferentes dimensiones tomadas por el Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos de Ecuador (INEC), decrece durante el período de la RC, especialmente en el área rural que, pese a ello, sigue duplicando la pobreza urbana y la quintuplica en su carácter de extrema pobreza. La Tasa de Pobreza Multidimensional (TPM)² del país descendió del 59,9% del 2009 al 35,1% del 2016 y la

¹ Este artículo parte de algunas estadísticas y datos producto de una tesis doctoral elaborada por la autora Gil Gesto, I. (2017): La política educativa del gobierno de la Revolución Ciudadana en Ecuador (2007-2017) y la gobernanza corporativa de la educación de corte filantrópico. Universidad de A Coruña. El trabajo de investigación fue financiado por la Secretaría Técnica de Educación Superior, Ciencia y Tecnología del Ecuador (SENESCYT) por medio del programa de becas para estudios de postgrado, Convocatoria Abierta, Fase II.

² La pobreza multidimensional atiende a diferentes cuestiones (cada una ponderada con un valor del 25%) y a diferentes indicadores con pesos ponderados diferentes. El Indicador Educación, que incluye indicadores con un peso del 8,3%, tales como a) no asistencia a la educación básica y bachillerato (5-17 años), b) no acceso a educación superior por razones económicas (18-29 años) y c) logro educativo incompleto (18-64 años). El Indicador Trabajo y seguridad social implica 3 indicadores con un peso de 8,3% cada uno: a) no contribución al sistema de pensiones (15 años y más), b) empleo infantil y adolescente (5-17 años) y c) desempleo o empleo inadecuado (18 años y más). El Indicador Salud, agua y alimentación, incluye 2 indicadores, con un peso de 12,5% cada uno: a) sin servicio de agua por red pública y b) pobreza extrema

TPM rural se redujo en un 3,5% en un año (del 63,4% en 2015 al 59,9% en 2016), lo que se considera una variación estadísticamente significativa. La pobreza extrema multidimensional³ se mantiene en 28,6% desde el 2008 hasta el 2016. En este sentido, los hogares ecuatorianos redujeron a la mitad el índice de pobreza por necesidades básicas insatisfechas (NBI)⁴, el cual pasó del 64,9% en 1995 al 32% en 2016 (INEC, 2017). Igualmente, decrece la desigual distribución de la riqueza, pero no por ello deja de ser notoria, especialmente si se atiende a las variables género y etnia.

En el contexto de un crecimiento económico estable, se produjo una importante disminución de la pobreza y las desigualdades en el país, entendiendo que Ecuador ha sido tradicionalmente una de las sociedades más desiguales del mundo (UNICEF, 2017), pero ello no impidió que se profundizara en el “proceso de acumulación por desposesión” (Harvey, 2007). Durante el período de la RC se conformaron nuevos grupos económicos, sobre todo, aquellos relacionados con actividades extractivas y energéticas, y, además, se fortalecieron grupos tradicionales del país. Si en el 2006, 62 grupos económicos ingresaban, por ventas, 17 083 millones de dólares (36,5% del PIB), en el 2015, fueron 200 grupos quienes incrementaron sus ingresos a 57 475 millones de dólares, esto es, el 57,04% del PIB (Investigación Ekos, 2015).

Como fuere, el gasto público en educación creció considerablemente durante el gobierno de la RC. En el 2005, el gasto en educación fue el 2,6% del PIB; en el 2008, el gasto subió al 3,4% del PIB, mientras que en el 2010 alcanzó el 4,1 % del PIB, y el 5% en el 2013; después descendió ligeramente al 4,8% en el 2015 (Banco Mundial, 2017; Luna, 2014).

Este incremento del gasto público en educación fue un pilar fundamental del proyecto político de la RC durante el período 2007-2017, y una de las cinco promesas electorales del año 2006 con las que Correa ganó la presidencia. Esta denominada “revolución educativa” implicó una serie de rupturas frente al statu quo educativo del país, desde la misma re-conceptualización de la educación como un derecho, atendiendo a los principios de universalidad, gratuidad y laicidad, hasta la promoción del acceso y permanencia en el sistema educativo de sectores tradicionalmente excluidos de él. En este sentido, una de las grandes lacras históricas del país ha sido el alto índice de analfabetismo.

El Censo de Población y Viviendas del 2010, señalaba que Ecuador contaba con 14 483 499 habitantes, de los que 676 945 (un 4,7% de la población total) no sabían leer ni escribir y/o no habían tenido la oportunidad de ingresar en el sistema educativo por causas económicas, distancias geográficas, carencia de escuelas, etc. (MINEDUC 2012b: 12) y todo ello, pese a las diferentes campañas de alfabetización

por ingresos. El indicador Hábitat, vivienda y ambiente sano incluye 4 indicadores con un peso de 6,25% cada uno: a) hacinamiento, b) déficit habitacional, c) sin servicio de saneamiento de excretas y d) sin servicio de recolección de basura.

³ La Tasa de Pobreza Extrema Multidimensional (TPEM) se refiere a la proporción de personas que viven en hogares que tienen privaciones en al menos la mitad de los indicadores ponderados ((los utilizados en la TPM)), pero igual o superiores al 50%.

⁴ La “pobreza por necesidades básicas insatisfechas” hace referencia a la situación de una persona respecto a lo que consideramos como necesidades básicas y su grado de satisfacción. El grado de pobreza del hogar de una persona por NBI se mide con respecto a una carencia en la satisfacción de, al menos, uno de los siguientes componentes: a) calidad de la vivienda, b) hacinamiento, c) acceso a servicios básicos, d) acceso a educación y e) capacidad económica. Cada dimensión tiene un indicador de carencia asociado el cual se identifica a nivel de hogar y se analiza a nivel de persona (INEC, 2017).

implementadas durante años por diferentes actores de la sociedad civil y del Estado. En el marco de la RC, se implementó el Proyecto de Educación para Jóvenes y Adultos, EBJA, (2010-2017) con el fin de atender a personas mayores de 15 años que, o bien por “desuso” o bien por características especiales, requerían de este proceso de alfabetización, siendo el programa más ambicioso implementado en el país en cuanto a sus aspiraciones por erradicar el analfabetismo en el país. El Proyecto EBJA⁵, respondía a la política 2.2 del Plan Nacional del Buen Vivir (2009-2013), relacionada con la mejora del sistema educativo a través de la erradicación progresiva de todas las formas del analfabetismo, apoyando procesos de post-alfabetización con enfoque de género y supervisión del rezago educativo (MINEDUC, 2012b), y se proponía como meta reducir el analfabetismo funcional el 10% hasta el 2013⁶. Pese a que no se alcanzaron las metas propuestas, Ecuador redujo considerablemente la tasa de analfabetismo en las últimas dos décadas, pasando del 11,7% en el 2010 al 5,5% en el 2015 (INEC, 2010). Sin embargo, esta tasa escondía importantes sesgos de género, puesto que las mujeres adultas mayores de 45 años presentaban tasas más altas, pese a la mejora de los indicadores, ya que en el año 2001, el 10,3% de las mujeres eran analfabetas frente al 7,7% de los varones, mientras que en el 2014, se reduce el analfabetismo en general, con 6,7% de mujeres analfabetas frente a un 4,7% de varones (MINEDUC, 2015). Igualmente, la población indígena presenta mayores niveles de analfabetismo y triplica la media nacional en algunos períodos históricos.

Si bien el gobierno de la RC consiguió reducir considerablemente el alto índice de analfabetismo existente, situando a Ecuador como un país de alfabetización más o menos generalizada, acompañada, como veremos, de fuertes procesos de alfabetización digital; sin embargo, en el marco de las sociedades de la información y comunicación, emergió un nuevo fenómeno global y local: el neo-analfabetismo (Viñao, 2004), donde los y las analfabetas del siglo XXI no son aquellos y aquellas analfabetas del siglo XX que no saben leer ni escribir, sino quienes saben leer pero que no comprenden lo que leen. El neo-analfabetismo es uno de los mayores retos de la educación en el mundo, que afecta tanto a la población más joven como a la población adulta, y que tendrá que ser contemplado por las políticas públicas de los países si quieren erradicar este nuevo tipo de analfabetismo.

Las sociedades de la información y la comunicación: la alfabetización digital y el neo-analfabetismo

El analfabetismo en el siglo XXI adquiere nuevas dimensiones. Si una persona era declarada analfabeta por no poder leer o escribir, o realizar una operación matemática simple, en las sociedades de la comunicación y/o informaciones contemporáneas, esta definición se hace más extensiva e incluye el

⁵ Este proyecto se implementa desde el 1 de diciembre de 2010 hasta el 31 de diciembre de 2017. El costo total del proyecto se fija en 294 196 406,9 dólares (MINEDUC, 2016c: 1-2). Se desarrolló en las 9 zonas administrativas del país, contando con un equipo especializado en territorio. Presentaba tres ofertas formativas: una destinada a la población hispana; otra oferta destinada a la alfabetización en la lengua de cada nacionalidad histórica; y una tercera oferta, que seguía la metodología del Ministerio de Educación del gobierno

⁶ El Gobierno de Ecuador, en el 2009, declaró haber alcanzado el estatus de “patria alfabetizada”, al lograr disminuir su tasa de analfabetismo del 9% (2007) al 2,7% (2009). Según la UNESCO, para declarar a una nación libre de analfabetismo, la tasa de analfabetismo debe situarse en el 3,9% de la población. Sin embargo, los datos presentados por el INEC (2010) eran diferentes y, si bien mostraban una considerable reducción, no llegaban al 3,9%. Por ello, el ministro de Educación del momento tuvo que rectificar y declarar que Ecuador se encontraba en vías de alfabetización.

uso y manejo de dispositivos digitales y de Internet. Por ello, en el siglo veintiuno, se acuña el término de analfabetismo digital.

Para el INEC (2015), en Ecuador una persona es analfabeta digital cuando reúne tres condiciones simultáneas: no tiene celular activado, no ha utilizado una computadora y, en los últimos doce meses no ha utilizado Internet. Según esto, de cada diez personas, entre 15 y 49 años, una es analfabeta digital (11,5% en el país, en el año 2012). De esta manera, en el siglo XXI, la problemática de la erradicación del analfabetismo se amplía e incluye la erradicación del analfabetismo digital para, de esta manera, poder hablar de procesos de alfabetización generalizados. En las sociedades de la información y/o comunicación, para que una persona se considere alfabetizada, es necesario que, además de saber leer, escribir y realizar operaciones matemáticas básicas, utilice medios digitales y se maneje a través de Internet.

Desde finales del siglo XX, asistimos a una serie de grandes cambios y transformaciones tecnológicas y comunicativas que han modificado la vida de las personas y el futuro de las sociedades de forma radical. Se habla, incluso, de la emergencia de una nueva sociedad: la sociedad de la información y del conocimiento, clasificaciones que son definidas frecuentemente como “sinónimas” (Vega, 2015; Kurz, 2002). Sin embargo, aunque estos dos términos se presentan como “conceptos cuasi naturales – lo mismo que la realidad que aparentemente explican” (Vega, 2015:83), dan nombre y contenido a dos realidades diferentes, aunque presenten elementos comunes en torno a las denominadas Tecnologías de la Información y Comunicación (TIC) o las Nuevas Tecnologías de la Información y Comunicación” (NTIC).

Las NTIC pueden ser definidas como “el conjunto de procesos y productos derivados de las nuevas herramientas (hardware y software), soportes de la información y canales de comunicación relacionados con el almacenamiento, procesamiento y transmisión digitalizados de la información” (Adell, 1997: 7). El modelo estrella de las NTIC son las redes informáticas, esto es, “ordenadores conectados que procesan información y que permiten acceder a la información, a recursos y servicios prestados por ordenadores remotos como sistemas de publicación y difusión de la información y como medio de comunicación entre seres humanos” (Adell, 1997: 7). El ejemplo paradigmático de estas redes es Internet.

Las bondades y enorme potencialidad de las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación son consideradas verdades “indiscutibles” y su aplicación a todos los ámbitos y sectores, como la educación, hechos innegables del “progreso” humano. De hecho, desde finales del siglo XX, se producen diferentes formas de alfabetización conectadas con las nuevas tecnologías de la información y la comunicación, esto es, la “alfabetización informacional” (relacionada con la informática, la electrónica, la tecnología de la información...) y la “alfabetización digital” (asociada al manejo de Internet, redes sociales, etc.).

Como investigadores, nos interesan los procesos de alfabetización digital por tratarse de la nueva realidad de los procesos de alfabetización en el siglo XXI, y ser cimiento, asimismo, de los procesos de alfabetización generalizada. Así, los procesos de alfabetización en los últimos años se han ampliado incluyendo el manejo de medios y formatos digitales, especialmente entre la población más joven, lo cual, a su vez, se considera que genera procesos relacionados, como son el neo-analfabetismo y

la “crisis de la lectura y la escritura, especialmente la que se asienta en la educación formal” (Viñao, 2004: 211-212).

El neo-analfabetismo representa un nuevo tipo de analfabetismo del siglo XXI, que se mueve en contextos crecientes de alfabetización generalizada y alfabetización digital, y que, según Viñao (2004), implica a...

... aquellas personas con usos pobres y escasos de lectura y escritura, que muestran rechazo, aversión e indiferencia frente a la cultura escrita, con carencia de habilidades necesarias para el uso de la lectura y escritura en situaciones en donde, en las sociedades en la que viven, las requieren desde un punto de vista personal, profesional y cívico. Desde luego, no se reconocen a sí mismas como personas analfabetas, pero tienen un discurso oral atrofiado, con retardos e incompleto, sin capacidad selectiva y de análisis frente a una sobre-información trivial y un trabajo efectivo de comunicación, con una estructura mental conformada por un discurso televisivo-publicitario, con una estructura caracterizada por una atención dispersa y fugaz acostumbrada a impactos, existencia de una gratificación instantánea y gratuita, fragmentación, presentismo, sin hábitos ni capacidad para analizar los fenómenos sociales, sin estrategias discursivas. (p. 224)⁷

El medio natural para el o la neo-analfabeta del siglo XXI son las redes sociales, Internet, la televisión y la publicidad, que entrañan entretenimiento, ocio e información. Ahora bien, navegar por Internet y manejar las redes sociales, no implica necesariamente comprender lo que se lee, esto es, razonar, reflexionar y mantener una posición propia; por el contrario, parece existir una tendencia a producirse serias limitaciones en el uso del lenguaje, donde importa más comunicarse que el correcto empleo de la ortografía y la gramática (Calero, 2014). Y ello, además, en un contexto donde el acceso a la información es digital, ya que menos del 0,1% de la información generada se encuentra en formato papel: “el 99,9% de la información se encuentra disponible sólo en formato digital. Cada minuto que pasa se realizan 2 millones de consultas en Google. Es decir, el buscador es el principal y omnipresente medio de búsqueda de información para niños, adolescentes y adultos” (Cánovas, 2013, párr. 8).

En definitiva, si bien durante siglos, la falta de acceso a la cultura y a los textos escritos perjudicó los procesos de alfabetización de amplios sectores de la población, en la era de la globalización neoliberal el acceso a nuevos formatos, siempre que se disponga de Internet, aparentemente democratiza el acceso a la cultura, a textos escritos (digitales), y con ello, se facilitan los procesos de alfabetización (digital) masiva. Ahora bien, si el acceso a las tecnologías digitales de la información y la comunicación no va acompañado del dominio de la lectura (Barboza, 2007), se profundizará más el analfabetismo, en este nuevo tipo de analfabetismo del siglo XXI.

Como sostiene Barboza (2007), citando a Millán (2000), la lectura seguirá siendo “la llave del conocimiento”. La lectura tradicionalmente ha sido asociada a los textos escritos, y en el siglo XXI,

⁷ Incluso Soto (2019) sostiene que este nuevo analfabetismo, además de involucrar a las personas más jóvenes así como a personas iletradas, también podría incluir a personas con escolaridad pero que no han conseguido desarrollar habilidades intelectuales que les permitan asumir los cambios vertiginosos de las sociedades contemporáneas, dificultándoseles “reconfigurar proyectos de vida, que no se pueden adecuar a las nuevas demandas (cognitivas, afectivas, socioemocionales)” (párr. 5), y que, igualmente, “no poseen mentalidad crítica, reflexiva y posturas éticas que les permitan apreciar las implicaciones de las acciones humanas a escala global” (párr. 5).

esta se relaciona con los textos escritos digitales, puesto que las nuevas tecnologías facilitan el acceso a través de la “tecnología móvil de bajo costo” (UNESCO, 2015). De hecho, incluso los teléfonos móviles más básicos “ofrecen un portal nuevo, asequible y fácil de usar para conseguir material de lectura” (UNESCO, 2015: 2).

Ahora bien, ¿leer información en textos escritos o en páginas web es lo mismo? Según un estudio de seguimiento ocular realizado por el doctor Jakob Nielsen, la herramienta que utilizamos para leer (y para escribir) nos condiciona. En este estudio, se afirma que quienes utilizan Internet “no realizan una lectura lineal, sino que “escanean” la pantalla” (Cánovas, 2013, párr. 10), realizando una lectura “en F”, esto es, leen las dos primeras líneas, y bajando por la izquierda vuelven a detenerse en el centro, abandonando nuevamente la lectura lineal y bajan hacia la parte inferior izquierda (Cánovas, 2013). Además, las personas que utilizan Internet leen “menos del 20% del contenido de una página web, dedicando hasta un 69% de su atención al lado izquierdo de la pantalla, y sólo el 31% a la parte derecha” (Cánovas, 2013, párr. 12).

Parece que leer textos escritos en formatos no digitales y en la web no es lo mismo. Si bien, como afirma la UNESCO (2015), Internet ha precipitado y democratizado el acceso a la información, incluso en los lugares más remotos, “en todos los países en desarrollo hay indicios de que mujeres y hombres, niñas y niños leen libros en teléfonos de bajo costo” (UNESCO, 2015: 2), este acceso no se produce de forma equitativa ni en la medida esperada respecto a la adquisición de conocimiento. Ello se debe, en primer lugar, a que el acceso de Internet no llega a todo el mundo, y, sobre todo, el acceso a la información no garantiza el acceso al conocimiento, porque la información no es lo mismo que el conocimiento: “la información es importante si es el punto de partida para generar saber y conocimiento, de lo contrario, en sí misma, no significa mucho” (Vega Cantor, 2015: 98). La información es “la expresión de un saber que no tiene valor por sí mismo, sino que es necesario para alcanzar una forma de saberes codificados” (Vega Cantor, 2015: 98).

El conocimiento contiene diferentes saberes, que utilizan la información (datos) como correa de transmisión. El conocimiento más simple es aquel más fácil de empaquetar según los soportes de transmisión (Vega Cantor, 2015). Sin embargo, el saber se hace más difícil de codificar según atiende a mayores niveles de especialización y formación; a mayor conocimiento, se produce una menor velocidad de difusión, según los soportes técnico-mecánicos y los procesos de generación de codificación y estandarización (Vega Cantor, 2015).

En el ámbito educativo, incorporar las nuevas tecnologías de la información y la comunicación a la escuela y al aprendizaje ha implicado un gran cambio tanto en el aspecto pedagógico como en otros aspectos de tipo organizacional y relacional, además de cambios en los sistemas de evaluación, etc. La UNESCO (2005) encuentra positivo y prometedor para el desarrollo humano el gran potencial ofrecido por la utilización de las nuevas tecnologías de la información y comunicación, las cuales pueden suponer una gran ayuda en muchos casos de déficit de aprendizaje del alumnado, además de facilitar la lucha contra la lacra del analfabetismo, tan presente aún en muchos países. Sin embargo, de acuerdo con las reflexiones expuestas anteriormente, este optimismo debe de ser matizado porque “el poseer competencias para leer, y el hecho mismo de comprender lo leído” (Barboza, 2007) continúan

siendo el requisito fundamental para enfrentar el analfabetismo en el siglo XXI.

El neo-analfabetismo y las bibliotecas en Ecuador

Ecuador, al igual que otros países de la región, se va conformando como una sociedad cada vez más digitalizada, pese a las grandes brechas digitales aún existentes. En el año 2015, un 50,5% de la población recibía y manejaba Internet. Este incremento ha sido espectacular si tomamos en cuenta que 15 años atrás, tan solo un 1,5% de población tenía acceso a Internet. El incremento vertiginoso de población que utiliza Internet se multiplica casi por 50 en tan solo 15 años. Además, se ha producido tal divulgación de la cultura, en diferentes formatos y a través de diferentes medios, que la alfabetización se ha venido generalizando en el país, aunque a diferentes ritmos e intensidades, según atendamos a variables como género, edad, clase social y grupo étnico. De esta forma, pese al error institucional cometido con la declaratoria de Ecuador como patria libre de analfabetismo, y subsanado bajo la fórmula de “Ecuador, patria en proceso de alfabetización”, consideramos que, por los datos presentados, con una caída de la tasa de analfabetismo del 9% al 5,5% en 15 años, el país asiste a una transición de una sociedad de “alfabetización restringida” a una sociedad de alfabetización más o menos generalizada (Viñao, 2004), aunque lejos de declararse patria “libre de analfabetismo”.

El Gobierno de la RC apostó decididamente por proporcionar recursos para invertir en tecnología en los establecimientos educativos, especialmente en las denominadas Unidades Educativas del Milenio (UEM). Se implementó un nuevo modelo educativo durante el período 2007-2017, donde las UEM se consideraron clave para el mejoramiento de la calidad de la educación pública. Cada UEM, de las 78 que se construyeron de 2013 a 2014, se erigió para “garantizar el acceso de la población escolar de las zonas rurales permanentemente excluidas de los servicios educativos” (MINEDUC, s.f., párr. 10). Las UEM albergan a estudiantes de 5 a 19 años, a través de un modelo de infraestructura integral, que incorpora diversos y novedosos recursos pedagógicos, aulas con ambientes temáticos, equipamiento moderno y tecnología, incluyendo bibliotecas, laboratorios, etc., de todo lo cual carecía tradicionalmente gran parte de las instituciones educativas públicas del país (MINEDUC, 2017a). En este sentido, fue prioridad dotar de ordenadores a las instituciones educativas e incorporar las tecnologías de la comunicación e información al proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje⁸. Según el Sistema Nacional de Información, SNI, (2017), desde el año 2008 hasta el 2016, se produce un incremento más que considerable de establecimientos educativos públicos que disponen de Internet, un 32,4% de las instituciones educativas rurales y un 38,7% de las instituciones educativas urbanas. El incremento porcentual del uso de Internet en tan solo ocho años (del 2008 al 2015) fue del 15,7% en las instituciones educativas urbanas y del 22,3% en las rurales. Enfatizamos este incremento porcentual del uso de Internet en las instituciones educativas públicas rurales del país, tradicionalmente las más desatendidas, puesto que, en el año 2008, tan solo un 10,1% de instituciones rurales facilitaban Internet a su alumnado. La apuesta gubernamental por las UEM tiene mucho que ver en las cifras del año 2015, donde el ámbito rural supera ligeramente al ámbito urbano en el porcentaje de estudiantes que disponen de Internet en los establecimientos educativos de educación básica y media.

⁸ Ello corría paralelo a procesos de capacitación docente para poder incorporar las NTIC en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje.

Estos datos apuntarían a una cierta democratización en el acceso a las nuevas tecnologías de la información y la comunicación en las instituciones educativas de Ecuador. Ahora bien, la cuestión es si esta mayor cobertura y acceso a las nuevas tecnologías permitieron mejorar el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje en el país,

En el siglo XXI, “globalmente, seis de cada diez niños y adolescentes no están alcanzando los niveles mínimos de competencia en lectura y matemáticas” (UNESCO, 2017: 2), competencias básicas para que una persona se pueda declarar alfabetizada. Además, “más de la mitad, 56%, de todos los niños no estarán en la capacidad de leer y manejar las matemáticas con competencia, en el momento que tengan la edad para completar la educación primaria” (UNESCO, 2017: 8), y este porcentaje aumenta en los y las adolescentes a un 61%. En la región de América Latina y el Caribe, “la tasa total de niños, niñas y adolescentes que no leen competentemente es del 36%” y la proporción se incrementa al 53% entre adolescentes, 19 millones de personas en la región (UNESCO, 2017: 8), donde, tanto niños como niñas tienen “la misma probabilidad de alcanzar niveles mínimos de aprendizajes en matemática a nivel global” aunque las niñas “tienen mayores probabilidades que los niños de leer competentemente” (UNESCO, 2017: 8).

Sin perder de vista la declaración de la UNESCO que ratifica cómo “la segregación escolar por condiciones socioeconómicas y culturales de los estudiantes tiene una relación negativa con el rendimiento” (UNESCO, s.f., párr. 3), en general, los datos globales sobre los aprendizajes en niños, niñas y adolescentes no resultan halagüeños. Estos datos incluso amenazan “el avance, no solo hacia el objetivo global de la educación sino hacia muchos otros Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible que dependen de contar con poblaciones alfabetizadas y con habilidades numéricas” (UNESCO, 2017, p. 23).

Según las pruebas del Segundo Estudio Regional Comparativo y Evaluativo (SERCE, 2008) y del Tercer Estudio Regional Comparativo y Evaluativo (TERCE, 2015), que analizan el logro de aprendizaje en América Latina, el alumnado ecuatoriano alcanza los “resultados promedio entre el primer y el segundo nivel de desempeño” (Torres, s.f., párr. 6), aunque con matices: “en lectura, matemática y ciencias de sexto grado, así como lectura de tercer grado, superan el promedio regional”, pero en matemáticas de tercer grado está por debajo de la media “al igual que en Lectura y Escritura de sexto de Básica se sitúan por debajo de la media regional” (Torres, s.f., párr. 6). Por ello, la UNESCO alerta que la situación es preocupante puesto que “el promedio del país es significativamente menor al promedio regional” (Torres, s.f., párr. 6); ahora bien, la tendencia en la región se caracteriza, cada vez más, por la deficiencia del aprendizaje de los y las niñas, específicamente de aquellos y aquellas que están en la escuela: “más de dos tercios de los niños y jóvenes que no aprenden están actualmente en la escuela” (UNESCO, 2017: 8). No se trata de niños y niñas sin escolarizar, que no disponen de recursos, tecnología e infraestructuras básicas, sino de quienes se encuentran en la escuela, que cuentan con tecnologías móviles y acceso a Internet y, aparentemente, se encuentran alfabetizados y alfabetizadas.

Pese a estos datos que indican que algo no está bien en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje de los niños y niñas de América Latina en general, y de Ecuador en particular, la UNESCO continúa

insistiendo en la necesidad realizar las “evaluaciones de aprendizaje” (UNESCO, 2017: 24), así como en aumentar la inversión en el uso de las nuevas tecnologías en educación. En el propio Informe TERCE en sus resultados para Ecuador, se insiste en la necesidad de fomentar un mayor uso del ordenador en la escuela, además de fuera de la escuela, lo cual se traducirá, automáticamente, en “un mayor desempeño por parte de los estudiantes” (TERCE, s.f., p. 7). Se sostiene en el Informe que los y las estudiantes que “leen con mayor frecuencia fuera del contexto escolar mejoran en todas las áreas evaluadas en sexto grado” (TERCE, s.f., p. 7), lo cual es facilitado por el acceso a las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación.

Sin embargo, los niños, niñas y adolescentes se conectan a la tecnología digital, tanto en las instituciones educativas como fuera de ellas. Es más: las instituciones educativas no son el principal espacio de uso de las tecnologías digitales. Como muestran los datos del INEC (2015), es el hogar el espacio donde se utilizan mayoritariamente las tecnologías móviles y se accede a Internet, seguido por los centros de acceso público y de trabajo, así como las instituciones educativas⁹. Cuando se produce este acceso a ordenadores, a teléfonos móviles inteligentes y a Internet cabría preguntarse si estos son utilizados para facilitar y mejorar la lectura en niños, niñas y adolescentes.

La escritura y, sobre todo, la lectura apoyados en formatos tradicionales no parecen ser parte de las actividades de amplios sectores de la población ecuatoriana. Según la Encuesta sobre Hábitos de Lectura en Ecuador (INEC, 2012), solo el 26,5% de la población declaraba tener hábitos de lectura, frente a un 73,5% que señalaba lo contrario. De las personas que no leían, un importante 56,8% no lo hacía por falta de interés, mientras el 31,7% por falta de tiempo. De quienes manifestaron tener hábitos de lectura, el 50,3% leían entre una y dos horas semanales, mientras el 13,5% lo hacía de 3 a 4 horas. Por grupos de edad, las personas de 16 a 24 años¹⁰ eran quienes más leían (83%), mientras que los y las mayores de 65 años eran quienes menos lo hacían (62%). Pero es que el 33% de los y las jóvenes que leen lo hacen por atender las obligaciones académicas, mientras el 32% lo hace por conocer sobre algún tema (INEC, 2012). En general, ningún grupo etario lee por placer o superación personal. Además, el tipo de lectura realizada suele ser de consumo rápido y fácil: el 31% de ecuatorianos y ecuatorianas lee un periódico en su tiempo libre, y tan solo el 28% lee un libro. Atendiendo a diferencias de género (INEC, 2012), son los varones quienes leen más periódicos (51%), mientras que las mujeres leen más libros (41%). Entre el grupo de jóvenes, la lectura de textos escritos en formato tradicional se circunscribe al ámbito escolar y a la obligatoriedad. Y esta capacidad lectora relacionada con el ámbito escolar, no parece hacer mella ni perdurar en el tiempo más allá de las obligaciones académicas puntuales. Por otra parte, las bibliotecas no son lugares de uso recurrente por parte de los y las estudiantes. El 54% de la población lee en su propia casa y solo el 0,3% lee en una biblioteca (INEC, 2012), aunque no se especifica si es por preferencia o por falta de oferta¹¹.

⁹ En el ámbito rural, son los centros públicos donde, con mayor frecuencia, se utilizan las tecnologías móviles y se accede a Internet, seguido por las instituciones educativas aunque, cada vez, son más los hogares rurales que tienen acceso a Internet.

¹⁰ No hallamos datos para poblaciones más jóvenes.

¹¹ En este sentido, consideramos que no se ha realizado una inversión suficiente en la construcción y dotación de bibliotecas más allá de las existentes en las UEM, aunque tampoco existe mucha información al respecto. Diferentes instituciones y organismos ofrecen algunos datos, pero parecen incongruentes. Si se parte de la Encuesta Nacional de la Niñez y Adolescencia de la Sociedad Civil (ENNA, 2004), el 46% de niños/as y adolescentes entre 5 y 17 años que asistían

Estos datos sugieren que un mayor acceso a la tecnología móvil, así como a Internet, no parecen estar relacionados con hábitos crecientes de lectura. El acceso a ordenadores, a teléfonos móviles, así como a Internet, también facilita el uso de las redes sociales y videojuegos virtuales. En muchos casos, el uso y abuso de redes sociales y videojuegos genera “individuos dependientes de la tecnología incapaces de pensar o comportarse por sí solos” (Islas, 2017: 1), sujetos a constantes y vigorosos estímulos. Sin embargo, como sostiene Mary Helen Immordino-Yang, existen algunos tipos de pensamientos, “especialmente la toma de decisiones morales sobre las situaciones sociales y psicológicas de otras personas” donde se hace “necesario dejar pasar el tiempo y la reflexión adecuadas” (Carr, 2011: 265), y cuando la red disminuye, esa capacidad de contemplación y meditación “está alterando la profundidad de nuestras emociones y nuestros pensamientos” (Carr, 2011: 266).

Y precisamente por ello, en el contexto de la sobreestimulación y el desbordamiento de información de las sociedades contemporáneas, se hace cada vez más necesario “reforzar la lectura lineal y reflexiva, que permite profundizar, asimilar y afianzar información, datos y conceptos. Esto también debe entrenarse. Más que antes, sin lugar a dudas” (Cánovas, 2013, párr. 24). El riesgo de reducir el conocimiento a mera información y acumulación de datos, sin participación del sujeto que conoce es muy alto (Vega Cantor, 2015: 100).

Las nuevas tecnologías de la información y la comunicación “no han sido aquella fuerza revolucionaria que obligaría a reconfigurar totalmente la educación tradicional ni han reemplazado todo lo que se sabe sobre lo que es buena educación” (Jara, 2007: 387). Sin tratar de eludir la importancia de Internet y las nuevas tecnologías, como resultado de esta investigación se considera necesario combinarlas con aquellos otros formatos que no permiten distraerse y que facilitan el pensamiento meditativo que, como considera Carr (2011), citando a Heidegger, es la “esencia misma de nuestra humanidad” (p. 267).

De esta manera, además de promover el uso de las nuevas tecnologías de la información y la comunicación, se debe restaurar el apoyo a hábitos de lectura y escritura asentados en soportes formales de educación, que permitan situar y contextualizar la información para, así, poder convertirla en conocimiento, lo cual solo se podrá producir a través de la intencionalidad del propio sujeto (Vega Cantor, 2015).

Conclusiones

En un momento donde se declaró al país como “patria alfabetizada”, con posterior enmienda de errores ministerial y reconocimiento de patria “en vías de alfabetización”, se podría concluir que Ecuador, en el siglo XXI, al amparo de algunos logros de la “revolución educativa” (2007-2017), ha transitado de una sociedad de “alfabetización restringida” a una sociedad de “alfabetización generalizada” (Viñao, 2004). En el marco de las sociedades de la información y/o el conocimiento, este proceso de alfabetización

a establecimientos educativos, contaban con una biblioteca en su escuela o colegio en el año 2004; este porcentaje descendió al 40% en el año 2010 (ODNA, 2010). Esta reducción del número total de bibliotecas en las instituciones educativas del país en un 6% en diez años se podría relacionar con el agrupamiento de establecimientos educativos en las UEM. Según Puente Hernández (2013), en el año 2010 existían 4194 bibliotecas en el país, de las cuales el 78,06% eran escolares (relacionadas en gran medida con las UEM), el 19% públicas, el 1,7% universitarias y el 1,20%, institucionales.

generalizada ha corrido paralelo a procesos de alfabetización digital y ha sido también sostenido por ellos. Ahora bien, dichos procesos implican dos riesgos interrelacionados para la educación: la crisis de la lectura y la escritura, más allá de sus fines instrumentales y productivos, y un preocupante nuevo tipo de analfabetismo, propio del nuevo siglo, el neo-analfabetismo (Viñao, 2004).

Ecuador, durante el Gobierno de la Revolución Ciudadana (2007-2017), como muchos países de América Latina, desarrolló políticas para incorporar las tecnologías de la información y comunicación a la educación, que facilitasen la erradicación de ciertos déficits de aprendizaje detectados en el alumnado. La inversión en nuevas tecnologías en pos de una alfabetización digital masiva ha sido parte de las prioridades estatales, fuertemente recomendada por parte de organismos transnacionales, aunque existe un acceso inequitativo por estrato socioeconómico a estas.

Sin embargo, la evidencia global muestra cómo no es tan claro que estos procesos de alfabetización digital transmiten y fortalecen aprendizajes permanentes; incluso aquellos organismos transnacionales que apuestan por las tecnologías de la información y comunicación muestran su preocupación ante la deficiencia de aprendizajes de los niños, niñas y adolescentes que, en principio, se encuentran alfabetizados y alfabetizadas. Se trata de niños y niñas que cuentan, cada vez más, con recursos tecnológicos, tanto en el aula como en sus hogares y, sin embargo, no adquieren, en la medida que se esperaba, los logros correspondientes a su grupo etario.

En este contexto de alfabetización generalizada y acceso a las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación, los textos escritos en soporte tradicional, así como el hábito de lectura no instrumental, esto es aquel que no es destinado a una prueba académica o profesional, corren serios riesgos de extinguirse. Internet abre todo un mundo de informaciones y conexiones, pero no garantiza que seamos capaces de comprender y seleccionar la información recibida, y transformar dicha información en conocimiento. Por ello, la investigación realizada permite afirmar que nos encontramos ante la emergencia de un nuevo tipo de analfabetismo, propio del siglo XXI, donde se configuran sociedades de alfabetización (digital) generalizada y, sin embargo, grandes sectores de la población no pueden realizar un tipo de análisis reflexivo sobre el entorno que les rodea u ofrecer soluciones a pequeñas actividades cotidianas.

En las sociedades contemporáneas, caracterizadas por enormes disparidades e injusticias sociales, se hace necesario, especialmente entre aquella población más joven, saber y poder “procesar la ingente cantidad de información de que disponemos, gracias al desarrollo de las nuevas tecnologías, transformándola en el conocimiento necesario para cambiar nuestro entorno” (Blázquez, 2001: 7). Las nuevas generaciones de estudiantes nacen y crecen en entornos digitalizados, lo cual ha provocado que “sus hábitos perceptivos y sus procesos mentales se hayan transformado, al igual que sus gustos, actitudes y emociones” (Blázquez, 2001: 9); por ello, se hace urgente que la escuela y las familias fomenten y formen en la reflexión, la meditación y el espíritu crítico.

La alfabetización y la alfabetización digital son un derecho fundamental, pero estos procesos alfabetizadores han de ser críticos si queremos promover un mundo más justo y equitativo.

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**Part III:
Questioning Education Policies
Inspired by Neoliberalism**

Transformative Education in Systems, Programmes and Individuals: Challenges and Hopes in Japan and Beyond

Carol Inugai Dixon

Summary

Is the term transformative education a tautology? Surely one of the main purposes of education is deep and lasting or, in other words, transformative changes in human beings through developing, within them, prosocial values that transcend selfish survival drives. A belief in democracy demands prosocial values that allow for each individual to flourish and develop to the best of his or her potential. But democracy entangled with neoliberalism as a particular manifestation of capitalism can create confusion and conflict in educational institutions. Nonetheless, there is a way to escape this with a curriculum that focusses on social, emotional, and ethical learning. This reflective paper considers the entanglement, its confusions, and ways to clarity with reference to initiatives in Japan.

Keywords:

Democracy, Prosocial, Ethical

Introduction

The Japanese national educational system is well established and connected in a complex way to both private and national universities across the country. But the system is outdated in many ways and in need of change. Fundamentally, schools are organized around a transmission model of teaching and learning, the roots of which can be traced back to the needs of the industrial revolution in the West. Typically, in classes of forty students, teachers pass on text-book content which must be learnt by heart for tests of accurate memorization at a later date. The skills of critical inquiry, so essential in our globalized world today, along with the benefits of IT, are not easily integrated into this rigidly structured system. Recognizing the shortcomings of the current situation and the need for change, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has introduced various initiatives to catalyse a shift. One of these has been the goal to introduce the International Baccalaureate (IB) educational programmes into 200 national schools. To support this initiative, some universities have sought recognition from the IB Organization (IBO) to offer IB Educator Certificates (IBEC) to teachers wishing to teach in IB programmes. The Master in International Education Program at the University of Tsukuba, which is one of the top ten national research universities in Japan, was purposely designed between 2015-2017 to incorporate IBEC options within its overall aim to prepare teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills, and values, relevant for twenty-first century education. The first cohort graduated in March 2019.

The Master in International Education Program at the University of Tsukuba, Japan

The Master in International Education Program at the University of Tsukuba, Japan, is of two years' duration and the completion of eleven compulsory courses is required for the award of the IBEC. Pedagogy for a Changing World is a core compulsory course which aims to stimulate deep thinking about the purposes of education in the twenty-first century. Students are asked in the first session of this core course to inquire and reflect on the purposes of education through answering the question "What is education for?" Each cohort so far has provided a wide range of answers. To date, these have always included the pragmatic aspects of education, such as that it is to provide life skills that enable a person to live and find work in society; but always additionally, they have recognized that merely passing on skills might be better referred to as "training" and have included the idea that education is most importantly about nurturing the next generation into becoming people who hold certain moral or ethical values that promote the individual flourishing of all. Further discussion on the latter inevitably leads to asking whether, without education, these values would be likely to spontaneously develop, and the answer is that they would not be guaranteed, as selfish survival drives fiercely compete with prosocial tendencies. Furthermore, there is a general agreement that passing on values that become internalised so as to drive prosocial actions and behaviour is core to the concept of education for democracy. Nurturing prosocial values is crucial to the deep transformation of human beings for participation in a democratic society where each and every individual can flourish to the best of his or her potential. Throughout the course Pedagogy for a Changing World this initial identification of the importance of inculcating values for transformation is considered in more depth. What exactly does it mean with regard to educational principles and practices? And what are the implications for the pedagogical identity of an educator? The ultimate goal of this course, then, is to ground and orientate the future teachers through their development of a pedagogical identity.

The International Baccalaureate Programmes in Japanese National Education

In considering why MEXT made the decision to introduce the IB programmes into the national education system as a catalyst for change, an understanding of the short history of the IB, which spans just over half a century, can help answering.

The four IB programmes which cater for students from elementary to pre-university have developed a high reputation of excellence and relevance since the first one, the Diploma Programme (DP), was introduced in 1968 in Ecolint, otherwise known as the International School of Geneva. The programmes, since their early days, have been widely associated with international schools which flourished from the late sixties onwards concurrently with globalization. Many families living overseas were unable to, or did not wish to, send their children to local schools. The international schools provided an alternative option, and the IBDP provided a qualification that meant the graduates of international schools could go on to universities in their home countries.

There is no doubt that the success of the IB programmes was in large part due to their growth in the contexts of these international schools. Such institutions were affluent enough to provide rich

resources, both material but also for attendance, with small classes comprised of students from a diversity of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The parents of the students in these schools had for the most part been prepared to invest not just in providing funding for such schooling, but also the energy and motivation to promote the idea of an international education that looked to the future.

The founders of the IB were idealistic. They believed that through education a better and more peaceful world, committed to the ideals of democracy, could be created. In the aftermath of the world wars of the early twentieth century this mission and vision was powerfully appealing to many educators and so international schools attracted many high quality teachers with values aligned to those of the IB. The pedagogy of the IB aims to develop in students inquiring minds along with the supporting appropriate research abilities and higher order thinking skills such as critical reflection. Students learn not to easily accept perspectives and world views, including their own, without some examination as to their basis. Theory of Knowledge (TOK) is therefore at the core of the IBDP. All IB students learn at least two languages to help them gain depth of insight into and an appreciation for intercultural differences. International mindedness is the overall aspiration and is oriented towards peaceful collaboration between people and between peoples with different world views.

However, the founders were also pragmatic and foresaw that their new educational programmes should have pathways leading to university entrance if they were to have real and practical impact. University entrance was the ambition of the parents funding international schools and consequently the IB, of course, but there was another underlying practical motive and rationale, based on an assumption of the role of universities. The founders of the IB, namely Alex Peterson, Robert Leach, John Goormaghtigh and Kurt Hahn were from a European tradition, where a university was understood, on a rather assumptive and implicit level, to be a place of edification. In other words, it was a place of transformation. In university, it was hoped that as well as further developing the erudition undertaken in school, people would aspire to become a class of leaders, either directly in political positions or less directly in positions of power in the various professions, and embrace the responsibilities and obligations, (known as noblesse oblige in earlier times) necessary to take the world forward, while at the same time giving back to society. It would seem obvious to presume that IB graduates, already nurtured to be internationally minded and committed to the ideals of global democracy, would easily and greatly benefit from this further edification in the universities. It must be remembered that the universities of England and Europe emerged from religious traditions and so the moral and ethical aspects were integral to their teachings. Those contrasted with the universities of America, where the commercial and economic aspect of education had a greater profile.

Japan has a long cultural tradition of strong values related to social harmony, so those expressed to be inherent in an IB education cohere well. Additionally, the IB reputation for offering a quality international education with a future focus and an emphasis on inquiry is seen as one answer to the need to reinvigorate the traditional Japanese system so it becomes relevant for the globalized world of the twenty-first century in providing the necessary human resources.

But fifty-one years on from the inauguration of the IB, the global context has become quite different and this is having repercussions throughout the field of education.

The Changing Field of Education

Although in theory, IB pedagogical values encourage an investigation of various perspectives and world views with the aim of them ideally being able to work together harmoniously, in practice in the field of education this is becoming a difficult issue because of two conflicting world views based on different hierarchies of values.

The major dominating world view is currently global capitalism, which values free markets. This has resulted in neoliberalism along with the rise of materialism, consumerism, and commodification. Neoliberal values prioritize capital growth and profit as the overall measure of wealth and success. This influence can be seen in some schools and universities where qualifications are overtly marketed for their efficacy in gaining a future lucrative job, in ways previously unimagined. Neoliberalism has changed the language and management of many schools, universities, and educational organizations so that, for example, responsibility has become known as accountability, and students or parents are now clients.

Of course, as already noted, one purpose of education has always been to provide skills for working in society, but perhaps there is a question of balance to be considered when asking what has happened to the idea of transformation so that basic selfish survival drives do not override prosocial behaviour.

There is certainly a major tension around this imbalance in teacher education and it has become apparent in each cohort of the Tsukuba University Master in International Education course Pedagogy for a Changing World, as the students work to articulate their pedagogical identity. Employing a TOK approach in the course, students learn to constantly ask what do I or we know, how do I or we know it, and why does it matter. Of course, one of the reasons it matters is because what we think we know as valuable is the basis for our actions. It is the basis of decisions that teachers will make in nurturing the future generations who will give rise to the future world. This is of enormous significance in our present time of global problems such as those identified through the OECD Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). In other more stable times, the role of a teacher was primarily to maintain a status quo and pass on canonical knowledge. The traditional Japanese educational system still does this well. But today, teachers must pass on the skills and values, for an unpredictable unstable future world with severe and dangerous environmental problems. Inquiry and critical and creative thinking are identifiable skills but what about values?

As European, British, and other universities increasingly recast themselves as places to gain qualifications that will provide the individual with economic opportunities and financial success, there is now little, if any, mention of edification or change outside the religious faculties. It can be argued that the universities have become an instrument of the neoliberal world view, associated with capitalism and the free market rather than democracy and the free mind, and the washback from this has created confusion through a clash of values in schools, which purport to be aligned with the original IB mission to create a better and more peaceful world through a transformative education. The confusion is not well articulated and results in some hypocritical and contradictory behaviours, that become an unhealthy hidden curriculum for the students. They learn that what is declared as

valuable in terms of action and behaviour is different from what is practiced actually.

Competition has become a primary value in schools as it has in the marketplace. The overriding drive for high grades subsumes even collaboration skills and service learning to become an instrument in winning top marks, and competition in the forefront highlights the notion of winning and losing, of winners and losers. Furthermore, there is an assumed belief that competition is absolutely fair, that the positions of winning and losing are somehow deserved, and therefore the ensuing categorization justifies all sorts of further decisions that impact student's future. Such conceptualization contradicts the principle of respect for diversity and inclusion, which lies at the basis of democracy and of any education that prepares for it.

Any student who finds the situation in school abhorrent and who walks away from it is labelled as a drop-out rather than an independent thinker and courageous individual. Of course, often they are not the latter, but they most certainly do not all deserve to be described in deficit terms. They are invariably young people who are emotionally distraught and physically and mentally stressed to the point that they can no longer cope with nor function in their school situation. The huge number of such students suffering from social-emotional unwell-being surely signifies that something is very wrong with an education that was supposed to make the world a better place.

Teachers and leaders in schools which have adopted the values of the IB mission are placed in a very difficult situation. Are they to continue trying to pass on those values in a committed and authentic way or bend to the demands of parents (or clients) who, especially if they are fee paying, demand that the school emphasize grades and competition for places at prestigious universities, at the expense of all else. And is it fair not to prepare students for the "real" world?

It is a perplexing and worrying situation, but there is a way out to be able to move forward.

A Balanced Education

In one sense, the term unbalanced means unhealthy, such as when it describes a diet or state of mind. An unbalanced education is similarly unhealthy and a sign or symptom of this can be seen in the lack of well-being in students, which is critically high, especially in the so-called developed countries. As much as parents and teachers might support the push for higher grades and competition, it is unlikely that any of them explicitly supports the promotion of student ill health. Instead, it is conceivable that schools and parents, and perhaps especially students, would welcome a balanced curriculum that attended to their well-being, physically, socially, and emotionally. Indeed, this accounts for the growth of mindfulness practices in schools. Mindfulness can be a great tool for stress reduction and emotional self-management. Unfortunately, it can also be offered as an instrument to help students deal with the aim of increasing their grade level and competitive performance. Of recently developed that presents an alternative focus along with an answer to the question about values. It is called Social, Emotional, Ethical (SEE) Learning and was formally launched in Delhi, India, in April of this year. The aim of the curriculum is transformative and seeks to develop compassionate human beings who are not driven primarily by selfish survival drives when they are not necessary. This is shown to depend on the health and social and emotional well-being of an individual who first has learnt to have compassion

for himself or herself. This requires each individual to value himself or herself and, therefore, take care of himself or herself. Learning to do this entails practice. Drawing on ancient wisdom traditions of contemplative practices, the latest research in neuroscience, human biology, practice based on trauma, and systems thinking, the SEE Learning curriculum has mapped out a meaningful scope and sequence that can be adapted to suit anyone from elementary students onwards, throughout life. It is for teachers as well as for their students. It is not dogmatic but nurtures the qualities of prosocial potentials through deep understanding arrived at through individual reflection and critical insight. It provides a way to realize the original IB vision, which until now has been pursued through mainly intellectual or cognitive means and has remained largely aspirational. SEE Learning attends to the education of emotions, which are entangled with intellectual and cognitive, as well as with ethic lived values and physical health. All of the SEE Learning materials and resources are freely available online.

The SEE Learning curriculum has been introduced to the students of the Master in International Education Program at the University of Tsukuba. It has been well-received, and generally agreed on that it, or something similar, is essential to rebalance education if it is meant to bring forth the kind of citizen that can deal with the problems of the twenty-first century, while still honouring the principles of democracy

Conclusion

The transformation of whole educational systems, like that of the Japanese national educational system, through the introduction of transformative educational programmes, such as the IB, could be thwarted because of a conflict of values which the economy system of neoliberalism thrives on. These include rampant competition and wealth accumulation, and might be described as the selfish survival drives that transformative education seeks to override. Because of the dominant position of neoliberalism, many educators sense not only conflict but despair.

However, SEE Learning can transform despair and confusion into hope, direction, and confidence. Teachers and students need these all if they are to transform themselves and as a result, the future world. Incorporating SEE Learning into the course of Pedagogy for a Changing World is a small beginning step towards the aspiration for deep and lasting change and could be possible in the national schools and universities of Japan.

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Resistencia y Transformación en la Red Educativa de São Paulo: La Lucha Contra las Innovaciones Neoliberales

Débora Cristina Goulart Y Márcia Jacomini

Resumen

El objetivo de este artículo es discutir las reformas educativas en el estado de São Paulo, más específicamente el Programa Inova Educación, basado en una experiencia de construcción de la resistencia al neoliberalismo en la educación, llevada a cabo por el Grupo Escuela Pública y Democracia (GEPUD). En términos metodológicos, se realizó un estudio bibliográfico y un análisis documental del proceso de organización y actuación de GEPUD. La referencia teórica ha sido adoptada por autores que han analizado críticamente la ideología neoliberal y sus consecuencias en las escuelas, como Laval, Dardot, y Tanguy. El grupo ha construido una propuesta alternativa de asignaturas optativas y contenidos diferentes a los propuestos por la Secretaría de Educación, para la disciplina tecnología y proyecto vida, que se implementará en el año 2020, en las escuelas que conforman GEPUD.

Palabras Clave:

Políticas Educativas,
Resistencia Propositiva,
Programa Inova Educação.

Introducción

El acceso a la educación básica pública en Brasil logró importantes avances a finales del siglo XX y principios de este, aunque todavía no se ha logrado universalizar la educación de los niños / las niñas de 4 a 17 años, como lo recomienda la Constitución Federal de 1988, redacción dada por la Enmienda Constitucional 59/2009 (Brasil, 2009); por lo tanto, el país sigue teniendo la tarea de garantizar el acceso a la educación básica a todos los niños, niñas y jóvenes del grupo de edad mencionado y asegurar que se atienda la demanda de educación de la primera infancia para los niños y niñas de cero a tres años. A esta importante tarea se suma el reto de organizar un sistema educativo nacional que ofrezca una formación integral a las nuevas generaciones, apoyado por una escuela comprometida con valores seculares como la justicia social, la igualdad, la libertad, la solidaridad, el respeto a la diversidad y la democracia.

En los últimos tres decenios, de manera más intensa, la organización, la gestión y el plan de estudios de la educación básica pública han sido objeto de una amplia controversia por parte de un conjunto de instituciones de la sociedad civil vinculadas al capital¹, cuyos objetivos se orientan en dos direcciones complementarias: la disputa por el fondo público en la oferta de educación y la intención de producir una educación desde los primeros años de escolaridad orientada a la formación del ciudadano-cliente, el trabajador flexible, el hombre neoliberal (Laval, 2004; Dardot y Laval, 2016).

¹ Entre las principales se encuentran Todos por la Educación, Fundación Lemann, Instituto Ayrton Senna, Centro de Estudios e Investigación en Educación, Cultura y Acción Comunitaria (CENPEC) y Fundación Vanzolini.

Este proyecto educativo bien orquestado se opone a la posición de un grupo de entidades académicas y sindicales² que, históricamente, han defendido el derecho a una educación pública, laica, gratuita para todos y con referencia social. A esta lucha se suman diversas experiencias de resistencia a las políticas educativas de los gobiernos municipales y estatales, organizadas, desde las escuelas³, por gestores, profesores, alumnos, familias y responsables que pretenden, en el ámbito de sus acciones, apoyarse en la legislación, en lo que esta garantiza en términos de autonomía y gestión democrática de la escuela, para construir propuestas alternativas a los proyectos y programas educativos que están sujetos a una “agenda educativa estructurada globalmente” (Dale, 2001) que tiene como punto fuerte los cambios en la economía capitalista mundial, especialmente la adaptación del personal a un mercado flexible y precario (Antunes & Pinto, 2017).

La experiencia de resistencia activa, en proceso, y la construcción de alternativas a las políticas educativas implementadas por el gobierno del estado de São Paulo en los últimos años, más precisamente en lo que se refiere al Programa “Inova Educación”(PIE) –previsto para comenzar en 2020 en todas las escuelas que atienden a los estudiantes de los últimos años de la escuela primaria y secundaria en la red estatal de enseñanza– empezó en un encuentro organizado por la universidad pública con la participación de las escuelas de enseñanza básica⁴, en el que se comprendió la necesidad y la viabilidad de una asociación, que posteriormente se consolidó en la formación del Grupo Escuela Pública y Democracia (GEPUD)⁵.

Los propósitos del Grupo han sido desarrollar una práctica educativa basada en la gestión democrática de la escuela, con amplia participación de la comunidad escolar en los órganos de decisión, y establecer relaciones democráticas en el proceso educativo así como una gestión de la labor pedagógica orientada al logro de la formación integral de los alumnos.

Contrariamente a esta perspectiva, la política educativa de la red estatal de São Paulo está en consonancia con la tendencia indicada en los documentos del Banco Mundial (2018a, 2018b y OCDE, 2015) en los que se analiza la educación desde la teoría del capital humano y tendría una urgencia demográfica en el Brasil, ya que estaríamos en una última oleada de población económicamente activa de jóvenes. La educación de los jóvenes, por lo tanto, debe orientarse hacia una formación que alinee las demandas de las empresas con un plan de estudios para los jóvenes que haga hincapié en las aptitudes socioemocionales (para beneficiar el comportamiento frente a un mundo de incertidumbres), una

² Asociación Nacional de Posgrado e Investigación en Educación (ANPED), Campaña Nacional por el Derecho a la Educación y Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación (CNTE), entre otros.

³ La Constitución de la República Federativa del Brasil de 1988 y la Ley de Directrices y Bases de la Educación Nacional, de 1996, establecen el principio de gestión democrática de la educación pública y la autonomía pedagógica de las escuelas, en forma de ley.

⁴ Esta asociación se inició a petición de un grupo de profesores y administradores de escuelas públicas de educación básica en un debate sobre el legado del educador brasileño Paulo Freire, celebrado en la Escuela de Filosofía, Literatura y Humanidades de la Universidad Federal de São Paulo, en la ciudad de Guarulhos, en noviembre de 2018.

⁵ GEPUD está formado por profesores y administradores de 15 escuelas de educación básica estatales y municipales del estado y la ciudad de São Paulo y por profesores de la Universidad Federal de São Paulo, Campus Guarulhos. Se reúne mensualmente para estudiar y discutir la política educativa del gobierno de São Paulo y celebra seminarios con la participación de profesores, estudiantes y directivos para debatir y construir propuestas alternativas para la aplicación de las políticas educativas en las escuelas miembros del grupo.

educación técnica más pertinente para la inserción en las ocupaciones y una colaboración más estrecha con el sector privado, beneficiando la intermediación entre la escuela y el trabajo. Consideramos, por lo tanto, que el caso analizado aquí compone una tendencia educativa ampliamente difundida por las organizaciones internacionales.

El estado de São Paulo es gobernado por el Partido de la Social Democracia Brasileña (PSDB) desde 1995, por lo que es posible observar algunos supuestos generales que orientan la política educativa y que se materializan en programas y proyectos desarrollados por las diferentes gerencias de la Secretaría de Estado de Educación (SEDUC).

De acuerdo con el análisis de Adrião (2006: 174-175), el modelo de gestión de la Secretaría de Educación del Estado de São Paulo adoptado en la década de 1990 “se caracterizó por la articulación de mecanismos que descentralizaron la gestión de los recursos financieros y materiales, al tiempo que centralizaron la definición de los objetivos de la escuela y el control de la organización de la vida cotidiana de la escuela”. Si consideramos el período comprendido entre 1995 y 2018, no hay muchas propuestas dirigidas a la democratización de las relaciones escolares como forma de mejorar la calidad de la enseñanza y el aprendizaje. Así, la gestión democrática de la escuela se limitó al funcionamiento formal de las instancias de participación representativa o, por iniciativa de algunas escuelas, a experiencias de democratización del proceso educativo, con la participación de los segmentos participantes de la educación escolar.

Después de la ocupación de las escuelas públicas estatales por los estudiantes en 2015⁶ (Campos, Medeiros & Ribeiro, 2016), SEDUC, en respuesta a la organización estudiantil, llevó a cabo una serie de actividades en torno al Proyecto Gestión Democrática de la Educación, principalmente en lo que respecta a la participación de los estudiantes en las universidades y los consejos estudiantiles, pero con escasa eficacia en la participación, especialmente de los estudiantes, según el análisis de Jacomini, et al. (2019).

De acuerdo con el análisis y las reflexiones de GEPUD, hasta el momento la política educativa del gobierno de São Paulo no ha contribuido a mejorar la calidad de la educación en la red estatal de enseñanza, ni ha favorecido el desarrollo de una gestión escolar y un trabajo pedagógico democráticos, ya que las propuestas tienden a centralizar el plan de estudios y a controlar el trabajo del profesor, lo que conlleva una cierta descalificación de este profesional. Así, el grupo asume el desafío de construir y desarrollar proyectos educativos y de gestión escolar democráticos y de formación integral que promuevan una calidad socialmente referenciada para la educación paulista, en contraposición a las formas de gestión por resultados y a la visión utilitaria de la educación que emana del mercado.

El objetivo de este artículo es presentar de manera analítica y reflexiva la experiencia de resistencia propositiva al Programa Inova Educación de SEDUC, especialmente en lo que se refiere a la construcción

⁶ En el segundo semestre de 2015, el gobierno del estado de São Paulo anunció a través de la prensa, sin previa discusión con la comunidad escolar, una reorganización de la red educativa que implicaba el cierre de casi cien escuelas. Los estudiantes se organizaron y ocuparon cientos de escuelas en todo el estado, lo cual llevó al Gobernador a dar marcha atrás en el propósito de cerrar las escuelas, después de más de un mes de lucha.

de una propuesta alternativa de disciplinas y contenidos electivos del Proyecto “Vida y Tecnología”, dirigido por GEPUD. En términos metodológicos, se realizó un análisis documental y bibliográfico del proceso de organización y actuación de GEPUD. Se adoptó como marco teórico el análisis crítico por sobre la ideología neoliberal y sus consecuencias en las escuelas, Laval (2004), Dardot y Laval (2016) y Tanguy (2016) y más directamente, los estudios de quienes se han dedicado al examen de las políticas educativas en São Paulo desde una perspectiva comprometida con el derecho a la educación y la formación integral de los estudiantes.

El texto está dividido en tres temas, además de esta introducción y las consideraciones finales. Dentro del primer tema, se presenta brevemente la política educativa de São Paulo en los últimos 25 años, centrándose en el Programa “Inova Educación”, una derivación del Programa “Educación y Compromiso de São Paulo” (PECSP) establecido en 2011. Finalmente, presentamos la propuesta que está construyendo GEPUD, en una perspectiva de educación emancipadora y transformadora. En las consideraciones finales destacamos los desafíos y la relevancia de acciones como ésta.

La política educativa del estado de São Paulo y el Programa “Inova Educación”

Desde la administración de Mario Covas en 1995, tres cuestiones relacionadas con las concepciones de la gestión pública y la educación escolar han impregnado las políticas educativas de São Paulo: una, la racionalización de los recursos; otra, las asociaciones con el sector privado para la elaboración y aplicación de proyectos y programas educativos, y la última, la gestión centrada en los resultados. Estos aspectos se han presentado de diferentes maneras en las diversas gestiones de SEDUC, pero permanecen como ejes que guían la formulación de programas y proyectos educativos.

La racionalización es un eje estructurante de la política y ha estado presente en varias acciones desde 1995, ya sea como una reducción del tamaño de la red, con una disminución del número de aulas y escuelas, incluyendo la transferencia a otras esferas administrativas, o con la reducción de los costos en el servicio de la red pública.

El enfoque de la política de gestión por resultados se expresa en la creación del Sistema de Evaluación del Rendimiento Escolar del Estado de São Paulo (SARESP) en 1996, como parte del Programa “Cambiando el Rostro de la Escuela”, y en el Índice de Desarrollo de la Educación de São Paulo (IDESP) en 2008. Asimismo, durante la gestión 2006-2010 se puso en marcha el Programa “São Paulo Hace la Escuela”, que se caracteriza fundamentalmente por la adopción de un plan de estudios centralizado y estrictamente orientado por medio de materiales para estudiantes y profesores (diario y cuaderno del estudiante; diario y cuaderno del profesor). Este material, conocido como el Plan de estudios São Paulo, fue concebido con la intención de dirigir el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje a evaluaciones externas, más precisamente el SARESP.

A pesar de las intenciones del SEDUC, un estudio realizado por Girotto, Passos e Oliveira (2018: 64) sobre el Programa “São Paulo Hace la Escuela” sugiere que el plan de estudios centralizado no proporcionó los resultados previstos en las evaluaciones externas. Los autores también consideran que el “discurso de la eficiencia, la competencia y la racionalización del gasto” ha contribuido a la reproducción de las desigualdades educativas en la red educativa de São Paulo. En el contexto

de una política educativa cada vez más articulada al logro de resultados educativos medidos por evaluaciones externas y al mantenimiento de bajos índices de rendimiento de los estudiantes, 2011, SEDUC instituye el Programa “Educación y Compromiso de São Paulo”, por decreto n.º 57571/2011 (São Paulo, 2011), con el ambicioso objetivo de colocar la red estatal de educación de São Paulo entre las mejores del mundo en el 2030.

Formulado con el propósito de organizar la gestión del sistema de enseñanza y de la escuela con un enfoque en los resultados de rendimiento de los estudiantes, el PECSP contó con la asociación de McKinsey & Company y fue estructurado en cinco pilares: Gestión de Personas, Gestión Pedagógica con Enfoque en el Estudiante, Educación Integral, Gestión Organizacional y Financiera, y Movilización y Compromiso de la Red y de la Sociedad en torno al Proceso de Enseñanza y Aprendizaje (São Paulo, 2011).

El Programa de Educación Integral (PEI), uno de los cinco pilares del PECSP, cuya estructura curricular se adoptará en el Programa “Inova Educación”, en el año 2019, operó en 417 escuelas, con la participación de 6840 profesores⁷. En las escuelas del PEI, los profesores trabajan en un régimen de dedicación exclusiva (RDPI), con una jornada semanal de 40 horas y reciben un bono de dedicación exclusiva (GDPI), correspondiente al 75% del salario mínimo. Para participar en el PEI, el profesor pasa por un proceso de selección realizado por la escuela en cooperación con la Junta Regional de Educación y es sometido a evaluaciones periódicas, cuyo desempeño condiciona su permanencia en el programa.

Contrariamente a la idea de una escuela centrada en la integración de los estudiantes en un proceso educativo innovador e interesante, los primeros estudios sobre la percepción de los estudiantes en las escuelas del PEI han indicado una vida cotidiana poco estimulante para el aprendizaje, la creatividad y el desarrollo de la autonomía intelectual, como señalaron Quirino y otros, “El día se resumió, según los entrevistados, para resolver las cuestiones del cuaderno de trabajo. Había poco espacio para las clases de diálogo e incluso para que los estudiantes asumieran, al menos, la autonomía de su proceso educativo” (2018: 88).

En colaboración con la Asociación de Socios de la Educación (APE) y el Instituto Educativo Falconi, en 2016 se puso en marcha el Programa “Gestión en Foco”, con el objetivo de mejorar el aprendizaje de los estudiantes de enseñanza primaria y secundaria, con énfasis en el Método para Mejorar los Resultados (MMR), en 77 escuelas y se amplió a todas las escuelas de la red educativa estatal hasta el 2019 (São Paulo, 2018).

El MMR es la concreción de un programa que pretende transformar el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje, lleno de conflictos inherentes a la construcción del conocimiento científico, en un proceso supuestamente técnico y lineal, que permita intensificar el control de la labor docente mediante una informatización sistemática, a fin de posibilitar el aumento de los índices en las evaluaciones del rendimiento de los alumnos, transmutando estos índices como sinónimo de calidad de la educación.

Se trata de una metodología de control de resultados, desarrollada por teóricos de la administración/

⁷ Registro de Escuelas de la Secretaría de Educación del Estado de São Paulo. SIC-SP n.º 553741718550 e n.º 539481915226.

gestión privada con miras a la gestión de empresas, cuyo principio rector es dar a los empleados la responsabilidad y la autonomía (dentro de los parámetros de su gobernanza) para presentar soluciones a los problemas y aplicarlas.

En el caso de la escuela, el MMR supone que la comunidad escolar (que en la práctica se ha reducido a los gestores y algunos profesores) desarrolle un conjunto de etapas predefinidas, condicionadas al supuesto de que el problema presentado, las causas y las soluciones deben ser todos de gobernabilidad de la escuela, más precisamente del profesor.

Con la aprobación de la Reforma de la Escuela Secundaria, la Ley 13415/2017 (Brasil, 2017) y la Base Nacional Común Curricular (BNCC) para la Escuela Secundaria (Brasil, 2018), con énfasis en los derechos y habilidades de aprendizaje (Smolka, et al., 2015) y las competencias en un plan de estudios por áreas, la política educativa positivista se profundiza con el anuncio, por parte de la Secretaria de Educación, Rossieli Soares, a principios de mayo de 2019, del Programa “Inova Educación”, cuyo objetivo es “conectar la escuela con la juventud del siglo XXI”, que se implementará en la red a partir de 2020⁸.

En la propuesta se reconoce que el sistema educativo estatal de São Paulo no ha alcanzado la meta del IDEB en la escuela secundaria y que hay una tasa de evasión del 22%. También se considera que ella ofrece una experiencia escolar exitosa, con sentido para el estudiante, por medio del Programa de Educación Integral, con el desarrollo del Proyecto de Vida y las asignaturas optativas y tecnológicas, una evaluación que no ha sido corroborada por la investigación académica, como se ha verificado anteriormente.

Por lo tanto, con base en una valoración positiva de esta forma de organización del plan de estudios, el Programa “Inova Educación” extenderá estas actividades a todos los estudiantes, sin que se apliquen a tiempo completo. A partir de 2020, todas las escuelas primarias y secundarias incorporarán en su plan de estudios dos horas de clase para una asignatura de Proyecto de Vida, dos horas de asignaturas optativas y una asignatura de tecnología. Esto se logrará reduciendo el tiempo de clase de 50 a 45 minutos y aumentando el tiempo diario de los estudiantes en la escuela en 15 minutos. Así, la carga de trabajo diaria de los estudiantes va de 5 h a 5 h y 15 min. y de seis asignaturas diarias a siete. De acuerdo con la propuesta, no habrá cambios en las actuales asignaturas del plan de estudios de la escuela primaria y secundaria, solo el aumento del tiempo de permanencia semanal en la escuela en 1 h y 15 min., para el desarrollo de las cinco nuevas asignaturas. De acuerdo con el Programa “Inova Educación”, las asignaturas optativas deben incluir lo siguiente: espíritu empresarial, educación financiera, economía creativa, olimpiadas, teatro, etc.

Este proyecto está en consonancia con las propuestas de la Organización para la Cooperación y el Desarrollo Económicos (OCDE) de cambios curriculares que tienen por objeto subordinar los conocimientos escolares al desarrollo de habilidades socioemocionales, y que se están desarrollando

⁸ Portal del Gobierno, lun. 06/05/2019. El gobierno de São Paulo lanza el Programa “Inova Educación”. Una iniciativa pionera que tiene como objetivo conectar las escuelas con los jóvenes en el siglo XXI y que se ofrecerá a partir de 2020 a 2 millones de estudiantes. Disponible en: <<http://www.saopaulo.sp.gov.br/spnoticias/governo-de-sp-lanca-o-inova-educacao/>> Acceso 19 de mayo de 2019.

en São Paulo en colaboración con el Instituto Ayrton Senna (IAS), que ha estado realizando estudios en este sentido (Smolka, et al., 2015). La secundarización del contenido científico para priorizar las habilidades socioemocionales como eje de la formación del “estudiante del siglo XXI”, subordina la escuela a las demandas del mercado, debilitándolas como espacio de apropiación del conocimiento universal, para acercarlas a las necesidades pragmáticas y urgentes del mundo del trabajo. Las publicaciones del Banco Mundial (2018a; 2018b; OCDE (2015) de los últimos años destacan la importancia de que los sistemas educativos modifiquen sus planes de estudio para que su composición dé prioridad a las habilidades profesionales: habilidades socioemocionales, cognitivas y técnicas, con miras a aumentar la productividad gracias a una mejor calificación de la fuerza de trabajo.

Para la aplicación de la propuesta, se prevé la formación de los profesores⁹ con miras a un mejor aprovechamiento del tiempo en el aula y un mayor tiempo de planificación¹⁰. Las nuevas asignaturas serán impartidas por profesores que ya trabajan en la red de enseñanza, y se permitirá hasta un 40% de clases relativas a los nuevos componentes curriculares. Los profesores interesados deben recibir una formación organizada por SEDUC y luego serán seleccionados por los directores de las escuelas sobre la base de una evaluación de las aptitudes para enseñar las nuevas materias.

Por lo tanto, se observa que la propuesta de gestión de la SEDUC 2019-2022 tiene por objeto aplicar el plan de estudios y la forma de gestión de las escuelas del PEI en todas las escuelas de la red estatal que atienden a los estudiantes de los últimos años de la enseñanza primaria y secundaria. Sin embargo, teniendo en cuenta que las condiciones de trabajo presentes en las escuelas del PEI y el prolongado tiempo de permanencia en la escuela no están presentes en todas las escuelas estatales, se entiende que esta propuesta significa en la práctica una precariedad de las condiciones de funcionamiento de las escuelas.

También es importante analizar Inova Educación en el marco de la Reforma de la Escuela Secundaria (BRASIL, 2017), que rompe con la idea de la formación general e integral de los estudiantes en la educación básica y establece itinerarios formativos, por áreas de conocimiento, a saber: a) Los idiomas y sus tecnologías, b) Las matemáticas y sus tecnologías, c) Las ciencias naturales y sus tecnologías, d) Las ciencias humanas y sociales aplicadas y d) La formación técnica y profesional. La aplicación de esta reforma en los términos de la Ley implicaría una completa reorganización del currículo y de la gestión de las escuelas, que proporcionaría una formación diferenciada a los estudiantes, de acuerdo con sus intereses, tal y como se propugna en la Ley, pero probablemente se aplicaría de acuerdo con las condiciones limitadas de las escuelas que ofrecen los diferentes itinerarios, produciendo en lugar de la elección del estudiante una elección del sistema, lo que tendería a intensificar aún más las características de la escuela dual, tal y como lo denunció Gramsci (2011) en el decenio de 1920

⁹ La Escuela de Formación y Perfeccionamiento de los Profesionales de la Educación del Estado de São Paulo “Paulo Renato Costa Souza” (EFAPE) ofreció los cursos Proyecto de Vida, electivos y de tecnología a los profesores y directores del núcleo pedagógico en ejercicio del SEDUC en un entorno virtual con una carga de trabajo de 30 horas entre julio y septiembre de 2019. La segunda edición de “formación a fondo” tuvo lugar en la misma plataforma y con la misma carga de trabajo entre los meses de octubre y diciembre de 2019. Disponible en: <http://www.escoladeformacao.sp.gov.br/portais/Default.aspx?tabid=8980>. Acceso el 10 de noviembre de 2019.

¹⁰ En el PIE se cita el siguiente ejemplo: un profesor que enseña 32 lecciones de 50 minutos por semana trabaja 26,7 horas; en el nuevo modelo enseñará 32 lecciones de 45 minutos, lo que significa 24 horas; el profesor tendrá otras 2,7 horas por semana para planificar, sin cambio de salario.

en el contexto educativo italiano.

La gestión y el espíritu empresarial en la educación pública: ¿formación para qué?

La producción de argumentos a favor de las reformas educativas se ha gestionado en investigaciones preparadas por los propios organismos actuando en su nombre, como en el caso del Programa Inova Educación, en el que las fundaciones empresariales y el Gobierno han utilizado datos de investigación aplicada en varios estados, como São Paulo, titulado Nuestra Escuela en (Re)construcción en 2019, realizado por Porvir y el Instituto Inspirare. Inspirare tiene como socios al Consejo Nacional de Secretarios de Educación (CONSED) y a varias secretarías de educación, entre ellas SEDUC, y en el ámbito no estatal al Centro de Referencias en Educación Integral, al Centro de Innovación de la Educación Brasileña (CIEB), la Fundación Lehmann, la Fundación “Roberto Marinho”, la Fundación Telefónica Vivo, la Fundación Vanzolini, al Instituto Natura, al Instituto Unibanco, al Instituto Reúna, al Instituto “Sonho Grande”, al Instituto Tellus, a Itaú BBA, al Movimento Pela Base, a Oi Futuro y a Porvir¹¹. Es evidente la red de relaciones entre los agentes públicos y privados que se articulan en la formulación y aplicación de las más recientes reformas educativas en Brasil –aquí destacan la Reforma de la Enseñanza Secundaria y la Base Nacional Común Curricular¹².

SEDUC insiste, en el argumento utilizado en defensa de la Reforma de la Enseñanza Secundaria, en que la escuela no es interesante para los jóvenes porque es anticuada, inflexible y despreciativa, utilizando para ello investigaciones¹³ con los jóvenes sobre sus preferencias, y llega a la conclusión de que a los jóvenes les gustaría recibir orientación sobre sus vocaciones y que consideran importante el uso de la tecnología en la escuela¹⁴. Aunque en este artículo se puede discutir la metodología, la amplitud y la pertinencia de las cuestiones que sustentaron la investigación, más bien interesa el currículo con un enfoque en la articulación entre el proyecto de vida y la tecnología como ejes fundamentales –con las materias optativas como complementos– de la formación de los estudiantes con miras a su inserción social.

El Proyecto de Vida se inserta como un eje organizador del currículo en la tríada “formación para la vida, excelencia académica y desarrollo de habilidades para el siglo XXI”, en la que se busca que “los estudiantes amplíen sus posibilidades de actuar en la escuela y en la vida, desarrollando no sólo la excelencia académica, sino creyendo que son capaces de elaborar y ejecutar su proyecto de vida” (EFAPE, 2019). Se apoya, a su vez, en la competencia general de la BNCC, que consiste en “valorar la diversidad de conocimientos y experiencias culturales y apropiarse de conocimientos y experiencias que permitan comprender las relaciones propias del mundo del trabajo y tomar decisiones acordes con el ejercicio de la ciudadanía y su proyecto de vida, con libertad, autonomía, conciencia crítica y responsabilidad” (BNCC, 2018). Y eso se replicó en el borrador para las obras del PNLD 2021, en el

¹¹ Ver <http://inspirare.org.br/instituto/>.

¹² Sugerimos leer Peroni, Caetano & Lima (2017) y Krawczyk (2017).

¹³ Para la investigación, ver <https://porvir.org/nossaescola/>.

¹⁴ Ver <https://inova.educacao.sp.gov.br/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/05/Inova-Educac%cc%a7a%cc%83o-%e2%80%93Lanc%cc%a7amento2.pdf>

que aparecen por primera vez las obras de Proyectos de Vida.

Por lo tanto, el proyecto exige que los trabajos “se organicen de manera que se garantice la progresión del aprendizaje en consonancia con la flexibilidad establecida por la Reforma de la Enseñanza Secundaria” y “contribuyan a la aprehensión de las relaciones establecidas entre el conocimiento propuesto y sus funciones socioculturales, teniendo en cuenta la dimensión afectiva de los individuos” (Fondo Nacional de Desarrollo de la Educación, 2019: 42).

Así, se evidencia la constitución de un alineamiento curricular que va desde la legislación que ordena la educación secundaria hasta los materiales didácticos, orientados a la noción de “educación a lo largo de la vida” (Vinokur, 2003), que se da en una red que ha ido profundizando en el modelo de gestión en la educación.

Este conjunto de reformas educativas se ha venido desarrollando desde los años noventa, con la introducción de políticas de austeridad y control del gasto público en paralelo con la acomodación de los intereses del capital financiero, como la flexibilización de las relaciones capital-trabajo, la introducción de mecanismos de gestión en las políticas públicas y la constitución de espacios cuasimercantiles en la educación (Souza & Oliveira, 2003).

La tríada de la Nueva Gestión Pública (NGP), eficiencia, eficacia y competitividad (Cavalcante, 2017), y la adopción de instrumentos de gestión de las organizaciones privadas con miras a reducir el gasto público y aumentar el control mediante la evaluación externa y el plan de estudios centralizado han estado presentes en la red estatal de São Paulo desde el decenio de 1990, y se profundizan, a partir del 2011, con el PECSP, que busca optimizar la rentabilidad en la educación mediante estrechos vínculos entre formación, educación y economía, que conlleva la noción de un individuo supuestamente libre y autónomo, que se constituiría en su propio capital, eficiente y productivo, a partir de la construcción de un rendimiento (Rey, 2013).

Sin embargo, según Cavalcante (2017), existe un debate sobre la superación del NGP por el post-NGP. Según el autor, con quien los autores estamos de acuerdo, se trata de “un proceso marcado más por la continuidad y el gradualismo que por la ruptura” (Cavalcante, 2017: 28) y que se centra en los instrumentos de gestión y apunta a “pequeñas y constantes mejoras, micromejoras, en los procesos y servicios públicos [que] convergen para el debate sobre las innovaciones en la gestión pública, que adquieren cada vez más, dimensión estratégica en el sector público” (2017: 34).

El Estado opera en un doble proceso en el que se dan la aplicación de las políticas preconizadas por organismos internacionales como la OCDE, el Banco Mundial (BM) y la Unión Europea (UE) (Laval, Clément, Vergne & Dreux, 2011) y la descentralización, la flexibilidad de las estructuras y mecanismos, y una mayor autonomía de los centros de enseñanza, en relación con los mecanismos de transferencia de los servicios públicos al sector privado, con la introducción/mejora de los mecanismos de gestión (Verger & Normand, 2015).

La necesidad de valorar la capacitación por sobre la educación (Tanguy, 2005) es evidente para los defensores de la Reforma, con el diagnóstico del fracaso de una educación universalista, costosa y anticuada (Burns y Luque, 2014). Los críticos señalan que existe una subordinación del sistema

educativo al sistema productivo (Tanguy, 2005; Antunes & Pinto, 2017), guiada por los documentos de las organizaciones internacionales, que proponen la flexibilización de los procesos de aprendizaje con la adopción de habilidades como orientación pedagógica y la colaboración entre la escuela y la empresa (Tanguy, 2016) como estrategia económica para aumentar la productividad mediante estrategias educativas para la empleabilidad y el espíritu empresarial (Tanguy, 2016; Laval, Clément, Vergne & Dreux, 2011).

Se trata de políticas supranacionales que se materializan en los Estados de diferentes maneras (Cavalcante, 2017), en un proceso globalizado de evaluación y regulación, que se basa en la comparación entre los índices de aprendizaje elaborados a partir de evaluaciones externas –el Programa para la Evaluación Internacional de Alumnos (PISA), sobre todo¹⁵ - y las evaluaciones internas y el reordenamiento de la gestión pública, con la transferencia de responsabilidad a los establecimientos educativos y con la centralización de las decisiones fundamentales, proceso globalizado en el que se desarrollan acciones de legitimación democrática de las políticas de gestión con la construcción de espacios institucionales controlados por decisiones de menor impacto en la política educativa.

En el caso del Programa Inova Educación, no hubo participación alguna, aunque hubo un débil participacionismo (Tragtenberg, 1980) en su elaboración y ejecución. Sin embargo, en todos los materiales se hizo hincapié en la posibilidad de elegir entre los profesores (al ofrecer las asignaturas optativas) y los estudiantes (en la selección de las asignaturas optativas, titulada “feria de las asignaturas optativas”, así como en el contenido del Proyecto de Vida, destinado a la construcción conjunta de proyectos de interés para los estudiantes). La formalidad de las consultas, la superficialidad de la participación de los sujetos colectivos e incluso, el limitado tiempo de discusión por la sociedad, pueden ser vistos como elementos de una autonomía heterogénea (Lima, 2014) que se extiende al proceso de descentralización y rendición de cuentas de los establecimientos escolares, ya en marcha desde hace al menos dos décadas.

Las reformas del sistema educativo no se limitan a las esferas económica y política, sino que están ligadas a las relaciones capital-trabajo y son expresiones de una forma organizativa y pedagógica de la escuela flexible (Kuenzer, 2017), que responde a la incorporación, no solo de conocimientos, sino de formas híbridas de conocimiento y saber hacer polivalentes, propias de la innovación tecnológica y organizativa de la empresa posfordista, resultado de la reestructuración productiva.

Esta escuela flexible tiene un doble movimiento: requiere una escolarización ampliada, que ofrezca una educación básica (más tiempo en el sistema escolar, núcleo común, base curricular unificada) y la diversificación y anticipación de la elección de los itinerarios escolares acompañada de la idea de “educación a lo largo de toda la vida” (Vinokur, 2003), que empieza temprano y no tiene fin para el trabajador, en un mercado de alta competencia y sin estabilidad (Laval, Clément, Vergne & Dreux, 2011; Kuenzer, 2017).

El tema de la iniciativa empresarial en la educación es vasto y puede ser abordado por diversos sesgos.

¹⁵El estudio de Baudelot y Establet (2009) muestra que la presencia de un núcleo común sólido es más eficaz que la fragmentación de vías, aunque se utilicen pruebas cuantitativas como referencia.

Aquí nos centraremos en considerarlo como uno de los elementos del neo-sujeto neoliberal (Laval & Dardot, 2016), con base en una breve revisión de la literatura que dialoga directamente, como el Programa Inova Educación (Pepin & Champy-Remoussenard, 2017).

En cuanto al espíritu empresarial, ya sea en la literatura que lo exalta como elemento de inserción social, o por los críticos (Pandolfi & Lopes, 2013), una variedad de temas son evidentes cuando se relaciona con la educación.

La investigación de Starck (2017) muestra que existen mediaciones entre las esferas de la formulación, la difusión y la aplicación de las políticas educativas y que existe una asincronía entre la educación empresarial transnacional (OCDE y UE) y nacional, regional y local y sus diferentes materias (documentos de la UE, burocracia de los ministerios y oficinas regionales, profesores y estudiantes en las escuelas).

Existe una amplia gama de estudios sobre la educación empresarial en Europa desde el decenio de 1980 (Pepin & Champy-Remoussenard, 2017; Tanguy, 2017; Ball y Van Zanten, 1998), que muestran que la denominada educación para la iniciativa empresarial tiene por objeto conocer las iniciativas empresariales en diversos sectores económicos (turismo, salud, etc.), especialmente en los cursos de educación superior. Otro sesgo es el enfoque en la educación para formar a los estudiantes en una “cultura empresarial” centrada en la ocupación profesional y el desarrollo del comportamiento, sean o no potencial para la creación de microempresas. Por último, más híbrido y extenso es el enfoque de la educación para la iniciativa empresarial como un proceso de aprendizaje diverso y amplio, que se extiende desde la escolarización hasta el mercado laboral en el desarrollo de habilidades.

En Brasil, aunque la investigación académica ha crecido, las dos áreas de mayor inserción de la educación emprendedora siguen siendo los cursos de formación profesional o en áreas específicas de la educación superior y el emprendimiento social como campo en disputa para los agentes financieros que destacan a los emprendedores sociales y sus cualidades subjetivas, como la innovación y la creatividad a la hora de comercializar los problemas sociales, por ejemplo (Barbalho & Uchoa, 2019).

La parametrización de la educación escolar por competencias engendra una pedagogía propia (Rey, 2013) que cruza la economía y la escuela, construyendo la noción de un “nuevo estudiante” centrado en las elecciones individuales con vistas a la empleabilidad, que promueve no solo emprendedores de su propia carrera, sino una nueva subjetividad por la potenciación de uno mismo (Dardot y Laval, 2016). Se trata de desarrollar conductas, valores y patrones culturales que apunten a consolidar un “espíritu de empresa” como racionalidad capitalista (Tanguy, 2016) o, en palabras de Dardot y Laval (2016), la empresa tomada como modelo de subjetivación (2016, p. 329).

El neo-sujeto neoliberal se distancia de la racionalidad empresarial que une las diferentes relaciones de poder (económicas, políticas, éticas) para constituir un nuevo sujeto unitario, que no está coaccionado externamente, sino que se mueve por la racionalización del deseo, haciéndose competente y competitivo en todos los ámbitos de la vida, incluidos los sentimientos, siempre en busca de la eficacia. La separación entre las esferas de la vida se diluye y todas se rigen por el “proceso de valoración del yo” (p. 335) que comienza pronto por establecer un proyecto de vida, ya que “la empresa es un proceso educativo”

(Dardot & Laval, 2016: 336).

Si el neoliberalismo desde el decenio de 1990 en el Brasil ha atacado la red pública y las escuelas con la desregulación, la focalización y la privatización, en el último decenio se ha dedicado a la formación de los des-asalariados, con la elaboración de un plan de estudios para formar al individuo autodirigido de la empresa por medio de técnicas de gobernanza de sí mismo y los demás: la eficacia de la comunicación, el individuo como capital de sí mismo (disociado de las relaciones sociales) y el desarrollo de la premisa del personal como recurso –autoestima, creatividad, compromiso, perseverancia, adaptación–, como potencial innovador diferencial.

En los espacios educativos formales, la calificación, la formación y el diploma salen para formar parte de competencias variables, constantemente revisadas por la demanda del mercado precario. Sale la enseñanza del conocimiento científico y entra la orientación del estudiante (Laval, Clément, Vergne & Dreux, 2011).

La subjetivación mercantil de sí mismo, por lo tanto, actúa en los espacios escolares de forma curricular y coqueta con la libertad de elección, la participación juvenil, las metodologías activas, las culminaciones pedagógicas significativas, etc. que refuerzan las críticas a la educación bancaria y tradicional, ganando adeptos entre la comunidad escolar, incluso entre los críticos de la escuela autoritaria, jerárquica y punitiva.

La cuestión es cómo estas políticas que forjan al neo-sujeto neoliberal en un proceso de desinstitucionalización de la escuela pública se encontrarán en la vida cotidiana de las escuelas con el control centralizado y burocratizado de la gestión ya en marcha.

La apuesta de GEPUD ha sido enfrentar tanto la construcción colectiva como, en lo que respecta al tiempo y la dinámica de cada unidad escolar / comunidad, promover un currículo democrático “de abajo hacia arriba” que recentralice el conocimiento científico como instrumento de acción crítica de la realidad, a partir de las luchas sociales históricas y recientes.

Por una educación integral y emancipadora: la práctica del Grupo Escuela Pública y Democracia (GEPUD)

El estudio y las reflexiones realizadas en las reuniones mensuales de GEPUD en el primer semestre de 2019, especialmente en lo que respecta al Programa “Inova Educación”, produjeron una comprensión de la necesidad de construir una propuesta, diferente a la del citado programa, de contenidos y objetivos para el Proyecto de Vida y la disciplina de tecnología y otros temas para las disciplinas electivas.

En vista del Programa “Inova Educación”, presentado en mayo de 2019, y de la propuesta de temas, contenidos y objetivos anunciados para el Proyecto de Vida, las asignaturas optativas y de tecnología, el Grupo evaluó que, ante la imposibilidad de que las escuelas miembros de GEPUD se negaran a aplicar el Proyecto a partir de 2020, sería importante construir, con una amplia participación de la comunidad escolar, una propuesta de temas, contenidos, objetivos y enfoques metodológicos basados en las demandas de las comunidades escolares, de acuerdo con el concepto de formación integral

de los estudiantes.

En septiembre de 2019 se celebró el primer seminario, titulado “Escuela Autónoma y Democrática: Esto Innova”, preparado durante dos meses y que reunió a 180 personas de las comunidades escolares movilizadas e interesadas, en general¹⁶. Cuatro ejes guiaron los debates en pequeños grupos, que socializaron con todos los que presentaron sus sugerencias: el primero, “Cómo trabajar el –Proyecto de Vida– en una perspectiva que articule las condiciones económicas, sociales y culturales a las demandas individuales y colectivas de los estudiantes”; el segundo, “Qué disciplinas electivas deberían ofrecerse”; el tercero, “Cuál es el papel y cómo se pueden desarrollar las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación (TIC) en la educación”, y el cuarto, “Cómo democratizar la escuela a través del plan de estudios para involucrar todas las asignaturas escolares en los procesos de enseñanza y aprendizaje”. Las directrices para la discusión de los respectivos ejes se basaron en la gestión democrática de la escuela y en la organización del trabajo pedagógico con enfoque de procesos, desde una perspectiva de resistencia a las políticas educativas paulistas.

Los aportes fueron sistematizados por un grupo mixto de profesores universitarios, gestores y docentes de la educación básica y nuevamente debatidos por las comunidades escolares, quienes elaboraron una nueva versión de propuesta de contenidos y objetivos para el Proyecto de Vida y la disciplina de tecnología y disciplinas electivas, diferentes a las propuestas por SEDUC.

Cada comunidad escolar, con base en sus dinámicas, convergencias y conflictos, retomó la iniciativa de socialización, discusión y elaboración de nuevas propuestas para el II Seminario, realizado en noviembre de 2019.

Si bien en algunas escuelas fue posible elaborar un programa de asambleas entre pares seguido de asambleas escolares, en otras las consultas fueron representativas de cada segmento y en otras los grupos de debate están todavía en construcción. La historia, la cultura y la dinámica de las relaciones escolares son diversas y representan la asimetría que todas las redes públicas generan y, al mismo tiempo, resultan. Nuevamente se sistematizaron, presentaron, debatieron, modificaron y aprobaron los aportes de las escuelas en el II Seminario, con la participación de 80 personas.

Fue posible diseñar una propuesta que en líneas generales esbozaba para el Proyecto Vida un enfoque que relacionara individuo y sociedad, para abrir la posibilidad a los estudiantes de actuar individual y colectivamente, en una realidad social determinada, sin desconocer su historia y contexto de vida, que se construye sobre la interrelación entre lo público y lo privado en una sociedad profundamente desigual.

Se elaboraron ocho ejes, uno para cada año (desde el 6.º año de la escuela primaria hasta el 3.º de la escuela secundaria) que tienen como fundamentos: la defensa de los derechos humanos, incorporando los derechos económicos, políticos, sociales y culturales, con atención a los movimientos sociales (feministas, negros, jóvenes y estudiantes, LGBTQI+); el conocimiento y la práctica cultural, entendiéndolos como un elemento de identidad y de respeto a las diferencias; la escuela como espacio

¹⁶ A divulgação foi realizada abertamente nas redes sociais.

de construcción de subjetividades democráticas, con el uso de diversos lenguajes como la oralidad, la corporalidad, la música, las artes visuales, la escritura, etc.; el trabajo como actividad constitutiva del ser humano, que media en su relación con la naturaleza y el mundo social, y su forma histórica en el capitalismo, con miras a comprender las relaciones entre las clases, los grupos y los individuos en el mundo del trabajo; el énfasis en el conocimiento de las artes y la estética de las culturas juveniles y sus formas de ser y relacionarse en el mundo, incluida la relación entre la escolarización y la profesionalización y la construcción de profesiones en el mundo contemporáneo.

En cuanto a la disciplina de la tecnología, una tensión impregnó todo el debate y se hizo presente en las propuestas: la disparidad entre su presencia en la vida de los jóvenes, su importancia en el mundo contemporáneo, y la demanda material para su funcionamiento con ciertos soportes (máquinas, redes, materiales, etc.), que se muestra insuficiente en la red pública de São Paulo¹⁷. Así, la “educación para el siglo XXI” presente en la base argumental del Programa, termina siendo efectiva por medio del uso de los escasos recursos de la escuela y de los teléfonos inteligentes y redes sociales de cada uno de los alumnos, evidenciando la disminución de la financiación de esta propuesta y su carácter utilitario y subordinado a las actividades del trabajo, el emprendimiento o el participacionismo controlado. La propuesta, entonces, tratando de ir más allá de las adversidades, plantea como ejes: primero, la tecnología como instrumento de desarrollo individual y colectivo en las relaciones sociales contemporáneas; segundo, Internet, los valores, principios y usos de los medios digitales, la relación público-privada y sus controversias en el mundo actual; tercero, la cultura del teléfono inteligente y el uso de juegos tecnológicos educativos en el aprendizaje; cuarto, la elaboración y producción de contenidos en diversos formatos; quinto, la salud física y mental en relación con los dispositivos electrónicos y el uso de Internet; sexto, el uso de herramientas e insumos básicos más accesibles para la apropiación de la ciencia abierta.

En las propuestas de asignaturas optativas se consideraron la articulación entre las posibilidades de enseñanza de los profesores y las expectativas de aprendizaje de los estudiantes. Así, contrariamente a la noción de las electivas como espacio de desarrollo cognitivo y socioemocional, las disciplinas electivas propuestas por GEPUD se alinean con las áreas de conocimiento de cada docente que las ofrecerá, de manera que el contenido se base fuertemente en el conocimiento científico y en la apropiación de conceptos y teorías como herramientas de acción y análisis de la realidad. Así pues, las optativas no están “al servicio” de un proyecto de vida emprendedor, sino de una profundización de los estudios de la ciencia para un mejor desempeño en el mundo.

Se han propuesto catorce asignaturas optativas que serán reconsideradas en cada unidad escolar, para ser adoptadas y/o modificadas según la necesidad, interés o posibilidad de cada comunidad. La variedad temática fue un punto importante que destacar, mostrando que había espacio para que surgiera la diversidad de concepciones pedagógicas presentes en cada escuela. Por ejemplo, se aprobaron las asignaturas optativas tituladas “Las relaciones de género y sexualidad en la realidad brasileña” y “La salud de los jóvenes”, así como “Matemáticas instrumentales, estadísticas y matemáticas financieras”.

¹⁷ El Atlas de la Red del Estado de São Paulo (2018) muestra que entre 2007 y 2018 hubo un aumento del número de laboratorios de informática en la red de São Paulo, al tiempo que disminuyó la presencia de la banda ancha en las escuelas (pp. 43 y 44).

A partir de este momento, el grupo y cada comunidad escolar se involucrará en la búsqueda creativa de alternativas para la implementación de un conjunto de contenidos para los cuales no existe una apostilla o evaluación externa. La autonomía individual y colectiva guiada por un proyecto político-pedagógico es fundamental para sostener el progreso de este desafío instigador, que hasta ahora puede resumirse en las palabras de una de las escuelas involucradas.

Se considera que esta experiencia ha supuesto un verdadero ejercicio de ciudadanía y de comprensión de lo que es un debate democrático. La construcción colectiva de las propuestas de disciplinas electivas, de los ejes temáticos a trabajar en el Proyecto de Vida y el tema de la Tecnología, constituye un camino prometedor en la construcción de un proyecto educativo articulado a las demandas, necesidades y perspectivas de la comunidad escolar .

Breves consideraciones para concluir

En un contexto nacional e internacional en el que los valores e ideas neoliberales y las políticas educativas están cada vez más influenciados por los sectores de la sociedad civil vinculados al capital, es urgente la construcción de una resistencia proactiva en diferentes espacios sociales y bajo diferentes formas de organización. Así, más que una acción puntual, GEPUD entiende que es necesario defender políticas educativas basadas en supuestos diferentes a los que han orientado la educación en la red educativa de São Paulo. Por lo tanto, frente a la racionalización que guía la política educativa de SEDUC, defendemos una mayor inversión para asegurar que los insumos presentes en el costo de calidad del estudiante sean incorporados en todas las escuelas. En oposición a las asociaciones de SEDUC con instituciones privadas, cuyas propuestas se apoyan invariablemente en la gestión empresarial y en la búsqueda de resultados en evaluaciones de gran escala, GEPUD, y las investigadoras como miembros del Grupo, defiende la asociación con universidades públicas y con la comunidad escolar por medio de una participación real de los estudiantes, los trabajadores de la educación y los miembros de la familia, además de la comunidad local, en los procesos de debate y formulación de propuestas educativas. A diferencia de la gestión por resultados, apoya la gestión democrática del sistema escolar y educativo, con una amplia y cualificada participación de la comunidad escolar en las instancias de deliberación, con la ampliación de los espacios de debate y formación política y el ejercicio de la ciudadanía representada en los derechos civiles, políticos y sociales. En oposición al currículo centralizado, propone la construcción colectiva, con la participación de la comunidad escolar, de parámetros curriculares básicos para la red; libertad e incentivo para que las escuelas aumenten el plan de estudios con base en la realidad local. En oposición a las evaluaciones externas, defiende el fortalecimiento de los procesos de evaluación en la escuela, capaz de guiar a los profesores y estudiantes en la conducción del proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje, centrándose en la formación integral de los estudiantes.

Partiendo de estos supuestos y consciente de la influencia del neoliberalismo en los diferentes aspectos de la vida y su hegemonía en la definición de las políticas educativas, GEPUD viene realizando esfuerzos en la defensa de una escuela pública, laica y democrática, que proporcione una formación integral a toda la población por medio de la acción directa de los gestores de la escuela, los profesores, los estudiantes y los familiares, con el apoyo de los profesores universitarios.

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Educar para la Libertad: Caminos Transitados hacia una Educación Emancipadora

Fabiola Munhoz

Resumen

Este artículo presenta la trayectoria de la CLADE en lo que toca a sus acciones y reflexiones en defensa de una educación emancipadora y garante de derechos para América Latina y el Caribe. Se propone igualmente trazar un breve recorrido histórico por la construcción del pensamiento latinoamericano sobre la educación popular y transformadora. Asimismo, aborda las disputas sobre los sentidos de la educación en los ámbitos regional e internacional, y comparte aprendizajes, logros y desafíos encontrados por comunidades educativas y movimientos sociales de la región, en su lucha por el reconocimiento y garantía de la educación como un derecho humano fundamental clave para alcanzar el desarrollo sostenible y la realización de otros derechos.

Palabras Clave:

Educación, Transformación, Emancipación

Introducción

En este artículo, presentamos un recorrido histórico por la trayectoria de la Campaña Latinoamericana por el Derecho a la Educación (CLADE)¹, en sus reflexiones y debates sobre los sentidos de la educación y cómo debe ser una educación emancipadora y transformadora, realizada como un derecho humano fundamental y desde una perspectiva de derechos; una educación que promueva la ciudadanía, la justicia socioambiental, la realización de los derechos humanos y la superación de todas las formas de discriminación.

Entre otros objetivos estratégicos, la Campaña y sus miembros han actuado para defender sistemas educativos públicos y gratuitos, en los que se garantice una educación que realice y promueva los derechos humanos de todas las personas, y donde además por medio de la educación se puedan alcanzar y ejercer otros derechos humanos.

Desde este punto de partida, no solo en el último cuatrienio, sino en los últimos ocho años, la CLADE se ha preocupado en profundizar en reflexiones y conceptos sobre cómo debe ser la educación para otro mundo posible, que sea más inclusivo, igualitario, pacífico y democrático, donde se realice la justicia social, económica y ambiental para todas las personas.

¹ La CLADE es una red plural de organizaciones de la sociedad civil, que tiene como miembros foros nacionales en 16 países de América Latina y el Caribe, además de redes regionales y organizaciones internacionales, e impulsa acciones para defender el derecho humano a una educación transformadora, pública, laica y gratuita para todos y todas, a lo largo de la vida y como responsabilidad del Estado. Como parte de esta misión, se dedica no solo a la afirmación del derecho humano a la educación y a la realización de una educación garante de derechos, sino que también actúa para defender el fortalecimiento de las democracias, de modo que la participación social sea reconocida como un derecho en sí misma y la ciudadanía plena pueda ejercerse activamente.

Retomando los caminos transitados en esta búsqueda, se espera además de registrar los aprendizajes, desafíos y avances encontrados, también reflexionar sobre los retos en lo que toca a poner en práctica nuestras perspectivas para una educación emancipadora y transformadora, ante la actual coyuntura regional, caracterizada por el cierre de los espacios de participación de la sociedad civil, la reducción de recursos públicos para la educación pública y gratuita, retrocesos para la igualdad de género y los derechos de niñas, mujeres y personas LGBTIQ+² y el avance del lucro en la educación, entre otros desafíos en los que se profundizará más adelante.

Capítulo 1. Nuestro punto de partida: la educación para la plena realización de todos los derechos humanos

Desde su inicio, en el 2002, la CLADE se ha propuesto promover acciones de incidencia en políticas públicas, movilización social, exigibilidad política y jurídica, articulación interinstitucional, producción de conocimiento, investigación y acciones de comunicación interna y externa, con el objetivo de presionar y aportar hacia la realización del derecho humano a la educación y para que esta sea garante de derechos, siendo disfrutada por todos y todas sin discriminación.

Es así como la Campaña ha adoptado inicialmente como marco conceptual sobre el derecho humano a la educación aquel planteado por Katarina Tomasevski, relatora especial de las Naciones Unidas sobre el derecho a la educación entre 1998 y 2004, y adoptado por el Comité de Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales (DESC). En su observación general n.o 13 sobre el derecho a la educación, el Comité DESC introdujo, en el 1999, el marco conceptual de los 4 “As”, al afirmar que “la educación en todas sus formas y en todos los niveles debe tener las siguientes cuatro características interrelacionadas: disponibilidad, accesibilidad, aceptabilidad y adaptabilidad”.

Este marco plantea que la educación debe ser disponible, en el sentido de que haya instituciones y programas de enseñanza en cantidad suficiente y en condiciones necesarias; accesible, en el sentido de que la educación pueda garantizarse material y económicamente a todos y todas, sin discriminación; aceptable, en el sentido de que la educación sea garante de derechos, promotora de justicia y dignidad, y cuente con estándares mínimos para maestros y maestras, facilidades escolares, currículos, formas de relación entre los sujetos de la comunidad educativa y la gestión democrática, entre otros elementos; adaptable, en el sentido de que la educación sea capaz de responder a las necesidades de los y las estudiantes y de la comunidad educativa, con sus distintos contextos sociales y culturales.

Asimismo, la CLADE viene pautando su agenda política en lo que dicen los instrumentos internacionales y regionales de derechos humanos sobre la definición de educación, en línea con la concepción de que los derechos humanos son universales, indivisibles e interdependientes. Son marcos clave la Declaración Universal de los Derechos Humanos, el Pacto Internacional por los Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales (PDESC), la Convención de los Derechos del Niño (CDN) y el Protocolo de San Salvador, los cuales definen el derecho a la educación como aquel que debe orientarse al pleno desarrollo de la personalidad humana y del sentido de su dignidad, y además debe fortalecer el respeto a los derechos

² LGBTIQ+: Lesbianas, Gays, Bisexuales, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexuales

humanos, el pluralismo ideológico, las libertades fundamentales, la justicia y la paz. Estos marcos también establecen que la educación debe formar las personas para participar efectivamente en una sociedad libre, democrática y pluralista; lograr una subsistencia digna; favorecer la comprensión, tolerancia y amistad entre todas las naciones y los grupos raciales, étnicos o religiosos, y promover la paz y el respeto del medio ambiente natural.

En ese sentido, los sistemas educativos deben asegurar como parte de la dignidad humana, la superación de todas formas de discriminación; la vida y la seguridad; entornos saludables, la libertad de pensamiento, opinión, expresión y participación, y la igualdad de género, entre otros derechos humanos. Una cultura de derechos favorece el reconocimiento y la superación de desigualdades y discriminaciones estructurales, entre ellas las desigualdades económicas, el racismo y el patriarcado. A la vez, impulsa valores y prácticas promotoras de igualdad y justicia.

La educación no puede resolver por sí sola todos los problemas del desarrollo, pero una visión humanista y holística de la educación puede y debe contribuir a lograr un nuevo modelo de desarrollo. En ese modelo, el crecimiento económico ha de estar regido por el respeto al medio ambiente y la preocupación por la paz, la inclusión y la justicia social. Los principios éticos y morales de una visión humanista del desarrollo se oponen a la violencia, la intolerancia, la discriminación y la exclusión. (Grupo de Expertos de Alto Nivel de la UNESCO, 2015: 10)

Son estos los propósitos que desde la CLADE hemos tenido en el horizonte, como referentes del sentido de una buena educación para la región y todo el mundo.

Capítulo 2. La educación que necesitamos para el mundo que queremos: disputa de sentidos en la defensa de una educación transformadora

Siendo un derecho y elemento clave para alcanzar otros derechos humanos, la educación y sus sentidos han sido terreno en constante disputa. El debate alrededor de este derecho también ha prevalecido en el contexto de las discusiones y negociaciones respecto a la adopción de una nueva agenda mundial para el desarrollo sostenible, ya que el cambio de modelo requiere la transformación de pensamientos y paradigmas, en la cual la educación juega un rol fundamental.

Así, en el año 2012, en el marco de la Cumbre de los Pueblos, organizada en paralelo a la Conferencia Río+20, donde se discutía la creación de una nueva agenda global para el desarrollo sostenible, la CLADE participó en las discusiones y reflexiones del Grupo de Trabajo (GT) de Educación. Este grupo, constituido por organizaciones de la sociedad civil coincidentes en la defensa de la educación como derecho humano fundamental³, destacó la importancia de construir modelos educativos para desarrollar capacidades humanas de empoderamiento y participación social, de convivir en la diversidad y la diferencia, de cuidar y planificar la propia vida, de convivir en armonía con el medio ambiente.

³ Organizaciones integrantes del GT: Consejo Internacional de Educación de Personas Adultas (ICAE), Foro Mundial de Educación (FME), Campaña Latinoamericana por el Derecho a la Educación (CLADE), Consejo de Educación Popular de América Latina y el Caribe (CEAAL), Jornada de Educación Ambiental para Sociedades Sustentables y Responsabilidad Global, Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO, Brasil), Internacional de la Educación y Red de Educación Popular entre Mujeres de América Latina y el Caribe (REPEM).

En el documento intitulado *La educación que precisamos para el mundo que queremos*⁴, lanzado en el marco de la Cumbre de los Pueblos, el GT de Educación propuso una educación pertinente, relevante, transformadora, crítica, con el fin primordial de promover la dignidad humana y la justicia social y ambiental. Estas perspectivas tenían por objetivo contrarrestar muchas tendencias y expresiones que negaban el valor central de los derechos humanos y querían borrar la responsabilidad del desarrollo capitalista en la generación de la multiplicidad de crisis que vivimos. Desde una mirada crítica, se expresó desde las organizaciones integrantes del GT, entre ellas la CLADE, el entendimiento de que la Río+20 debería ser un proceso de movilización y cambio de paradigmas hacia sociedades integralmente sustentables.

Si en el contexto actual, la finalidad de la educación es producir mano de obra para la producción y el consumo, entonces ¿quién va a formar ciudadanos-as? El capital humano reduce las capacidades humanas a la función de producir mayor riqueza en las condiciones sociales existentes, que implican grandes desigualdades. Las y los ciudadanos, por el contrario, tienen el deber de cuestionar dichas condiciones cuando producen injusticia, discriminación, envilecimiento, y ponen en riesgo la vida en el planeta. En este sentido, es urgente rescatar la noción de Educación como derecho humano, en sus dimensiones formal, no formal e informal, abrir su mirada a la democratización de las sociedades para formar ciudadanías críticas, capaces de vincularse a movimientos que reclamen una transformación del orden social, con miras a una mayor justicia social y ambiental, con la intención de entender y discutir soluciones a los problemas de escala planetaria. (Fragmento del posicionamiento público del GT de Educación de la Cumbre de los Pueblos, ante la Conferencia Río +20. Río de Janeiro, 2012)

Infelizmente, la declaración oficial de la Conferencia Río+20 incorporó pocas sugerencias de la sociedad civil, de modo que prevalecieron las necesidades del mercado y una visión instrumental de la educación, orientada a una perspectiva reduccionista del desarrollo y a la empleabilidad. Los compromisos asumidos fueron mínimos y no incluían la gratuidad de la educación o la necesidad de acciones concretas para combatir las discriminaciones y desigualdades.

Pese a ello, para integrantes de la CLADE que participaron en los procesos de incidencia ante la Conferencia Río+20 y la Cumbre de los Pueblos, la experiencia les permitió aprender y despertar a la necesidad de participar más activamente en el debate sobre las Agendas de Desarrollo y Educación post-2015, que seguiría.

De hecho, la participación de la CLADE, al lado de otras organizaciones y redes hermanas, en el proceso de debate y negociación de las Agendas de Desarrollo y Educación 2030, fue fundamental para la adopción de objetivos y metas comprometidos con la perspectiva de derechos humanos.

La negociación sobre estas agendas se caracterizó por una gran disputa conceptual alrededor de la educación y del desarrollo sostenible. En ese contexto, la CLADE se posicionó a favor de la garantía de la educación como un derecho humano, poniendo de manifiesto su oposición a la visión reduccionista y economicista que venía caracterizando los discursos en ese ámbito.

⁴ Documento disponible en: https://redclade.org/wp-content/uploads/clade_publicacaorio20_es2-1.pdf

Específicamente, tres informes que fueron presentados al entonces Secretario General de las Naciones Unidas⁵, Ban Ki-moon, en el 2013, planteaban este concepto reducido de la educación, definiéndola como una actividad orientada a la formación de mano de obra (empleabilidad) y a las capacidades laborales y productivas. La argumentación se centraba en el retorno económico que la educación puede suponer a las personas, empresas y naciones. Los informes eran los siguientes: Una agenda de acción para el desarrollo sostenible, elaborado por la Red de Soluciones para el Desarrollo Sostenible de las Naciones Unidas (SDSN, por sus siglas en inglés), Una nueva alianza mundial: erradicar la pobreza y transformar las economías a través del desarrollo sostenible, del Grupo de Alto Nivel de Personas Eminentes sobre la Agenda de Desarrollo post-2015⁶, y Sostenibilidad corporativa y la agenda de desarrollo posterior a 2015 de las Naciones Unidas, de autoría del Pacto Mundial de las Naciones Unidas⁷.

Los tres documentos tenían el propósito de orientar la elaboración de un informe especial por el Secretario General Ban Ki-moon sobre la nueva agenda de desarrollo sostenible, el cual se presentaría a la Asamblea General de la ONU en septiembre de 2013, e influenciaría fuertemente el contenido por plantearse para la Agenda de Desarrollo Sostenible 2030.

Antes que esos informes viniesen a público, CLADE, Red de Educación Popular entre Mujeres de América Latina y el Caribe (REPEM), Consejo Internacional de Educación de Personas Adultas (ICAE), Foro Mundial de Educación (FME) y Consejo de Educación Popular de América Latina y el Caribe (CEAAL) insistieron en la necesidad de respetar los acuerdos ya existentes sobre el derecho humano a la educación, a la hora de plantear nuevos compromisos internacionales. En una carta de mayo de 2013, dirigida a Amina J. Mohammed, asesora especial del Secretario General de la ONU para el proceso post-2015, a los presidentes de Indonesia y Liberia, y al primer ministro del Reino Unido –todos integrantes del Grupo de Alto Nivel de Personas Eminentes sobre la Agenda de Desarrollo post-2015– se hizo hincapié en los puntos defendidos por más de 400 representantes de la sociedad civil en la Consulta Regional sobre la Agenda Post-2015, realizada en Guadalajara (México)⁸.

De esta manera, además de enfrentarse a una concepción de educación alejada de los derechos humanos, la comunidad educativa reclamaba que la perspectiva de desarrollo sostenible presentada no solo no atendía a las causas de la injusticia y de las desigualdades en el mundo, sino que dejaba de proponer cambios estructurales para su superación. Los informes mencionados apuntaban a un escenario de Estado mínimo, concediendo a los negocios y a las tecnologías el rol de promotores del desarrollo. A su vez, la perspectiva de desarrollo sostenible presente se orientaba hacia la

⁵ La Red fue establecida por el Secretario General de la ONU en agosto de 2012, con el objetivo de buscar soluciones para un desarrollo sostenible en escala local, nacional y global. Sus aportes sirvieron de documento guía al Grupo Abierto de Trabajo para la Agenda ODS (Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible), establecido por Naciones Unidas a partir de un mandato de la Conferencia Río+20.

⁶ Este grupo estaba compuesto por 27 personas escogidas por Ban Ki-moon para asesorarlo en la elaboración del marco de desarrollo mundial en el período post-2015.

⁷ Plataforma compuesta por 56 corporaciones nacionales y multinacionales.

⁸ La Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL) organizó entre los días 7 y 19 de abril de 2013 la Consulta Regional de América Latina y el Caribe titulada “Realizando el futuro que queremos en América Latina y el Caribe: hacia una agenda de desarrollo post 2015”. La llamada Consulta de Guadalajara (la ciudad mexicana en que se realizó) recibió aportes de centenas de organizaciones de la sociedad civil del continente, incluyendo la CLADE.

homogeneización del planeta, considerando apenas sociedades “modernas, urbanas y globales”, sin lugar a la diversidad de culturas y pueblos.

Asimismo, los tres informes ponían énfasis en resultados mínimos y mensurables de aprendizaje en lectoescritura y matemáticas, lo que reducía el contenido pleno del derecho a la educación. De allí, desde la sociedad civil, se vio la necesidad de impulsar una visión ampliada sobre el significado de la calidad de la educación, más allá de su medición por pruebas estandarizadas.

Respecto al informe de la Red de Soluciones específicamente, llamaba la atención el hecho de que ni siquiera nombraba la palabra educación, y además promovía el concepto de “asequibilidad” educativa, noción que circulaba ampliamente en los ámbitos internacionales, impulsada por empresarios de la educación, en sustitución al precepto de gratuidad.

La CLADE y sus miembros argumentaron que el reemplazo del concepto de gratuidad por el de asequibilidad promovía las llamadas low fee private schools (escuelas privadas de bajo costo para sectores de menores ingresos). A partir de distintas experiencias que se estaban conociendo en América Latina y el Caribe, la CLADE trató de promover, dentro y fuera de la comunidad educativa, una alerta sobre los riesgos de las diferentes formas de lucro en y desde la educación.

Según Giroux (2013), “en las sociedades neoliberales, la soberanía está muchas veces en manos de las grandes corporaciones, que no apenas tienen poder sobre la producción de conocimiento, sino que también sobre la implementación de políticas que tiene impacto directo sobre la vida de las personas”.

Hablando sobre la influencia de los intereses de empresas con fines de lucro en los debates sobre la educación, cabe recordar que, poco antes del inicio de las negociaciones sobre las Agendas de Desarrollo y Educación 2030, el Banco Mundial lanzó la Estrategia Sectorial de Educación 2020. En el documento intitulado Aprendizaje para todos (2011), se sostiene que el foco central de los sistemas educativos debe ser el aprendizaje de algunas habilidades y particularmente la medición de estos aprendizajes, tomando como base pruebas estandarizadas internacionales y como horizonte el crecimiento económico.

Según el educador popular Marco Raúl Mejía (2016), esta perspectiva viene de mucho antes, más exactamente de las decenios de los 80 y 90, cuando se observó la crisis del socialismo real y el fortalecimiento de un capitalismo que tomó para sí las transformaciones en el conocimiento y la tecnología, haciendo de la globalización su proyecto de control.

Para adecuarse a estas nuevas realidades, en la esfera de la educación la alerta la enciende en Estados Unidos el informe Una nación en riesgo (A nation at risk), de 1983, elaborado por la Comisión Nacional de la Calidad Educativa, que centra ésta en tres competencias: leer, escribir y matemáticas, que irían a impregnar las políticas educativas a nivel mundial en una educación al servicio de la economía del conocimiento, la cual a nivel de contenidos construyen la sigla STEM, como acrónimo para hablar de los estudios en ciencia, tecnología, ingeniería y matemáticas, que en algunas de sus corrientes ha[n] generado lo que se ha venido denominando el pensamiento computacional y del déficit, y del reduccionismo cognitivo. Este planteamiento, con su influencia en políticos y economistas, marcará su influencia en educación y su orientación

a las competencias y estándares. (Mejía, 2016)

Para seguir contrarrestando las perspectivas reduccionistas e instrumentales de educación antes señaladas, en mayo de 2013, la CLADE envió una nueva carta al entonces Secretario General de la ONU, Ban Ki-moon, haciendo propuestas concretas para su informe sobre la Agenda 2030, y resaltando la necesidad de adoptar un enfoque para la educación desde un paradigma más amplio.

Si queremos llegar a un programa universal, su marco subyacente debe hacer espacio y reconocer la existencia de diferentes culturas y visiones, teniendo en cuenta las contribuciones de las poblaciones indígenas del mundo, como por ejemplo, el buen vivir, paradigma fomentado en América Latina que aborda de manera integral las cuestiones económicas, sociales y medioambientales.

En lo que se refiere específicamente a la educación, consideramos que los informes citados anteriormente no contemplan este derecho humano de una manera amplia, relacionándolo especialmente a la empleabilidad y a la satisfacción de las demandas del mercado y centrando los indicadores en resultados medibles de aprendizaje en lectura, escrita y matemáticas. Este horizonte no está a la altura de los estándares de derechos humanos acordados internacionalmente, que reconocen la educación como un derecho humano y un derecho que permite la realización de otros derechos, que promueve el pleno desarrollo del ser humano, la posibilidad de acceder a trabajos decentes, el ejercicio de la democracia y de una ciudadanía activa, así como la construcción de la paz.

(Fragmento de carta firmada por Camilla Croso, en nombre de la CLADE y las organizaciones de su comité directivo, dirigida al Secretario General de Naciones Unidas, Ban Ki-moon)

En agosto de 2013, vino a la luz el Informe Especial del Secretario General Ban Ki-moon intitulado Una vida de dignidad para todos y todas: el progreso acelerado hacia los Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio. Como resultado de las acciones de incidencia impulsadas por la CLADE y redes hermanas, en el documento se mencionaron causas estructurales de la pobreza y de la injusticia (como la persistencia de múltiples formas de discriminación y de concentración de la riqueza). Además, se propuso la adopción de medidas para enfrentar dichas causas estructurales, se nombró el buen vivir como horizonte importante y se defendió la igualdad de género. Específicamente con relación al derecho humano a la educación, el informe incorporó el concepto de aprendizaje a lo largo de la vida, la calidad y la superación de las múltiples formas de exclusión en la educación, conceptos que estaban ausentes en versiones preliminares del documento.

También se removió del informe el término *affordable education*, que estaba presente en versiones preliminares. Sin embargo, en aquel momento, subsistían retos importantes, como la falta de una mención explícita a la gratuidad educativa y la ausencia de una visión amplia del propósito de la educación, tal como lo plantea la Declaración Universal de los Derechos Humanos.

Así, en septiembre de 2013, la CLADE firmó, junto con otros movimientos y organizaciones de la sociedad civil mundial, la declaración El derecho humano a la educación en la Agenda de Desarrollo post-2015, liderada por la Campaña Mundial por la Educación, con el objetivo de continuar dialogando con el Informe Especial del Secretario General Ban Ki-moon y el avance de la Agenda de Desarrollo

2030 en Naciones Unidas.

Además de dichas acciones de incidencia y activa participación, la CLADE y sus miembros estuvieron presentes en múltiples espacios presenciales y virtuales de discusión y consulta sobre la educación y el desarrollo sostenible 2030. Es importante destacar la colaboración con la UNESCO y el diálogo con Estados latinoamericanos, especialmente por medio de sus representaciones oficiales ante la UNESCO en París y las Naciones Unidas en Nueva York. También fueron fundamentales los diálogos entre coaliciones nacionales que integran la CLADE y los Ministerios de Educación y Relaciones Exteriores en sus países. En todo este proceso, la CLADE trató de contribuir de manera concreta a la discusión sobre la calidad educativa, defendiendo una perspectiva holística e integral de la educación.

La educación que queremos debe orientarse al pleno desarrollo del potencial de cada persona y de la ciudadanía. En la escuela no solamente se aprenden habilidades cognitivas básicas, sino que es el lugar donde se desarrolla la creatividad, se promueven distintas expresiones artísticas, las capacidades críticas, de autonomía y a la vez de solidaridad y colectividad, la capacidad de problematizar las respuestas ya construidas, de dudar de los saberes establecidos, de formular hipótesis originales. La comunidad internacional debe hacer un esfuerzo por desarrollar indicadores de la realización del derecho humano a la educación, más allá que indicadores y mecanismos de medición de ciertos aprendizajes.

(Fragmento del documento Aportes para la consulta sobre calidad del aprendizaje de la UNESCO para el proceso post 2015, elaborado por la CLADE, enero de 2013)

Como resultado de todas estas acciones, se logró reemplazar la perspectiva reduccionista e instrumental de educación antes vigente por una Agenda de Educación 2030 que reafirma la educación como un derecho humano fundamental a lo largo de toda la vida. Asimismo, los Estados firmantes se comprometieron a ofrecer una educación pública y gratuita durante al menos 12 años de primaria y secundaria. Afirmaron, igualmente, un compromiso en aumentar el gasto público en educación y asignar para este campo, como mínimo, entre el 4% y el 6% del Producto Interno Bruto (PIB), o entre el 15% y el 20% de su gasto público total.

Nuestra visión se inspira en una concepción humanista de la educación y del desarrollo basada en los derechos humanos y la dignidad, la justicia social, la inclusión, la protección, la diversidad cultural, lingüística y étnica, y la responsabilidad y la rendición de cuentas compartidas. Reafirmamos que la educación es un bien público, un derecho humano fundamental y la base para garantizar la realización de otros derechos. Es esencial para la paz, la tolerancia, la realización humana y el desarrollo sostenible.

(Fragmento del Marco de Acción para la Educación 2030, documento adoptado en noviembre de 2015, que junto con el Objetivo de Desarrollo Sostenible de número 4 (ODS 4) constituye la Agenda de Educación 2030)

Capítulo 3. Reflexión y acción colectivas hacia una educación emancipadora y garante de derechos

En el 2016, año siguiente a la adopción de las Agendas de Desarrollo y Educación 2030, la CLADE siguió actuando y profundizando en diálogos y reflexiones, para defender una educación transformadora y habilitante de la promoción del desarrollo sostenible, en línea con los nuevos acuerdos firmados por las Naciones Unidas.

Así, en su IX Asamblea Regional, realizada en la Ciudad de México, la Campaña tomó como lema de acciones y reflexiones: “Educación emancipadora y garante de derechos: retos para América Latina y el Caribe”. En el encuentro, se generaron diálogos e intercambios frente a varios desafíos, como las distintas formas de discriminación en la educación, en particular la de género; la tecnocratización de la educación y las tendencias hacia la homogeneización de los sistemas educativos; la evaluación por medio de pruebas estandarizadas, que segrean la diversidad social y cultural, así como la disminución de recursos financieros para la educación.

En la declaración final del evento⁹, se avanzó en la concepción de una educación emancipadora orientada a los propósitos de los derechos humanos, para la construcción de la paz; de ciudadanías activas, críticas y participativas, hacia la realización de una vida digna, reconociendo las singularidades y diversidades de los pueblos.

También en el año 2016, la CLADE, en alianza con el CEAAL, impulsó la elaboración y difusión de una serie de entrevistas y artículos con el objetivo de profundizar en reflexiones sobre cómo debe ser una buena educación para América Latina y el Caribe¹⁰.

Dos años después, persistían grandes obstáculos para la realización de una educación emancipadora y transformadora en América Latina y el Caribe, mientras se profundizaban disputas alrededor de los sentidos de educación y calidad educativa en la agenda política de la región. Ante este contexto, la CLADE eligió nuevamente la temática de la educación emancipadora para que fuera enfatizada en su X asamblea.

El encuentro, realizado en Bogotá (Colombia) en octubre de 2018, expandió conceptos y definiciones defendidos por los miembros de la red, para la garantía de una educación emancipadora y garante de derechos, y a la vez señaló nuevos desafíos observados en la coyuntura regional. Entre los retos, se destacaron el ascenso del neoconservadurismo; el desarrollo de ajustes económicos neoliberales, acentuando el recorte de recursos públicos para derechos sociales, facilitando la privatización y ampliando las desigualdades; la criminalización y represión de la protesta social; el uso deshumanizador de las neurociencias, la robótica, la inteligencia artificial y otros procesos, sustentado en posturas racistas, machistas, misóginas y patriarcales; el ascenso de una perspectiva militarizada de la educación, que atenta contra las pedagogías reflexivas y democráticas; obstáculos para una educación con igualdad de género, y la promoción de pruebas estandarizadas como única medida de la calidad educativa,

⁹ La declaración está disponible en <https://redclade.org/wp-content/uploads/Carta-de-Mexico.pdf>

¹⁰ Se puede acceder a estos artículos y entrevistas en esta página: <http://buenaeducacion.redclade.org>

que conlleva la homogeneización de los procesos educativos, en detrimento de la diversidad, la singularidad y del contexto histórico, cultural y territorial.

En los diálogos de la X Asamblea, entre otros puntos, se subrayó la necesidad de garantizar un sistema educativo público y gratuito, en el cual desde la reflexión y una pedagogía crítica se discutan temas políticos y sociales, y donde se reconozcan e incluyan los distintos saberes y cosmovisiones de los pueblos, respondiendo a la vez a la pluralidad, la diversidad de culturas y a la interculturalidad de lenguas, cuerpos, géneros, identidades, sexualidades y territorialidades. Asimismo, se destacó la necesidad de reconocer a los pueblos y a las y los docentes y estudiantes como interlocutores legítimos en el debate y la definición de la política educativa; de articular la educación con las luchas sociales; de garantizar la educación como un derecho humano por encima de la mirada educativa instrumental al servicio del mercado, y de democratizar el conocimiento, el arte, la cultura y nuestra memoria histórica, como formas de promover la transformación positiva de nuestras sociedades desde una educación popular y emancipadora, y considerando los centros educativos como territorios de paz y producción cultural¹¹.

Vale señalar que la X Asamblea de la CLADE se realizó en el marco de la movilización regional Educar para la Libertad: Diálogos y Acción por una Educación Emancipadora¹², con la cual la CLADE ha buscado poner en debate y reflexión qué es una educación emancipadora y garante de derechos y cómo realizarla en nuestra región. Con la iniciativa, se estimula la realización de círculos de diálogo sobre esta temática en los diferentes países y localidades de América Latina y el Caribe, involucrando a toda la membresía de la CLADE, educadoras y educadores, sindicatos docentes, movimientos y organizaciones estudiantiles y de jóvenes, investigadoras e investigadores, autoridades públicas, comunidades educativas y organizaciones de la sociedad civil local, nacional y regional, así como a la ciudadanía de manera general.

Capítulo 4. Breve recorrido histórico por el pensamiento latinoamericano acerca de una educación popular, emancipadora y transformadora

Según investigaciones de Marco Raúl Mejía, las discusiones y reflexiones sobre educación popular en América Latina y el Caribe se han alternado entre momentos de invisibilidad y ocasiones en que se hizo necesario su resurgimiento dentro del panorama regional, devolviendo la problemática a coyunturas y procesos sociales y políticos particulares, donde sus planteamientos adquirirían forma.

Formaron parte, en la construcción de las primeras perspectivas latinoamericanas de educación popular, pensadores de las luchas por la Independencia, como Simón Rodríguez (1769-1854), quien fue maestro del libertador Simón Bolívar, y José Martí (1853-1895).

Rodríguez fue el más explícito en sus menciones a la educación popular, la cual definía como aquella que nos hace americanos y no europeos, inventores y no repetidores, que educa para que quien hágase educa

¹¹ Otros resultados de las discusiones se presentan en la declaración final del evento, la Carta de Bogotá: https://redclade.org/wp-content/uploads/Carta-de-Bogota_FINAL.pdf

¹² Para saber más sobre la iniciativa, ingresa a <http://www.educarparalalibertad.org>

no sea más siervo de mercaderes y clérigos, y sea capaz de un arte u oficio para ganarse la vida por sus propios medios.

Además, se destacaron los intentos de construcción de universidades populares a lo largo de la primera mitad del siglo XX en América Latina, las más notables en Perú, El Salvador y México. En ellas se actuó para educar a los obreros, dotándolos de conciencia sobre su lugar y su papel en la historia, en alianza con la organización que defendía los intereses de estos grupos.

Otros casos representativos del esfuerzo por crear una escuela ligada a la sabiduría aymara y quechua, fueron la escuela Ayllu de Warisata, en Bolivia (1931-1940), promovida por Elizardo Pérez, y el intenso proceso organizativo propiciado por los anarcosindicalistas de la Federación Agraria Departamental, entre 1946 y 1947, el cual generó la construcción de 51 escuelas autogestionarias afiliadas a las uniones sindicales de labriegos en comunidades del altiplano boliviano¹³.

Los fundamentos de la escuela Ayllu de Warisata, cuyo proyecto sigue vivo en Bolivia, con la reciente restauración de la escuela¹⁴, son el desarrollo de una práctica educativa propia de los grupos indígenas, derivada de su cultura, y la educación como movimiento, proceso de creación cultural y transformación social, implementada desde una pedagogía basada en el trabajo, el territorio y la comunidad.

Marco Raúl Mejía también destaca como un pensador latinoamericano que contribuyó con la construcción de la educación transformadora desde una perspectiva regional, P. Vélaz, y sus esfuerzos para establecer una escuela desde la educación popular integral como fundamento del Movimiento “Fe y Alegría”, desde el año 1956.

Según Mejía, las ideas planteadas por dichos troncos históricos, vuelven a surgir con más fuerza en el continente en el decenio de los 60 del siglo XX, constituyendo un quinto tronco que originaría diversos procesos, los cuales tomarán el nombre de Educación Popular, Educación Liberadora, Pedagogía del Oprimido, Educación Emancipadora, Pedagogías Crítico-Sociales y Pedagogías Comunitarias. Paulo Freire, miembro del movimiento de cultura popular en Recife, se consolidará como el gran exponente de estas nuevas corrientes.

También la época de mayor desarrollo y auge de la Educación Popular a nivel teórico-práctico coincide con un momento muy específico de América Latina, en la [el] cual se dan una serie de construcciones conceptuales y prácticas como crítica a la forma de la cultura y la colonialidad. En ese sentido, a lo largo de treinta años se da la construcción de un pensamiento propio que busca diferenciarse de las formas eurocéntricas y de las miradas de una lectura de América desde afuera, que no se lee internamente, generando líneas de acción que constituyen con la Educación Popular los gérmenes de un pensamiento propio que organiza y da sentido a estas realidades. (Mejía, 2011: 13)

¹³ Más informaciones sobre esta última experiencia se pueden conocer en la publicación Esbozos de pedagogía libertaria en el altiplano (CBDE, 2017): <http://campanaderechoeducacion.org.bo/images/publicaciones/Esbozos%20de%20pedagoga.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://redclade.org/noticias/dia-internacional-de-los-pueblos-indigenas-clade-celebra-la-restauracion-de-escuela-ayllu-de-warisata/>

En su trabajo, el investigador Marcos Raúl Mejía profundiza en el momento fecundo que, a partir del decenio de los 50 y a lo largo de la segunda mitad del siglo XX, establece la base para la consolidación de un pensamiento educativo crítico en América Latina y el Caribe, el cual cuestiona la hegemonía del pensamiento europeo y la subalternización de pueblos, culturas, lenguajes y formas de conocer propios de la región, que el eurocentrismo promovía.

Estas innovaciones conceptuales siguen desarrollándose y orientando otras lecturas en la región, durante el siglo XXI, las cuales han avanzado en el conocimiento de las singularidades del control y la dominación eurocéntrica. Estas diferentes prácticas y conceptos críticos se han caracterizado por un acercamiento-distancia con las teorías críticas euro-norteamericanas, y han agregado elementos y especificidades de la realidad regional.

Hablar de educación y pedagogía crítica desde América Latina es hablar de una práctica social que se ha venido conformando en esta realidad en la segunda mitad del siglo XX y los comienzos de este nuevo milenio. En ese sentido, se trata de un proceso que nació unido a las dinámicas sociales, políticas y culturales que se desarrollaron en nuestra realidad, buscando una identidad y un sentido propio al ser de acá como una práctica que, abierta a las otras culturas, busca concretar un compromiso con las necesidades de transformación de la injusticia en nuestras realidades. (Mejía, 2011: 16)

A la luz de dichas discusiones y planteamientos críticos, se elaboraron en la región caminos y lecturas que afectaron la concepción de una educación transformadora desde una perspectiva latinoamericana, destacándose entre ellos el marxismo, desde Latinoamérica; la teología de la liberación; el teatro del oprimido; la comunicación popular; la investigación-acción participante; las reflexiones sobre la colonialidad del saber y el conocimiento; la psicología social; la filosofía latinoamericana; la ética del cuidado y la compasión por la tierra, y la sistematización como propuesta investigativa para leer las prácticas y hacer visibles los saberes de los grupos excluidos¹⁵.

Capítulo 5. La educación popular y transformadora en constante proceso de reinención: su relación con las nuevas luchas populares y el buen vivir

Como señala Marco Raúl Mejía, el pensamiento de Paulo Freire le dio forma a la educación popular, planteada desde los intereses de los grupos oprimidos, haciendo de la pedagogía un hecho político-cultural. Así, en las diferentes dimensiones del saber que se inauguran desde la realidad regional, se refuerza la investigación y producción de saber y conocimiento desde las prácticas de los grupos subordinados y su contexto histórico, lo que exige que la educación popular y otras corrientes críticas estén en constante proceso de revisión y reinención para incorporar los saberes y experiencias de la práctica, y a la vez atender a las demandas de estas realidades.

Como parte de esta búsqueda constante, como bien señala el filósofo y docente Benito Fernández,

¹⁵ Para profundizar en este recorrido histórico sobre el pensamiento latinoamericano acerca de la educación popular, se recomienda la lectura de Educaciones y pedagogías críticas desde el Sur, de Marco Raúl Mejía: <http://www.educarparalalibertad.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/MejiaEducaciones-PedagogiasCríticasDesdeelSur.pdf>

los debates sobre la “calidad educativa” deben llevarse en paralelo a la discusión y reflexión acerca del horizonte que se traza para la humanidad y el sentido de nuestro ser en el mundo, en un contexto de globalización y de crisis planetaria.

La crisis económica y financiera, es al mismo tiempo una crisis de sobrevivencia de la especie humana y de la vida en el planeta Tierra. La inseguridad alimentaria, la sobreexplotación de las fuentes energéticas no renovables, el incremento de la carrera armamentística y los conflictos bélicos, el cambio climático, todo ello con graves consecuencias sobre todo en los países más pobres, donde ha crecido de forma alarmante la brecha entre ricos y pobres, la violencia y la inseguridad ciudadana, y se ha incrementado el desempleo, la pobreza y el hambre, obligando a millones de familias a buscar lugares más seguros, pero muy riesgosos también, a través de la migración masiva. (Fernández, 2016)

Según Fernández, ante las actuales crisis, es un reto de la educación popular reflexionar sobre la construcción de un mundo mejor, y aquí nos encontramos con el “buen vivir”, el “vivir bien” y la “vida plena”, como alternativas inspiradas en la experiencia de los pueblos indígenas de América Latina y el Caribe, las cuales inclusive se han vuelto discurso en numerosos documentos y en las Constituciones de Ecuador y Bolivia.

El docente y filósofo destaca que el momento presente exige de la educación popular la renovación de su enfoque, antes limitado a la consciencia crítica y a la formación de sujetos revolucionarios (fundamentalmente, la clase obrera) y el movimiento popular, para dar cuenta de una mayor diversidad de sujetos y contextos presentes en el actual panorama neoliberal, que se caracteriza por la flexibilidad laboral y el desarrollo de la economía informal (relativizando los conceptos de clase obrera y trabajadora), el fracaso de los socialismos de cuño autoritario y la emergencia de nuevos actores en el escenario político, como jóvenes, mujeres, indígenas, que requieren trabajar desde la educación sus diferencias, subjetividades, perspectivas e identidades diversas.

La Educación Popular, comprometida con los procesos de liberación y emancipación, ha encontrado en el ‘buen vivir’ un sentido ético y político que enriquece su comprometida trayectoria a favor de la liberación de los pueblos. Desde la educación popular y el paradigma del ‘vivir bien’ nos preguntamos de qué forma la EP¹⁶ hace aportes al debate actual sobre la ‘calidad educativa’, enriqueciendo el enfoque de la ‘educación como derecho’ y contribuyendo a innovar este campo de la pedagogía actual. (Fernández, 2016)

El *sumaq kausay* o el *suma qamaña*¹⁷ guardan principios de reciprocidad y complementariedad que podrían nutrir modelos educativos que formen las personas para una relación armónica entre sí y con la naturaleza.

¹⁶ Educación popular

¹⁷ *Sumak kawsay* es una palabra quechua referida a la cosmovisión ancestral de la vida. Desde finales del siglo XX es también una propuesta política desarrollada principalmente en Ecuador y Bolivia. En Ecuador se ha traducido como “buen vivir”, aunque expertas y expertos en lengua quechua coinciden en señalar que la traducción más precisa sería “la vida en plenitud”. En Bolivia la palabra original en aymara es *suma qamaña*, que se ha traducido como “Vivir bien”. En su significado quechua original, *sumak* hace referencia a la realización ideal y hermosa del planeta, mientras que *kawsay* significa una vida digna, en plenitud.

El paradigma del Buen Vivir es una propuesta de vida que surge desde la visión de las comunidades indígenas marginadas de los últimos 500 años y otras inspiraciones similares que provienen de diversos sectores y regiones del planeta (ecologistas, feministas, cooperativistas, humanistas, cristianos...). Es una utopía de una sociedad alternativa en la que las personas viven en armonía consigo mismas, con los demás y con el planeta. Proyecta una vida estrechamente relacionada con la comunidad y la naturaleza, practicando la solidaridad, el respeto, la reciprocidad, la complementariedad, la equidad, la igualdad, la libertad, la ética, el sentido común. La actividad productiva es sostenible si sirve al bien común y del vivir bien de todas las personas. Construir el Buen Vivir como alternativa al “desarrollo” es un largo proceso de esfuerzo colectivo que genera cambios en todos los estamentos de la sociedad. (Vandenbulcke, 2017: 40)

Benito Fernández explica que la educación popular se nutre de utopías, siendo que entre ellas, inicialmente, predominó el “socialismo”, y después estas miradas y expectativas tuvieron una evolución hacia otras formas como la “democracia participativa”, donde debe ser plena la vigencia de los derechos humanos, individuales y colectivos.

Recientemente, se reconoce la adscripción de la educación popular al “buen vivir”, como propuesta que se opone al actual sistema hegemónico, “depredador del medio ambiente, consumista y explotador de la fuerza de trabajo, a favor del incremento del capital y contra la vida”. A la vez, una educación para el “buen vivir” plantearía, entre otros elementos: la formación de ciudadanas y ciudadanos interculturales imbuidos de una conciencia planetaria; el fortalecimiento de las economías locales y solidarias, con gestión autónoma, dándole contenido concreto a la autodeterminación en la satisfacción de las necesidades económicas, sociales y culturales (sostenibilidad social) y la preservación de la naturaleza (sostenibilidad ecológica).

Las cualidades más importantes de la persona comprometida con este proyecto emancipador son el compromiso, la capacidad crítica, la autonomía intelectual, la creatividad y el ser solidario. En el marco del buen vivir la calidad de la educación no puede ser elitista, de acuerdo a los muchos o pocos recursos que tenga la gente, su capacidad adquisitiva, sino afirmada como un derecho universal en función de las necesidades educativas de las personas. Políticas públicas inclusivas llevadas a la práctica será[n] un indicador importante del buen vivir. (Fernández, 2016)¹⁸

En el siglo XXI, diversas educadoras y educadores populares, investigadoras e investigadores de América Latina y el Caribe, siguen profundizando, aportando y recreando conceptos y pensamientos sobre la educación emancipadora, transformadora, popular y garante de derechos, desde las experiencias prácticas y sus trabajos de investigación e incidencia política. Muchas de estas personas se citan en este documento y articulan sus luchas y estudios desde colectivos y redes regionales que desempeñan un rol clave en el avance de esta temática, como CEAAL y REPEM, entre otros.

¹⁸ Fernández sigue reflexionando sobre otros elementos que deben caracterizar una educación popular para el buen vivir en este artículo: <http://buenaeducacion.redclade.org/index.php/articulos/44-articulo-educacion-popular-calidad-educativa-y-buen-vivir>

Capítulo 6. Educar para la Libertad: reflexiones y conceptos que desde la CLADE sustentan una educación emancipadora para la región

Dando seguimiento a sus acciones y reflexiones en defensa de una educación emancipadora y garante de derechos, la CLADE lanzó en el 2019 un documento intitulado Educar para la libertad: por una educación emancipadora y garante de derechos¹⁹.

Esta publicación reúne los resultados de los varios procesos de formación, diálogo, reflexión y movilización hacia una educación emancipadora, que desde la CLADE se vienen impulsando, con el objetivo de sistematizar, reconocer y profundizar en los avances y descubrimientos logrados, abriendo a la vez caminos para proyectar nuevas discusiones y acciones en esta temática.

El documento aborda el derecho a la educación desde una perspectiva integral y holística, en su relación con la libertad, la transformación social, la descolonización, la democracia, la igualdad de género, la comunicación y las tecnologías, el arte y la cultura, la afectividad y el cuidado, así como los cuerpos y los territorios.

Sus reflexiones proponen caminos hacia la realización de una educación esencialmente emancipadora, que contribuya para formar sociedades libres de todo tipo de opresión, y también para transformar la vida de niñas y niños, adolescentes, jóvenes y personas adultas desde la reflexión, el diálogo, el pensamiento crítico, y desde la capacidad de indagar, cuestionar, discernir, imaginar y actuar por otros mundos posibles.

Según el documento, la educación emancipadora debe contribuir a garantizar a la comunidad educativa condiciones de libertad y dignidad, para posibilitarle reflexionar, dialogar, formarse y producir conocimientos en el sentido de cambiar las interrelaciones sociales hacia la abolición de opresiones y hegemonías patriarcales, heterosexuales y heteronormativas, entre otras.

Más allá de la imposición dogmática de la democracia liberal o de las mal llamadas democracias populares, habría que atenerse a que es la realidad, tal como es experimentada por las mayorías, la que debiera imponerse en la selección de los criterios de convivencia y socialización en la línea de una auténtica autodeterminación. De ahí la relevancia de la defensa de los derechos humanos, así como los diversos ensayos de autogestión en los diferentes ámbitos sociales, incluido el económico, que conducen a formas de autogobierno desde lo local. No faltan ahora movimientos sociales antisistémicos que se encaminan hacia una radicalización de la democracia, comprendida como el poder del pueblo y para el pueblo, demandando un reconocimiento del “otro” y de los “otros” como sujetos dignos, autónomos y libres. (Ibañez, 2010: 181)

Partiendo de estas ideas iniciales, a continuación compartimos algunas de las reflexiones presentes en el documento elaborado por la CLADE, divididas por diferentes ejes temáticos.

¹⁹ El documento está disponible en este enlace: https://redclade.org/wp-content/uploads/CLADE_Educacion_Emanicipadora.pdf

Educar para la libertad

Según los principios de la educación popular y especialmente la teoría del educador brasileño Paulo Freire, la educación debe darse a partir del diálogo y de relaciones horizontales entre los sujetos de las comunidades educativas. Desde esa perspectiva, una educación emancipadora es aquella que genera conciencia crítica y, por lo tanto, libera y genera condiciones para que todas las personas puedan participar, en pie de igualdad, en la vida económica, política, cultural y social de los distintos pueblos, países y comunidades. Según Freire (2004: 18),

... la gran tarea del sujeto que piensa acertadamente no es transferir, depositar, ofrecer, dar al otro, tomado como paciente de su pensar, el entendimiento de las cosas, de los hechos, de los conceptos. La tarea coherente del educador que piensa acertadamente es, mientras ejerce como ser humano la práctica irrecusable de entender, desafiar al educando con quien se comunica y a quien comunica, a producir su comprensión de lo que viene siendo comunicado. No hay entendimiento que no sea comunicación e intercomunicación y que no se funda en la capacidad del diálogo.

En este sentido, se considera imprescindible contar con docentes con perspectivas críticas y desafiantes, que confronten, estimulen y liberen a sus estudiantes desde el diálogo. También se requieren sistemas educativos que reconozcan la multiplicidad de contextos de las y los estudiantes y promuevan su pensamiento crítico, permitiéndoles dudar, cuestionar, interpelar y desarrollar todas sus potencialidades.

Desde esta perspectiva, una educación para la libertad, en respeto a su sentido crítico y ético, debe abrir caminos a las educandas y los educandos para ser y actuar de formas distintas en los territorios, elaborando nuevas narrativas y haciendo visibles sus voces. Es clave para ello reconocer las particularidades de las personas y de los pueblos, así como su pluralidad y diversidad de identidades, posibilitando de esta manera la construcción colectiva y la participación crítica de todas y todos.

Por eso la inspiración freiriana de una educación liberadora que construye las capacidades de las personas como sujetos comprometidos con una transformación social de la historia, implica que los procesos pedagógicos tienen que ser democráticos para crear capacidades democráticas: sería una contradicción llevar a cabo procesos educativos autoritarios, verticales o doctrinarios, para lograr procesos de participación democrática. De ahí la crítica a la educación “bancaria”, por vertical y autoritaria. De ahí la propuesta de una educación problematizadora, dialógica y horizontal, que vincula la práctica con la teoría, que desarrolla el pensamiento crítico, la ecología de saberes y la vocación de humanización. (Jara, 2018: 5)

Educar para la transformación

Por medio del concepto de educación transformadora se plantea que la educación tiene el potencial de cambiar las vidas de las personas y de, además, promover, fortalecer y motivar sus capacidades para transformar la realidad, superando las asimetrías sociales y defendiendo una sociedad libre de

cualquier opresión, marginación, explotación y exclusión social. Más allá, se afirma que la educación debe contribuir a que las personas estén en sintonía con su tiempo y espacio; conozcan su territorio, contexto, historia y diversidad cultural, mientras que los espacios y procesos de educación informal, no formal y formal deben estar relacionados, siendo promotores de culturas y saberes, investigación, enseñanza y extensión; contribuyendo para la justicia económica, social y ambiental. En este sentido, la educación transformadora también pasa por la democratización del conocimiento, del arte, de la cultura y de la memoria histórica.

Según Oscar Jara, la educación transformadora es aquella que se asume popular porque, en primera instancia, responde a las necesidades de todas las personas, en todas las modalidades posibles, especialmente las de los sectores populares que sufren cualquier nivel de asimetría. Asimismo, la educación popular debe ser un movimiento que forme a las personas para ser críticas y creadoras de la historia, protagonistas del cambio social y cultural. Es aquella que acontece en los movimientos sociales y sectores, entidades y personas que luchan y trabajan en la búsqueda de un mundo mejor.

El hecho de percibirme en el mundo, con el mundo y con los otros, me pone en una posición ante el mundo que no es la de quien nada tiene que ver con él. Al fin y al cabo, mi presencia en el mundo no es la de quien se adapta a él, sino la de quien se inserta en él. Es la posición de quien lucha para no ser tan sólo un objeto, sino también sujeto de la Historia. Me gusta ser persona porque, aun sabiendo que las condiciones materiales, económicas, sociales y políticas, culturales e ideológicas en que nos encontramos generan casi siempre barreras de difícil superación para la realización de nuestra tarea histórica de cambiar el mundo, también sé que los obstáculos no se eternizan. (Freire, 2004: 25)

De acuerdo con la teoría de la pedagogía crítica, representada por Henry Giroux y otros pensadores, se necesita la formación de la autoconciencia y la reflexión responsable para crear un proceso de construcción de significados apoyados en las experiencias personales. Esta corriente de pensamiento plantea que la educación debe estar encaminada a la transformación social en beneficio de los más débiles, considerando las desigualdades sociales existentes en el mundo globalizado, desde un compromiso con la justicia y la equidad.

Educar para descolonizar

La colonización sufrida por los pueblos latinoamericanos y caribeños les impuso saberes, maneras de hacer y ser, formas de pensar, valoraciones e instituciones que subsisten y son manifestaciones que oprimen y niegan sus identidades originarias. Sin embargo, los movimientos populares de América Latina y el Caribe construyen sus luchas con base en conocimientos ancestrales, culturales, populares y espirituales ajenos al cientifismo propio de la teoría eurocéntrica u occidental.

Según Marco Raúl Mejía, el neocolonialismo sigue operando a través de una visión del mundo y el control de las mentes y los cuerpos; para su continuidad, las instituciones de educación juegan un papel muy importante. “En ese sentido se señala que el eurocentrismo no es una mirada cognitiva propia de los europeos, sino de todos los que hemos sido educados en los imaginarios y prácticas de las hegemonías de las instituciones educativas en donde se ha naturalizado el imaginario cultural

europeo, generándose una geopolítica del conocimiento, la cual invisibiliza y desaparece las historias locales” (Mejía, 2011: 15).

Un proyecto educativo liberador debe, entonces, revelar, cuestionar y tratar de superar estos aspectos coloniales de la sociedad. Así, debe asegurar la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de conocimientos acumulados por la humanidad en distintos campos, pero superando la hegemonía de conceptos y miradas de base eurocéntrica u occidental y, a la vez, tomando en cuenta y valorando la diversidad de saberes, culturas, lenguas y cosmovisiones de los distintos pueblos, lo que implica la inclusión de todas las personas con la misma oportunidad de aportar y aplicar prácticas y metodologías propias.

El objetivo de las Epistemologías del Sur es posibilitar que los grupos sociales oprimidos representen el mundo como propio y en sus propios términos, porque solo así podrán transformarlo según sus propias aspiraciones (...). Su objetivo, aliás, es identificar y valorizar lo que con frecuencia ni siquiera aparece como conocimiento a la luz de las epistemologías dominantes, por lo que en su lugar surge como parte de las luchas de resistencia contra la opresión y contra el conocimiento que legitima esa opresión. (Santos, 2018: 301; traducción libre del portugués al español)

Según Boaventura de Sousa Santos, la dominación de clase y la dominación étnica-racial se alimentan mutuamente, y así la lucha por la igualdad no puede estar separada de la lucha por el reconocimiento de la diferencia. Desde este enfoque, urge la transformación de las sociedades hacia un ambiente que integre la diversidad cultural, étnica, lingüística y de cosmovisiones de los distintos pueblos. Es fundamental que estas prácticas y perspectivas sean potencializadas, de modo que generen procesos de formación que incluyan las memorias históricas de los pueblos.

Educación para la democracia

En la pedagogía crítica, los centros educativos son espacios de encuentro, en el que las personas pueden trabajar en forma conjunta para abordar sus problemas, desarrollar proyectos, encontrar y experimentar las diferencias y practicar la democracia.

Como dice el educador Jorge Osorio (2016), “la ciudadanía no sólo es el atributo jurídico de la democracia, sino también es un proceso comunicacional, de generación de sentidos comunes, de desarrollo de capacidades reflexivas, argumentativas, deliberativas y de promoción de recursos cívicos que acrecienten el capital social democrático y la participación ciudadana. Es el ámbito en el cual las sociedades llegan a construir su ‘sentido de lo común’”.

En esa dirección, la participación popular, en especial de integrantes de la comunidad educativa, debe estar presente en el diseño, definición, implementación, monitoreo y evaluación de las políticas educativas y los proyectos político-pedagógicos. Este es un elemento fundamental para la organización de la gestión democrática en la educación.

Asimismo, se deben promover la democracia y la participación en los centros y espacios educativos, reconociendo a todas las personas de la comunidad educativa como interlocutoras legítimas y

fundamentales, en condiciones de igualdad, para superar las discriminaciones y posibilitar la resolución no violenta de los conflictos, desde la acción y reflexión colectivas.

La participación democrática es un criterio importante de ciudadanía: es un medio por el cual las niñas, niños y personas adultas pueden involucrarse con otras/os en la toma de decisiones que les afectan (...) Es también un medio de resistir al poder y a su voluntad de gobernar, y a las formas de opresión e injusticia que emergen del ejercicio descontrolado del poder. Por fin, pero no menos importante, la democracia permite que la diversidad prospere. Al hacerlo, ofrece el mejor ambiente para la producción de pensamientos y prácticas nuevas. (Moss, 2007; traducción libre del portugués al español)

Educar para la igualdad de género

La garantía de los derechos de las mujeres, niñas y adolescentes, así como de la comunidad LGBTIQ+, está relacionada con la promoción de una vida digna y la posibilidad de elegir con libertad el propio proyecto de vida, sin restricción a su ser y actuar en el mundo.

Para ello, es primordial deconstruir patrones patriarcales y afirmar normas, roles y relaciones de género en condiciones de igualdad y equidad. Una educación que permita reflexionar sobre los roles y estereotipos que se asignan a los géneros; replantear los conceptos sobre masculinidades y feminidades, para que sean más sensibles y responsables, y para que accionen en la construcción de sociedades verdaderamente incluyentes, igualitarias, pacíficas y democráticas.

Como subraya la activista feminista y licenciada en Ciencias de la Educación Imelda Arana Sáenz (2016),

...la educación como derecho universal deberá implicar que la calidad de la misma incorpore los elementos teórico-prácticos adecuados para que el ejercicio del mismo se dé en condiciones de igualdad, ello ha de llevar a la eliminación paulatina de las disparidades que aún persisten en el acceso, permanencia y culminación del proyecto educativo anhelado por cada persona, incluyendo la aplicación de los aprendizajes derivados del mismo para la realización profesional y la participación en la vida familiar, social y política en condiciones de justicia y equidad para todas y todos.

Así, es fundamental integrar las perspectivas de la pedagogía feminista para la construcción de una ciudadanía activa, participativa y transformadora. Ello implica buscar soluciones hacia la inclusión, la igualdad y el combate de la violencia desde y en la educación. Entre otras medidas, se debe punir a responsables por las situaciones de violencia, discriminación, abuso y acoso en los espacios educativos, respaldando a las víctimas y ofreciéndoles mecanismos de denuncia.

Nos referimos a colectivas feministas que en algunos casos somos parte de movimientos mixtos, y que coincidimos en la necesidad de no establecer jerarquías entre las distintas opresiones, rechazando caracterizar a las luchas como principales o secundarias, asumiendo que en el sistema capitalista patriarcal y colonial, las distintas formas de dominación y disciplinamiento

de los cuerpos, territorios, comunidades, y los intentos de “conquistar” y “dominar” la naturaleza de la que somos parte, se refuerzan mutuamente. En esta perspectiva, cada logro erosiona los pilares del sistema, en la medida en que contribuye a la creación de subjetividades – individuales y sociales – autónomas, capaces de imaginar y crear un mundo diferente. (Korol, 2018: 25)

La educación en su relación con la comunicación y las tecnologías

Los medios de comunicación educan las personas a todo momento, más aún en la actualidad, donde predominan las tecnologías de información y comunicación (TIC) y los rápidos cambios tecnológicos. En ese contexto, es un rol de la educación y una tarea cotidiana de la ciudadanía pensar críticamente la comunicación y lo que se difunde a través de los medios y las redes sociales digitales. Poner en la agenda educativa y comunicativa posiciones críticas y temas para la reflexión significa abrir espacios para profundizar en el debate democrático, alentando la participación social y la pluralidad.

Como bien destaca la Asociación Latinoamericana de Educación y Comunicación Popular (ALER), a partir de la comunicación y la educación, se pueden promover narrativas y modelos alternativos hacia la diversidad de otros mundos posibles. La comunicación, en su relación con la educación, permite la construcción colectiva de escenarios distintos y posibles para el continente (sociopolíticos, educativos culturales y tecnológicos, entre otros).

En el avance de estos procesos de cambio, los medios de comunicación juegan un rol muy importante. Pequeñas prácticas locales de buen vivir necesitan ser conocidas y reconocidas. Las redes sociales facilitan tanto la proyección hacia la sociedad como la intercomunicación entre actores que comparten visiones, sueños y proyectos. (...) También otros medios como las radios populares, comunitarias, centros de comunicación audiovisual y la televisión comunitaria son indispensables para dinamizar acciones comunitarias de bien común. Los procesos de comunicación en esos medios se definen y se redefinen en la interacción con el contexto y actores sociales. (Vandenbulcke, 2017: 16)

A su vez, la educación para y a través de los medios, permite cuestionar, investigar y proponer ante los programas de software y hardware que monopolizan la creación y difusión de contenidos por las plataformas virtuales, privatizan el conocimiento individual y colectivo, y utilizan información privada, personal y colectiva con fines no autorizados y mercantiles. Esta educación debe también permitir el uso de las TIC para difundir ideas y producir contrainformación, comunicación y conocimiento liberadores, trascendiendo del consumo a la producción de contenidos y evitando que estos sirvan de mercancía a empresas privadas.

Como afirma Humberto Vandenbulcke (2017), los medios tienen que innovar constantemente, interpelados por las realidades políticas, sociales, económicas y culturales del contexto. En su mirada, innovar es un proceso colectivo de observar los cambios y las tendencias que se destacan en el contexto, y luego proyectar los escenarios futuros deseados, definiendo estrategias para alcanzarlos.

La educación para las afectividades y el cuidado

Las personas traen en sí un contenido rico de experiencias, vivencias, sueños, emociones y sensibilidades, fundamentales para su desarrollo. La educación debe valorar la manera de ser, sentir y pensar de las personas, permitiéndoles, desde el autoconocimiento, desarrollar sus potencialidades intelectuales, afectivas y espontáneas.

En este sentido, el cuidado y el amor deben tomarse como principios éticos de la educación. Es en la alegría, la curiosidad y la complicidad que educadoras y educadores fortalecen en cada educanda y cada educando la pasión por aprender, descubrir, reflexionar, discutir y constatar. Es en la mediación dialógica que se da la verdadera pedagogía del amor, la cual se vive por la emoción, el cariño y el afecto.

Esta forma de socialización y educación que respeta la sensibilidad, las emociones y las afectividades requiere asumir la relación docente - niño o niña desde una perspectiva pedagógica ética y amorosa, la cual es clave para promover una convivencia alternativa.

¿Cómo puedo respetar la curiosidad del educando si, carente de humildad y de la real comprensión del papel de la ignorancia en la búsqueda del saber, temo revelar mi desconocimiento? ¿Como ser educador, sobre todo desde una perspectiva progresista, sin aprender, con mayor o menor esfuerzo, a convivir con los diferentes? ¿Cómo ser educador, si no desarrollo en mí la necesaria actitud amorosa hacia los educandos con quienes me comprometo y al propio proceso formador del que soy parte? (Freire, 2004: 31)

En esta misma línea, según la teoría de la pedagogía crítica, representada por Henry Giroux y otras personas estudiosas, la educación y las relaciones en el ambiente educativo deben permitir a las y los docentes y a la comunidad educativa en general identificar las limitaciones y potenciar las capacidades de tal forma que estas sean la base para la autosuperación, lo que exige sensibilidad, de los sujetos involucrados. Así, lo que una persona interioriza por medio del proceso de socialización depende del contexto en el que está inmersa (familiar, social, cultural y educativo), y cada individuo interactúa e interpreta de diferente manera la realidad en la que vive con base en las representaciones internas que construye, las cuales afectan su accionar en el mundo.

La educación, el arte y la cultura

Una educación emancipadora debe considerar la relación intrínseca entre educación, arte y cultura, la cual debe reflejarse en los sistemas y centros educativos, de manera que sean reconocidos como centros culturales, en donde múltiples manifestaciones no solo se expresan, sino que también se producen.

El arte y la cultura también dialogan con el aprendizaje desde la alegría, la expresión, el juego, lo lúdico y la sensibilidad. Tienen el poder de cuestionar y desnaturalizar las estructuras sociales y los poderes establecidos y cambiar las formas convencionales de pensamiento, creando nuevos imaginarios. Como bien señalaba el actor y dramaturgo Augusto Boal, el arte se nutre de utopías libertarias, y estas son fundamentales para la emancipación de los sujetos.

“El pensamiento sensible, que produce el arte y la cultura, es esencial para la liberación de los oprimidos, amplía y profundiza su capacidad de conocer. Solo con ciudadanas y ciudadanos que, por todos los medios simbólicos (palabras) y sensibles (sonido e imagen), se vuelven conscientes de la realidad en que viven y de las formas posibles de transformarla, solo así surgirá, un día, una real democracia” (Boal, 2009: 16; traducción libre del portugués al español).

Así se plantea una educación para imaginar otros mundos posibles, potenciando la creatividad desde la estética, lo lúdico, el disfrute y la alegría; donde se aprenda a jugar y a practicar deportes, y en que se puedan disfrutar y producir arte y cultura. Una educación donde, además, el cuidado de los espacios educativos se enseñe y se comparta para que los establecimientos sean siempre bellos, limpios, seguros y se conviva en armonía y respeto con la naturaleza.

“Ora, como sabemos, uno de los grandes pilares de la tónica de la emancipación es el sentido común encantado, que no dispensa la carnavalización de las prácticas sociales emancipatorias y del erotismo del riso, del divertimento y de la ludicidad. La carnavalización de las prácticas sociales emancipatorias tiene una importante dimensión autoreflexiva: posibilita la descanonización y la subversión de esas prácticas” (Santos, 2018: 113; traducción libre del portugués al español).

Los cuerpos y territorios en su relación con la educación

El cuerpo es nuestro primer territorio, donde se encuentran nuestros sueños, recuerdos, dolores y fortalezas, nuestra subjetividad. Es así territorio del saber, aprender, vivir y transformar.

Por las relaciones de poder que los constituyen, los sistemas educativos sujetan, normalizan o disciplinan los cuerpos de niños, niñas, adolescentes y jóvenes. Consideramos que se deben proponer pedagogías y currículos que contemplen el trabajo educativo con el cuerpo y la búsqueda por su liberación, desde la conciencia, la expresión corporal, el movimiento, la danza, la educación física y otras alternativas.

Nuestros cuerpos son territorios en disputa, por lo que es necesario que los procesos educativos los reconozcan como espacios de dominación y liberación. El territorio, asimismo, es un cuerpo, un espacio de vida colectiva de las personas entre sí y con la naturaleza, un ámbito de reproducción de la cultura, la economía, la política y la espiritualidad, donde constituimos parte de nuestras identidades colectivas.

La educación popular desde la cual actuamos está construida con los saberes previos individuales y comunitarios, construidos desde la cotidianidad de la vida familiar y social y por ello se considera el cuerpo primer territorio de aprendizaje; el cuerpo de las mujeres permite entender la desigualdad de los roles que impone el patriarcado, permite expresar los sentimientos, proyectar los procesos formativos de las mujeres desde ahí, conlleva a cuestionar, tanto los conceptos como las metodologías de enseñanza y aprendizaje que ignoran la experiencia femenina. El cuerpo es el territorio donde se ubican todas las experiencias vitales, desde el cuerpo y en el cuerpo se proyecta el nuevo conocimiento y a él confluye; así, “los conceptos se aprenden con

el cerebro, pero también con los sentimientos y las emociones”²⁰.

(Fragmento de la publicación *Travesías pedagógicas en educación popular feminista*, REPEM, 2018)

Reflexiones sobre la coyuntura y consideraciones finales

Las líneas anteriores, en las que se retomaron algunas de las perspectivas sobre qué es una educación emancipadora y garante de derechos, desde contribuciones e investigaciones de activistas, personas estudiosas de la temática, maestras y maestros, revelan que las consignas y conceptos hacia una educación transformadora se hacen muy presentes, pero todavía están lejos de consolidarse en políticas públicas, currículos y prácticas educativas en nuestra región.

Observamos con gran preocupación el crecimiento de corrientes de neoconservadurismo en América Latina y el Caribe, las cuales se expresan como fundamentalismo religioso y son respaldadas por grandes conglomerados mediáticos en distintos países. También se nota la tendencia hacia la desfinanciación de la educación pública, la ciencia, la tecnología y la cultura, mientras avanzan en el continente la mercantilización y la privatización de la educación y otros derechos sociales. Otra tendencia retadora son los ataques a la universidad pública, sea por medio del recorte de recursos públicos para estas instituciones, sea por medio de acciones de censura e intentos de descalificar el rol de estos centros de socialización y producción de conocimiento.

De la mano con estos retrocesos, corrientes conservadoras, autoritarias y neo-militaristas promueven la militarización y censura en la educación, bajo el argumento de “combatir el adoctrinamiento ideológico y la violencia en las escuelas y universidades”²¹. Así, se expande el proyecto de crear sociedades controladas en todos los niveles, incluyendo los territorios y los cuerpos, lo que amenaza y vulnera los derechos humanos.

Debido al mantenimiento de esta perspectiva de control, que se coaduna a una sociedad colonizadora y patriarcal, infelizmente, persiste la violencia y discriminación contra las niñas, las mujeres y la comunidad LGBTIQ+, tanto en los espacios educativos como en los distintos ámbitos sociales. Eso se debe, en gran parte, a la resistencia contra la inclusión de una perspectiva de igualdad de género en los currículos escolares, por parte de grupos ultraconservadores y confesionales fanáticos, lo que obstaculiza la implementación de programas de educación sexual integral y convivencia escolar pacífica.

Otra tendencia preocupante de la coyuntura, la cual se impone en el ámbito político, económico, de la comunicación y de la educación, es la definición de libertad como el mero poder de consumo y de integración al mercado de trabajo, lo que va en línea con una mirada instrumental, meritocrática y mercadológica de la educación, y refuerza la tesis del Estado mínimo, de la privatización de las políticas y de que la conquista de derechos es una responsabilidad de las familias y los individuos,

²⁰ Este aspecto diferencial en la consideración de la relación mente, cuerpo, emociones viene siendo recogido por teóricos de la educación popular, tal como lo evidencia Marco Raúl Mejía (2012) en su artículo “La sistematización como proceso investigativo o la búsqueda de la episteme de las prácticas”.

²¹ Son ejemplos que se destacan el proyecto “Escuela sin Partido” en Brasil, el movimiento “Con mis hijos no te metas” en diferentes países de la región, y la ley “Aula Segura” adoptada el año pasado en Chile.

no del poder público.

Esta visión requiere y refuerza evaluaciones para medir la calidad educativa, aplicadas a gran escala. Estas pruebas, especialmente las de carácter internacional, como única medida de calidad educativa, vienen incidiendo sobre los procesos político-pedagógicos, los currículos y las relaciones de convivencia, y son en general desarrolladas por la consultoría de empresas del sector educativo privado, sin la participación de actores de la comunidad educativa. Estas evaluaciones condicionan los sistemas educativos a una perspectiva reduccionista y utilitarista, inclusive con la retirada o reducción de disciplinas humanas, educación física y artes de los currículos, para priorizar la enseñanza de lenguas y matemáticas (habilidades que son evaluadas en dichas pruebas).

La formación meramente técnica y al servicio del mercado está en línea con la homogeneización de la educación y la despolitización del proyecto político-pedagógico. Desde esta perspectiva, se defienden currículos y prácticas estandarizados y orientados hacia la competitividad, mientras se vacían los centros educativos como espacios de debate y reflexión crítica, generando como consecuencias pérdida de autonomía y debilitamiento de la profesión docente, competencia entre instituciones educativas y miembros de las comunidades escolares, y afectación psicológica negativa y en la salud de estudiantes y docentes.

“También es necesario estar alerta en cuanto cierto discurso de tipo técnico sustrae la educación de la esfera pública separándola del ámbito de la sociedad y colocándola en manos de los expertos educativos, quienes terminan construyendo una tecnocracia que si tiene algún poder y posibilidad de control económico, determina los modelos de calidad sin muchas posibilidades de diálogo” (Mejía, 2016).

Representan otros obstáculos para una educación transformadora, la disminución o cierre de espacios para la participación de estudiantes y docentes en la toma de decisiones sobre las políticas educativas, así como el incremento de la criminalización y represión contra las personas que luchan para defender la educación y otros derechos humanos.

Por otro lado, las grandes transformaciones tecnológicas conllevan dilemas civilizatorios por el uso deshumanizador de las neurociencias, la robótica, la inteligencia artificial y otros procesos conexos, que se sustentan en posturas racistas, machistas, misóginas y patriarcales, y pretenden dividir entre seres imprescindibles e irrelevantes. Son actuaciones apoyadas por grupos económicos y élites dominantes, que manipulan y falsifican informaciones como herramienta de disputa política y económica, a través de la rápida difusión de fake news y del refuerzo al discurso de odio y a la polarización política por las redes sociales. Estas miradas, inclusive, ponen en jaque al concepto de qué es ser humano y qué es humanidad, en un ambiente donde las nociones de verdad y ficción, de tiempo y espacio se confunden y nos confunden a todo instante.

Aunque nos escapen a la comprensión por su absurdo, estos cambios tan rápidos y la euforia frente a las nuevas tecnologías conviven con la tendencia al obscurantismo y a movimientos anti-ciencia, terraplanistas, anti-vacuna, creacionistas y fascistas, que hoy forman parte del Gobierno de Brasil, por ejemplo. El presidente Jair Bolsonaro, a fines del año pasado, se posicionó contrario a la teoría

de Paulo Freire y acusó a este educador brasileño reconocido mundialmente como el responsable por los malos resultados de la educación brasileña. Más recientemente, el exsecretario de Cultura de Brasil, Roberto Alvim, en un discurso público, parafraseó a Goebbels, líder de la propaganda nazista y considerado una de las figuras más influyentes de la dictadura de Hitler.

En este contexto desafiador y, por veces, alarmante y desalentador, vemos como única salida mantener la esperanza y consideramos que, más que nunca, se hace necesario recuperar, divulgar e implementar las teorías y experiencias de la pedagogía crítica, la pedagogía popular, emancipadora y transformadora, para promover la reflexión y superación de los retos actuales desde la educación.

Solo mediante la garantía de una educación pública, gratuita, laica, emancipadora y transformadora, será posible contar con espacios críticos, democráticos y reflexivos, que permitan la creación colectiva de soluciones para el enfrentamiento a las crisis actuales. Para ello, se requieren espacios educativos que valoren y promuevan el intercambio, la expresión y la formulación de planteamientos e indagaciones de otros modelos posibles de educación y de desarrollo, donde prevalezcan la convivencia pacífica, la democracia, la igualdad, la inclusión y la dignidad para todas y todos.

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Contributors

Anne-Sophie Bang-Manniche is an Education Assistant working at Oxfam IBIS Denmark since August 2019. She has worked extensively with power dynamics and how it shapes our social selves as part of her bachelor's degree in Cultural Encounters and Social Psychology. She is currently finishing her master's degree in Cross-cultural Studies at University of Copenhagen, further extending her knowledge on the multiplicities of intersectionality and gender.

Antônio Vagner Almeida Olavo Teacher at the Institute of Nature and Culture at the Federal University of Amazonas (INC/UFAM). Graduated in Administration at the Faculty of Castanhal (FCAT). Specialist in Ead and New Technologies from Faculdade da Lapa (FAEL) and in Project Management from Faculdade Dom Bosco. Master in Administration from the Federal University of Viçosa (UFV).

Carmen Pineda Nebot es licenciada en Derecho por la Universidad Complutense de Madrid y licenciada en Ciencia Política y de la Administración por la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. Consultora independiente de administraciones públicas. Coordinadora de Investigación del Grupo de Trabajo “Espaços Deliberativos e Governança Pública” (CLACSO) 2016-2019. Miembro de los grupos de investigación brasileños “Controle Social do Gasto Público”, de la Universidad de UNESP-FCL, Araraquara, SP; “Administração Pública e Gestão Social”, de la Universidad Federal de Viçosa (UFV), MG; “Federalismo y Políticas Educativas”, de la Universidad Federal do Espírito Santo (UFES), ES; “Gestão Social e do Desenvolvimento Local” - GESDEL (UNAMA), A. Ha publicado diversos libros, capítulos de libros, artículos y comunicaciones en congresos nacionales e internacionales sobre participación ciudadana, presupuesto participativo, educación.

Carmen Pineda Nebot Master in Law from the Complutense University of Madrid and Master in Political Science and Administration from the Autonomous University of Madrid. She is an Independent Consultant of Public Administrations. She is the Research Coordinator of the Working Group “Espaços Deliberativas e Governança Pública” (CLACSO) 2016-2019 and member of several Brazilian Research Groups. She is a specialist in participation issues, Participatory Budgeting and public administration. She is the author of several books and articles on these topics.

She has advised various Public Administrations on citizen participation projects and participatory budgeting, participated in international, national and regional research projects on public administration issues and provided training for managerial staff of public administrations.

Carol Inugai Dixon is currently a guest professor at the University of Tsukuba, Japan, where she has lead a team in developing a master's program in International Education to support the Japanese Ministry of Education initiative to transform the national education system through the introduction of International Baccalaureate (IB) programmes. She now teaches courses core to the program. She is president of the Japan Association of Research into IB Education (JARIBE) and member of the International Committee of SEE Learning. Previously, she was a curriculum developer for the IB in their head offices in Europe, in the area of language across the curriculum, which informed practices for the realization of the IB mission to develop international mindedness. Before that, at Yokohama

International School (YIS), Carol was head of social-emotional learning from K-12, as well as TOK coordinator and teacher. Carol's original field of interest is biology.

Débora Cristina Goulart, PhD in Social Sciences (2011) and professor in the Department of Social Sciences at the Federal University of São Paulo and in the Graduate Program in Education.

Eftychia Ramantza is a tutor and an adult educator, born in 1981 and raised in Athens, Greece. She graduated from the Kapodestrian University of Athens, with bachelor degrees in History and Archaeology in 2004 and worked as a tutor of Greek Literature (Ancient and Modern) for many years. She accomplished her postgraduate studies in adult education with a scholarship of excellence and in 2019 got her master's degree from the Hellenic Open University. She is a member of the Hellenic Adult Education Association and has participated in plenty of seminars, educational programs and conferences, and has a particular interest in the theory of transformative learning, which is the subject of her empirical research.

Eneida Maria Erre Araújo holds a master in Education and graduated in Letters from the Federal University of Maranhão (UFMA). Professor at Maranhão State Education Network. Advisor at the Adjunct Secretariat for Professional and Integral Education, at SEDUC, MA.

Eva Iversen is an independent consultant with 25+ years of experience in education strategy/ programme design, capacity building and advocacy. In positions with UNESCO, the Danish Coalition of Global Campaign for Education, Plan International and as independent consultant, she has led on gender campaigns and advocacy; facilitated capacity building processes on gender mainstreaming into education programming and advocacy; provided technical advice and undertaken reviews and evaluations from a gender perspective and written concept papers and articles of gender and education. Her background is master's degrees in political science, philosophy and African studies, including exams in gender studies.

Fabiola Muñoz, Fabíola de Fátima Munhoz Ferreira, es abogada graduada por la Universidad Estadual de Londrina (Brasil) y periodista graduada por la Facultad de Comunicación Social Cásper Líbero (São Paulo, Brasil). Tiene un postgrado en Comunicación y Educación por la Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona (España), y desde el 2004 actúa como redactora y reportera en proyectos y medios de comunicación con énfasis en temáticas de derechos humanos y movimientos sociales. En el 2011, actuó en la cobertura de las movilizaciones y ocupaciones de plazas y espacios públicos en distintos países de Europa, en contra de las políticas de austeridad que eran entonces adoptadas por Gobiernos de la Comunidad Europea, recortando presupuestos para derechos sociales ante la crisis financiera internacional. Tiene amplia experiencia en comunicación orientada al tercer sector, campo en el cual trabaja desde el 2008, y desde el 2012 viene actuando especialmente en organizaciones no gubernamentales que defienden el derecho a la educación. Actualmente es coordinadora de Comunicación y Movilización de la Campaña Latinoamericana por el Derecho a la Educación (CLADE), donde trabaja desde el 2012.

Francisca Carla Ferreira das Chagas Scholarship from the Amazonas State Research Support Foundation (FAPEAM). Specialist in Microbiology and Immunology from Faculdade Candido Mendes.

Degree in Science: Biology and Chemistry from the Institute of Nature and Culture of the Federal University of Amazonas (INC/UFAM).

Isabel Gil es natural de A Coruña (España). Licenciada en Sociología (Universidad de A Coruña), máster en Género y Desarrollo (Universidad Complutense de Madrid) y doctora por la Universidad de A Coruña (Programa Innovación y Equidad en Educación, Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación); el título de la tesis doctoral, La política educativa del gobierno de la Revolución Ciudadana (2007-2017) y la gobernanza corporativa de la educación de corte filantrópico, realizada bajo dirección del Prof. Jurjo Torres Santomé. Actualmente, reside en Ecuador. Es docente de la Universidad de Cuenca (Ecuador) y directora de la carrera de Género y Desarrollo, Facultad de Jurisprudencia, Ciencias Políticas y Sociales de la Universidad de Cuenca (Ecuador).

Jhonatan Uelson Pereira Sousa de Almada is the Director of the Center for Innovation and Knowledge for Excellence in Public Policy (CIEP), president of the International Robotics Federation (FIRA) in Brazil, co-founder of the Educational Planners Network in Latin America and member of the Education Policy Experts Network of UNESCO/IIEP. Master in Education from the Federal University of Maranhão (UFMA). Graduated in History from the State University of Maranhão (UEMA).

Jyotsna Jha has been director of CBPS since January 2011. She has a PhD in Economics from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU). Her research primarily focuses on education and gender. Before her association with CBPS, she worked as an advisor of Education at the Commonwealth Secretariat, London. She has actively worked with education policy planners, administrators, teachers, and professionals at various levels both nationally and internationally.

Luis Eduardo Perez Murcia holds a PhD in Development Policy and Management from the University of Manchester and is currently the GCE's Policy and Research advisor. Luis Eduardo's main areas of research include migration and education. His research has been published in international journals including Migration Studies, Journal of Refugee Studies, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, and Refugee Survey Quarterly.

Márcia Jacomini holds a PhD in Education from the Faculty of Education of the University of São Paulo. Associate Professor, Department of Education, Federal University of São Paulo.

Marcos Eduardo Miranda Santos is a PhD student in Biodiversity and Biotechnology, and Master in Oceanography at the Federal University of Maranhão (UFMA). Graduated in Biological Sciences from the State University of Maranhão (UEMA). He is currently technical advisor at the Innovation Coordination of the State Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Maranhão (IEMA).

Maria Ron-Balsera holds a PhD in Education from Bielefeld University (Germany), an MSc in Human Rights from London School of Economics and an LLM in Human Rights from Universidad Carlos III in Madrid. She has done research at the Institute of Education (UCL) as a "Marie Curie" Education as Welfare visiting research associate, and at UC Berkeley. Maria works as Research and Advocacy coordinator at ActionAid, coordinating the multi-country project "Tax, Privatisation and the Right to Education". Maria has experience as a lecturer, consultant, researcher, and as a teacher. She has also written several publications, including articles in high impact academic journals.

Neha Ghatak holds a master in Sociology from Delhi School of Economics. She is a Research Advisor at the CBPS, where her engagement has primarily been with gender studies and the education sector. She has worked on several projects related to women's empowerment, agency, and connected issues. She has also worked extensively on the Right to Education, 2009. A Sociologist by training, she has been involved in studies to examine the relationship between gender, empowerment, and education.

Niveditha Menon has been working with CBPS since April 2015. She has a PhD in Sociology and Demography, with a minor in Women's Studies from Pennsylvania State University. Prior to CBPS, she was working with the International Institute of Information Technology (IIIT), Bangalore. At CBPS, her work includes gender and education related projects.

Peter Dankmeijer was trained as a teacher but has worked for 40 years as senior consultant on LGBTI issues in education. In this context, he has experience in the areas of training and education, HIV/AIDS prevention, empowerment of grass roots organizations, and consultancy for municipal policies and a range of for profit and non-profit organizations. Dankmeijer is a leading international expert on LGBTI issues in education. He is director of GALE (global network of educators on sexual diversity) and of Edu-Diverse (Dutch expertise center on sexual diversity in education). Dankmeijer has published extensively on these areas; a full list of publications can be found on <https://www.gale.info/peter-dankmeijer>. In his career, Dankmeijer has initiated and participated in about 30 international projects and organized more than 60 international meetings.

Sanne Müller is a Senior Education Advisor working over 20 years with Oxfam IBIS Denmark with experience in education strategy development, programme design, capacity building and advocacy. She has led the Danish Coalition of Global Campaign for Education for more than 15 years. She has done education reviews and evaluations including gender perspectives. She is co-lead in the Oxfam 'Education Community of Practice and Influence' (ECPI). Her background is a bachelor's in education and one in anthropology and a master's degree in adult pedagogics and organizational change processes.

Vernor Muñoz has been Plan International's Global Advisor on Education, Human Rights professor, researcher and coordinator of the Ph.D. Programme of Latin-American Studies at the Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica. He is currently the Global Campaign for Education's Head of Policy. Advocacy & Campaigns and board member of the Universidad Estatal a Distancia de Costa Rica. Vernor Muñoz has higher studies in Literature, Law, Human Rights, Philosophy, and a Ph.D. in Education, and is widely published. He is the former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education (2004-2010).

Vandreza Souza dos Santos. Degree in Science: Biology and Chemistry from the Federal University of Amazonas - INC/UFAM. Postgraduate in Chemistry Teaching Methodology from Faculdade Integrada da Grande Fortaleza - FGF. Master in Chemistry Teaching by the Postgraduate Program in Teaching of Natural Sciences and Mathematics - PPGECCNM, Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte - UFRN.

About Global Campaign for Education

GCE is a leading civil society movement that promotes and defends education as a fundamental human right. GCE has over 124 members, made up of national education coalitions, International NGOs, regional networks, and youth-led organisations. GCE advocates for education as a fundamental right. GCE defines education as the foundation for all forms of development and as a catalyst for growth. As a transnational organization, GCE believes that education is the key to ensuring sustainable and equitable economic growth, improved health and social development.

GCE's initiatives focus on the following strategic areas, equality and no-discrimination, education in emergencies, education financing, and transformative education.