

Coexistence and Learning

Convivências e Aprendizados

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Learn from those who can teach you. The experiences of those who preceded us in our “dead poets”, help you walk through life.

–Walt Whitman. *Do Not Let*.

IN THIS SECTION OF **MATRIZES**, we dedicate space so that affections, concepts, reflections can freely be expressed. These expressions are often connected to personal experiences with Paulo Freire or experienced as influences and dialogues made possible by the work of the patron of Brazilian education. We have gathered texts coming from authors spread across a wide spectrum of regions across the globe. We thus bring together Germany, Brazil, Denmark, the Netherlands, and the Philippines. Such diversity of speeches, places and cultures testifies to the importance of thought, as well as involvement, in work and in personal relationships, maintained with Paulo Freire.

The multiple statements tell stories derived from situations that show either the human dimension of Paulo Freire, busy discussing ideas and sharing affections, or the clarification and realization of projects whose results reached educational institutions, university departments, lines of research, to mention some examples. Finally, the stories illuminate, from different perspectives and modalities, the testimony of coexistence and learning

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MATRIZES

for which the dialogical and intercommunicative procedures, so defended by Paulo Freire, occupy a fundamental place. We live in a historical time influenced by forces of backwardness, intolerance, and authoritarianism, motivated by the primary purpose of naturalizing social inequalities and the intention to promote the neoliberal monologue as a kind of new sense of the world. In this context, it is necessary to listen to the calls of diversity, as they help us to unravel the broad Freirean project, aimed at the emancipation of human beings.

^dThis text is part of an article whose first version was published in Saul (2017).

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WHAT I LEARNED FROM PAULO FREIRE^D

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There are few lines of a text to say the much I learned with Paulo Freire. I usually synthesize my experience of working with Paulo Freire, as a teacher and manager of a public education network as a great learning in politics, theory and practice. But more than a great learning, there was the privilege of learning life lessons from a man who surprised, especially by his consistency. Paulo Freire was a professor at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo (PUCSP) in the Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação (Currículo), after his return from exile, for a period of 17 years (1980-1997). I had the great happiness of sharing with him for the period of almost two decades the space of the classroom, directing the Tuesday's afternoon seminars, and so, I can witness the coherence between his *teaching*, originated from his reflection about his practice and the constant dialogue, which he maintained with educators and students from different countries of the world, and their political-pedagogical propositions. In 1979 I had the chance to see Paulo Freire being received at the PUCSP's theater, when he returned from exile. I started working with the teacher in 1980, invited by the institution to teach classes in the Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação (Currículo).

The Graduate Program where we worked underwent a reformulation, proposing seminars to guide the student's research. Paulo Freire and I were tasked to coordinate the seminars together. We had weekly contact in the classroom, sharing the teaching, and we met, also in program meetings and in seminars planning moments. For the seminar's planning, Paulo Freire used to "call me" for lunch or a coffee at his house; then "we left", as he said,

to do the planning. He always tried to hear what I was thinking about the next semester, we talked a lot and got to the proposals. He made a point of highlighting that our desires, our teachers' dreams, would be confronted with the student's dreams and therefore proposed that the first thing we would do in the classroom would be to discuss the seminar's work proposal with the students. We considered, for the elaboration of the plan, the student's expectations, the possibilities of theme treatment and the evaluations of previous semesters made by the seminar participants. We tried in these preparatory meetings dialogue about our desires, our dreams like teachers. These dialogues with Paulo Freire had always been very productive, rich and fraternal.

On the first day of class, he initially worried about listening to the students, so that their needs and expectations were contemplated in the work proposal to be developed in the semester. This was done in a classroom arranged in a circle, an environment conducive to dialogue, where all participants could see each other face to face and where Paulo Freire could *touch* some of the participants of the wheel, who were to his right or left, gently placing his hand on his shoulders; he did this in a few moments, in a very spontaneous gesture, as if he wanted to be better understood or even to call your interlocutor to participation. Those who lived with Paulo Freire and had the opportunity to be closer to him will surely remember the expressiveness of his gestures. He was a man who spoke with his hands. In conducting classroom work, Paulo Freire made a point of encouraging the students to talk about their projects, even if they were not detailed or totally clear. From this report or research intentions, a second moment was used in which we worked with the different themes, finding the important axes and the *common threads* between the projects. In a recurrent way in the analyses, the following concepts emerged, with priority: social justice, power, freedom, democracy, utopia, ethics, knowledge construction, social commitment, educator training, education as a political act, reality reading, values of the human being. The presence of Paulo Freire in the classroom has always been very dear, remarkable and significant. His performance in class was discreet. Although he knew that his words made difference, with authentic humility, he was rarely the first to speak. Thus, he exercised one of the knowledge that in his last book he pointed out as necessary for the educational practice: *to be able to listen*. He listened to everyone attentively and respectfully and was comfortable interfering whenever he thought it was appropriate or when someone in the group addressed him. In those moments, we heard his gentle voice, which revealed, however, a strong posture that

invited us to think about the challenges presented by him, in the direction of a critical reading of the world, in the uncompromising defense of the ethics of the human being and the struggle for the oppressed. The meetings with Paulo Freire have always been reflective, interesting, fraternal and surprising. His clarity of analysis of the world was admirable! Restless and thought-provoking, he always sought the coherence between his practice and his thinking, showing himself indignant at the social injustices. He always revealed, however, courage, humility and hope.

The great opportunity I had to live and learn with Paulo Freire at the University, expanded and deepened when I was invited by him to direct the curricular reorientation of the Municipal Department of Education of the Municipality of São Paulo and coordinated the permanent educators training program. Working on Paulo Freire's team, as Secretary of Education, was an unusual experience. In our meetings almost every morning in his office, in a building on Paulista Avenue, I met a tall, elegant man in a suit and tie, white hair, almost always long, with soft ripples on his shoulders. Well-disposed, he arrived on time in the early hours in the morning. He expressed his concern about the more general aspects of education policy. I was surprised, however, by the creative and concrete way in which he treated everyday life. With his seventy years' experience and with the authority of a knowledge recognized by many people around the world, he always had something new to propose, with a view to putting into practice the principles of educational policy announced in his administration, advancing step by step, towards the construction of a public, popular and democratic school.

I experienced with Paulo Freire the true meaning of what participation is. Quite unlike the false participation that manipulates employees, centralizing all decisions in the boss hands and delegating only the execution of tasks, the participation in Paulo Freire's team assumed the most radical of the meanings, truly characterizing itself as a participation at a political level. This meant, effectively, sharing decisions. In the difficult, demanding, challenging daily life of education in the city of São Paulo, in the construction of a democratic management, I was able to experience with Paulo Freire his willingness to dialogue, the demonstration of his tolerance, a patience/impatience and a touch of passion in everything he did.

When Paulo Freire was no longer among us, in his honor, PUCSP created in the second semester of 1998 the Cátedra Paulo Freire, under the direction of the Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação: Currículo. At PUCSP, we have understood the Chair as a space for the development of studies and research on and from Paulo Freire's work, focusing on his theoretical-practical

repercussions in education and the Freirean pedagogy potentiality of fertilizing new thoughts. In other words, we honor Paulo Freire in the way we understand that he would like to be honored, rigorously studying his thinking, to understand him and to recreate it. The Chair has been developing broad cumulative research that seeks to map and analyse the “Presence of Paulo Freire’s thoughts in the Educational Systems, in Brazil, from the 90’s decade”. The results of this research have been recorded in publications, with the objective of systematizing and thickening information that can support researchers and education public policies managers, from a critical-emancipatory perspective, enabling them to analyse and recreate policies and practices.

Paulo Freire misses for his lucidity of interpretation of the world facts, for his power of indignation, for his contagious love for life and human beings, for his incessant struggle for justice, for freedom and for his solidarity and always friendly presence.

MEMORY IS THE OTHER IN US: PAULO FREIRE CENTENARY

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Every celebration is a work of memory. Without memory, we lose much of our humanity. Without it, there’s no society nor history. A man without memory, by ideological or physical contingency, is a man in a clear process of alienation and mortification.

With the advent of the centenary of Paulo Freire’s birth, I began to rummage through the memory of everything I had thought and written about this educator from Pernambuco. There was a motivation: the edition of the book *Travessias Acadêmicas das Tecnologias de Comunicação para o Desenvolvimento*, organized by me and Professor Salett Tauk (Tauk & Callou, 2019), in commemoration of our 35 years of teaching activity at the Universidade Federal Rural de Pernambuco (UFRPE). When we looked over our academic records to catalogue all the research material developed with our former graduate students I found, in my archives, the original transcript of Paulo Freire’s conference, held in Santa Maria in 1982 which I had the opportunity to attend. The transcript was made by the journalist and friend Néri Pedroso. By a certain academic instinct, I never liked to get rid of documents, even those apparently unimportant, in the belief that one day they could acquire new meanings. And, in fact, that’s what happened.

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When reading the lecture, we faced each passage with the timeliness of the approach to the theme – *A Educação como Espanto* – and decided to publish it word by word, including Paulo Freire’s answers to the questions asked by the audience. It was the guiding thread that we sought to make sense of the vast material we had 80 research reports from 111 authors with a view to systematizing the different theoretical appropriations we made to renew the object of Rural Communication, Rural Extension and Fishing Extension in Brazil. Professor Nita Freire, Paulo Freire’s widow, was selfless with us in attesting the originality of the material and entrusting us with its publication and the choice of the title of the lecture. Thanks to this memory reconstruction, we had the heart-warming realization of the remarkable presence of Freire’s thought in our teacher-student production over decades of academic work.

The first contact I had with Paulo Freire’s work was by chance, as Paul Veyne (1998) states in *Como se Escreve a História*, in the sense that under the moon everything is fate, event and chance. It was 1977. The 4th edition of *Ação Cultural para a Liberdade* (Freire, 1976/2013a) fell into my hands, first published in 1976. I perfectly remember this moment, mostly by Paulo Freire’s refined and fulminant critique of literacy primers. When I read his comments on the following sentences – “Eva viu a uva”, “Asa é da ave”, “Ada deu o dedo ao urubu” – for example, I was taken in astonishment, to use an expression of his own, since these sentences were very familiar to me because I was literate in one of these primers in the public school where I studied.

Reading *Ação Cultural para a Liberdade* (1976/2013a) opened a new universe in my university formation, now less *naive*, more critical and, perhaps, more politicized for new challenges. At that time, I became an assiduous reader of Paulo Freire’s works, until my meeting with the booklet as he himself one day referred to the work *Extensão ou Comunicação?* (Freire, 1969/2013b). The sights were becoming clearer as the poet says until one day I woke up as the professor of Rural Extension, Fishing Extension and Communication Theory (in graduate school) at UFRPE.

The access to *Extensão ou Comunicação?* (Freire, 1969/2013b) has a story, at least, curious. It was also by chance of fate that I found this work, in the memorable bookstore Livro 7, in 1979’s Recife, because that’s the way it’s written in the copy that I keep with esteem to this day. At the time, I imagined how interesting it would be if Paulo Freire had written about Rural Extension, such was my desire to pursue a career in this field of Agrarian Sciences. I read everything related to the subject. Again, I was taken in amazement to see my obscure object of desire materialized on one of those square displays

that made up that huge bookstore. I never believed in forces of attraction of this kind. But Hermann Hesse assures that such achievements are possible, like the main character in the book *Demian* (Hesse, 1919/2012). In any case, the booklet literally accompanied me in the most decisive moments of my professional life (selection procedure for university professor, master's and doctoral exams etc). Some sort of mascot, a guardian angel, so important that had in my university formation, that chance gave me.

Recently, reading Paulo Freire's biography written by Nita Freire (2017) – *Paulo Freire, Uma História de Vida* – I perceive a relevant aspect of the confrontation of a generation to have access to school. Paulo Freire's mother, unable to place him in a private school went through, in vain, several public schools in Recife to enroll the future Patron of Brazilian Education in the secondary school. My mother was of Paulo Freire's generation. Likewise, she suffered the same saga in Salvador at the hands of a Spanish migrant. Stories that intersect.

Paulo Freire, however, was lucky enough to knock on the door of a private humanist institution, the Oswaldo Cruz College, considered at the time one of the best schools in Brazil. The owner and director of the institution, Professor Aloízio Pessoa de Araújo, Nita Freire's father, welcomed the young student with a scholarship. Professor Aloízio and his wife, Genove, were people known to be committed to the education of young people in Recife. My mother came to know them, by irony of fate. And a cousin lived with her family for two years, on Soledade Street, to study at one of the schools nearby in the mid-1960s.

With these words, of a very personal kind, I pay my little tribute to Paulo Freire. It is to say that memories, if there is any use to them, is precisely the humility of recognizing the best of us, from the other. In this, Paulo Freire occupies a undying and central place!

SPEAKING FOR YOURSELF, FINDING THE WAY FORWARD TOGETHER: WHEN THE COMMUNITY TAKES CHARGE

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As a young activist in the feminist movement in Copenhagen, our *Redstocking basis groups* met up every week to grow personally and professionally based in a simple – and all-encompassing – feminist activism. Based in our

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core truth to “Turn the personal political” we worked systematically when we met up, taking turns on sharing where we were in our lives, collectively exploring, reflecting, understanding. Our personal experiences as women in Denmark in the 70s was the basis, and from our individual, collectivized experiences we extracted an understanding of our lives – and through that consciousness-raising process, we made sense of ourselves, our lives and the society in which we lived – collectively developing strategies and roadmaps for the way forward.

In 1982, when interning in Washington DC with the Women’s Institute for Freedom of the Press, a feminist DC-based media think tank, one of the Institute’s three principles for feminist journalism was that “women have to speak for themselves”. This resonated deeply with my lived history in the movement, and became one of my personal and professional mantras, and the core of the participatory work methodologies, which have formed along with my praxis as elements in my toolbox: “Women – people – should speak for themselves”.

In 1983, when forming part of the group founding the first feminist radio station in Denmark – *Women’s Waves* – we transformed the work methods of the *basis groups* into feminist journalistic principles, using the new won platform to tell stories in ways not heard elsewhere at the time, building new understandings among the producers, the guests and the listeners. This work partly came from my MA thesis about how to use radio as a liberating tool for feminist consciousness-raising: *A Counter-Image in Sound* (Jallov, 1982), where theories were added to my basic lived truth through the thinking of the ‘Frankfurt School’ with its *Sociological Fantasy* (Negt, 1971) – and not least the universe of liberation theory and thinking through the insight found with Paulo Freire’s reflected practice. With this systematized thinking, my budding praxis found a home together with my other guiding star, represented by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The following thirty years I have continued to witness to the power and the generation of empowerment, when everyone speaks for her/himself and when collective sharing and extraction of experiences helps make sense of the world and move on. This has been at the centre in my work to help communities build their own media, and it comes forward in the below stories of change, based in Mozambique and in Lao PDR, where communities have been supported to create *the community’s own radio station*.

Paulo Freire and community empowerment

In 1968 Paulo Freire (1970a) wrote his inspired and inspiring *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and put words to much work carried out not least in his native Latin America including its *liberation theology*. Believing in the power of conscientization as the first step in a people-driven development, his thinking and practice has many similarities with the thinking around *empowerment in my own practice*¹. Four aspects of Freire's thinking come to mind in particular:

- (i) the importance of dialogue, focusing on the importance of space for community and individual experience and knowledge as opposed to top-down instruction, which Freire called *banking*;
- (ii) praxis, i.e. action that is informed and value-based with an aim to create change. The aim being an enhanced community and building of social capital to facilitate justice and human development;
- (iii) *Pedagogy of the oppressed* or a *pedagogy of hope* which draw attention to those who do not have a voice, and who are oppressed. An important element of this was his concern with conscientialisation developing consciousness to have the power to transform reality; and
- (iv) the need to build on the lived experience of participants as this makes learning/empowerment possible. Building on things you understand and know, opens the mind for new insights.

¹The presentation here is inspired by Smith (1997/2002).

Opening communities, hearts and minds - and development options - through dialogue in Lao PDR

In 2006 the Ministry of Information in Lao PDR together with UNDP decided to do a pilot project, starting a community radio station in Khoun in the Xieng Khuoang Province. It was one of the areas in Laos hardest-hit by the more than 15-year-long *secret war*, during which two tons of bombs per inhabitant were dropped over the beautiful mountainsides and rice pastures (O'Connor, 2020). Rebuilt, Khoun is now a minor district seat in the Lao Xieng Khouang Province, and one of the 47 poorest districts in Laos. The development challenges are immense for the 90 villages with more than 31,000 people: 40.6 percent are Lao Lum, 54.14 percent are Hmong and 5.22 percent are Khamu. According to the 2005 Census, one-third of the district's people had no access to roads back then, and two-thirds had no access to electricity. Eighty-two health centres existed in the district, and in 2000, skilled health personnel in Xieng Khuoang province attended only eight percent of births.

Twenty-five percent of the adults in the Khoun district were illiterate. Two-thirds are mostly ethnic women, and they are the most vulnerable group.

With the Lao Lum living in the valleys, Khmu halfway up into the mountains and the Hmong highest up, the three ethnic groups of the district had little interaction due to the lack of infrastructure but also the many historical political contradictions and conflicts since the latest war, and with the Lao Lum dominating the others. It was in this reality the *Khoun Community Radio for Development* was started.

The decision had been taken as the development challenges in the poorest districts did not seem to decrease despite intense efforts over many years. A one-party state, where the voices of citizens do not have a regular space on the national radio, the Lao Government recognized that something was needed to get the development dynamics going in these small ethnic communities in the mountainous regions of the country. This was the beginning of the *Community Radio for Development* in Khoun.

One year after the *Khoun Community Radio for Development* went on air, an impact assessment was carried out to see whether the hypothesis, that a community radio would stimulate development, actually worked? After only one year with the usual challenges met and resolved, development had, indeed, started to pick up pace, including²:

- increased harmony and equality in families, and less abusive practices towards women;
- 60–70% more ethnic women used health facilities when pregnant;
- 50% more ethnic women vaccinated their children;
- important decrease in diarrhoea-related illness due to improved practices;
- parents began to take more responsibility for children's welfare (left to the school before);
- new agricultural techniques had been demonstrated and adopted – with positive results:

With *Khoun Radio* we can know things that we did not know before. Khoun Radio talks about things that are close to us. We can go and see what we hear. This creates trust! (Adult Hmong man)

From within the collective of eighty Khoun volunteer broadcasters, the following impact statements were shared based on the question of how they saw their role in the development process?

Before *Khoun radio*, our people did not get local information in our own language. I am happy to be part of this. My family is really proud that I help our people! And it does help a lot!!! (Khmu man)

²The impact assessment was carried out March 2009 – as referred to in Jallof (2014).

I have learnt so much at the radio: to do research for a programme, analyse our problems, interview people, put the weekly programme together, work with computer editing... a lot of new important skills – it is really exciting!!! Working with colleagues and friends from other ethnic groups is also new. We respect each other and work together well. Beginning with us, the producers, the radio has the potential to be a really important tool for unity of our whole Khoun community. (Young Laolum woman)

These ground-breaking changes happened as the broken ‘social tissue’ slowly but sure was mending through *the dialogue and understanding* taking root. The community radio framework, *facilitating the space for community creation and the individual experience of the other*, generated the basis for unity, as the woman says above. as opposed to top-down instruction, which Freire called *banking*.

Empowered communities take charge of positive change in Central Mozambique

Coming out of a 30 year long (partly externally imposed) civil war, and a 25-year socialist Government-controlled one-party press period, Mozambique with the peace accord in 1992 was looking to the media³ to support lifting the country forward and towards a multi-party democracy. Among the opportunities looked at by Mozambique and its development partners, was as a new feature, to also put media in the hands of the communities, whose voices had never before been listened to in that way.

With four state-controlled *community radios* left from the Socialist period, one of which Catholic, the remaining state-controlled, partners like UNESCO, UNDP, the Catholic Church and the Government Communication Institute (ICS) (<https://www.ics.gov.mz/>) joined hands to explore opportunities for the start up of a movement supporting communities’ own opportunity to form community-owned, and -run radios with radio programmes developed by ordinary volunteer community members about issues of importance in their lives (Jallov, 2015).

Starting the movement in 2000, 30 stations could be identified in 2002, 50 in 2004 and today, in 2021, there are more than 100 community media stations in Mozambique with different ownership structure and orientation. As the background history article linked above describes, more than half of the established stations were ‘real community stations’, not owned and controlled by the state or a church, but by the community itself. The significance and impact of these stations in Mozambique is documented, and findings underscore all that the Freire *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is about, drawing attention to those who do not have a voice, and who are oppressed.

³ First law passed – already in 1991 (Law No 18/91 of 10 August 1991) – a year before the peace accord and just after the new Constitution.

In Mozambique, in many communities, the community spirit and the social tissue was destroyed after the tragic and tough civil war, where lines of tension were drawn through villages and families, where some on the other side had hurt some on ours. This brought a paralysation and a stand-still, also of development. When community radios started to be created through facilitation, community mobilisation and empowerment, communities changed from being objects moved around by others, to become subjects of their own destiny, collectively. A senior Parliamentarian, coming back to the capital Maputo after a visit to his village a year after the community had started a radio station, was startled by the unexpected local energy, dynamism, and empowered action he had witnessed: “Totally transformed lives in my childhood village – how can a community radio cause that???”⁴

⁴ A personal experience by the author of this article, who lived and worked in Mozambique 1998-2004 (<http://www.mediamoz.com/>).

Systematic engagement by community members in editorial groups about matters of concern (education, culture, health, rights...) based upon effective mobilisation, community mapping and capacity building, generates the *conscientization* the Freire talks about, the insightful consciousness with the power to – through insight – transform reality. The added social capital generated through the collaborative and future-oriented work in the radio (contrary to the paralysation of the past) provides new and productive openings and opportunities.

Based on a year, where local champions with coach support mobilised, inspired and trained community members to lead and fill the community radio in the district capital Dondo, in the Sofala province in Central Mozambique, the following impact results were found – including the overall total change in terms of openness, increased debate and empowered and improved livelihood. Other impact results include:

- Women respected more, more seeking elected office – and much less violence against women;
- Electricity supply (had been halted due to corruptive practices);
- Community policing (limiting neighbourhood thefts and violence);
- No cholera deaths (normal average 160-200 per year during the rainy season);
- Improved public services in hospitals and offices (radio mentioned, when officials did not turn up for work);
- More HIV/AIDS testing (due to more openness and de-stigmatization);
- Increased participation in elections (because of understandable information and encouragement);
- Increased pride in the local culture & language (an important reason why the radio was so trusted).

With trust at the core of community change

With the activist origin of my empowerment-focused work methods, and the Freirean systematization, the methodologies I have co-created in the start-up of community radio and media have given added evidence to the power of building insights from the bottom up. The powerful impacts generated within the two community radio stations presented above are very similar to the results of other comparable studies, all having paid careful attention to attribution and the two above have been followed every year for a five-year period, reconfirming the impact.

Searching for answers to what it is within the Freirean *pedagogy* and my own *liberating methodologies in radio broadcasting* that cause the change, that cause the communities to follow the development advice from their local stations, it is actually quite simple. It is because the station is ours; we see and feel this through the community broadcasters being from here, known and respected, speaking our language - in our way, and using our culture, our stories and our history, our idioms and sayings. This generates the trust needed for powerful change to happen because it includes all the Freirean principles of love, empathy, hope and humility. Together we can do it!

TESTIMONIAL PAULO FREIRE: “TRUST THE PEOPLE”CEES J. HAMELINK^h

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I met Paulo Freire in the early 1970s when he worked with the World Council of Churches and I had the privilege of sharing an office with him while I worked on alternative communication projects for the Lutheran World Federation. I remember that at the end of a long office day Paulo would often look at me and say, “Cees, never forget, trust the people!”. Ever since, that sentence continued ringing in my mind as it became the basis for my own work on dialogic communication. I learned from Paulo that the basis of the *communicative freedom* that should guide human communication is trust. I also learned that trust means that I need to know that what the other says is genuine and the other should be assured that what I say is authentic. We found a shared inspiration in Martin Buber who believed that I can only speak to someone in the true sense of the term if I expect him to accept my word as genuine. Trust is essential to living together. It is the basis of social cooperative behaviour. We cooperate because we

rely on others to be reliable. If they turn out to be unreliable there can be no cooperation. Trust is a dependency relation based upon the expectation that this dependence will not be abused and this expectation can be based upon knowledge about earlier behaviour of the other, or knowledge about his character, or strong affective feelings. If an encounter starts from distrust, i.e. the belief that the other cannot be relied upon to speak truthfully, to deliver what he/she promises or to meet a commitment, a conversation may be possible but not a real dialogue. In dialogical communication you need to trust the conversational partners. Equally important however is that you can be trusted as a partner. Thus dialogical communication is also an exercise in critical self-reflection. Can I be sure that I am to be trusted? Do I trust myself? Do I believe my own truth?

I understood the meaning of trust in allowing the other to be free in his/her communication. I remember an evening in the John Knox foyer in Geneva when the audience expected to be treated to the great wisdom of the guru Freire. However, Paulo refused to play that role. He sat in front of the audience and said “Please, share your insights with me”. After a moment of paralysis, people began to talk and argue. That evening I saw my friend practicing *communicative freedom*. The respect for the communicative freedom of others is a basic recognition of their human agency and requires that we accept the other as fundamentally different from us and see their alterity as a unique feature that cannot be assimilated and reduced to similarity. Dialogical communication opens the possibility of recognizing that a different position is justified and that there can be real differences and genuine Otherness. In the dialogue participants do not hold on to only one position as the absolute truth. They accept the willingness to cope with real and deep differences. The respect for the communicative freedom of the other is a recognition of the dignity of human agency. If we deny people agency we do not accept them as autonomous beings, as beings defined by themselves and in charge of their own lives. I discovered in just this one evening that dialogical communication is a fundamental precondition for true humanization. Also that the dialogue cannot exist without a profound love for the world. In her correspondence with Karl Jaspers Hannah Arendt wrote that she wanted her book on political theories (that she never completed) to have the title *Amor Mundi*. Paulo understood that meaningful non-oppressive relations with others are only possible on the basis of love for the world.

In the Geneva office we often talked about power. As a student of the power of propaganda I would refer to the power as it was classically defined by Robert Dahl (1957), “A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to

do something that B would otherwise not do” (p. 202). Paulo helped me to see the other dimension of power. Power not only in the adversarial, competitive sense but also in the spirit of mutuality and solidarity (Freire, 1970b, p. 69). Power as a reciprocal process of empowerment. Power to do something that was also seen by Hannah Arendt (1970) as, “the human ability not just to act but to act in concert” (p. 44). Through our discussions I could see power as capacity, as potentiality and as a resource that continues to be highly unequally distributed in the world.

As I later in life entered the academic world, Paulo’s spirit was there again. I found that most educational policies and practices conceived of education as an instrument to facilitate the conformity of students to the prevailing political-economic and socio-cultural system. Paulo reminded me that education should be a means by which men and women deal critically with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. Education as Paulo would argue is never a neutral process. We have to make a choice between two opposing modes of thought. The conformity approach (that seems to be more and more dominant around the world) versus the freedom approach (inspired by the work of Paulo). Around the world, when talking to teachers, students, and politicians responsible for educational policies I saw a predominance of the conformity mind-set that confirmed Bertrand Russell’s (1916) insight that.

The prevention of free inquiry is unavoidable so long as the purpose of education is to produce belief rather than thought, to compel the young to hold positive opinions on doubtful matters rather than let them see the doubtfulness and be encouraged to independence of mind. (p. 107)

Contrary to this, the conformity approach continues to manifest itself in the following ways:

Education is rapidly becoming an arena of winners and losers: a competition model prevails with focus on economic output so that quantity wins out against quality. This implies that financially less successful programmes will be censored away. It is crucial to get the highest possible Hirsch index score: a measuring standard with little validity that combines citations with productivity but tells nothing about the quality of the research. Academic institutions becoming egoistic entities fighting for the biggest part of the cake. The biggest share (or any share at all) of diminishing funds for research means that educational staff need to spend disproportionate amounts of time to prepare in most cases unsuccessful research project proposals.



Academic education in the spirit of Paulo would stimulate what Russell called “the love of mental adventure” whereas in the conformity approach there is no space for the kind of dialogue that Paulo saw as central to the transformation of the world. The choice between the conformity approach and the freedom approach can be put as a choice between president Jair Bolsonaro and philosopher Paulo Freire. Or as the granddaughter of Freire writes between the eradication of her grandfather’s heritage or the celebration of his liberating approach to education.

Favourite topics in discussions at the restaurant of the Ecumenical Building on the Route de Ferney, dealt with the issue of rational discourse versus imagination. As Paulo would stress the importance of rationality, consciousness, and the use of language, I wanted dialogical communication to be re-enchanted and liberated from rational discourse. As I – many years later – read Enrique Dussell’s critique of the discursive ethics as proposed by Karl-Otto Apel and Jurgen Habermas (Dussell & Ape, 2013), I think Paulo would have agreed with Dussell that the genuine dialogue as political action should not be based upon rational argumentation but should be embedded in the reality of exploitation and exclusion.

If our Genevan coffee stops would have lasted longer I would have wanted to ask him whether he had read Hemingway’s (1940) *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. He probably did, but did he read it with the same fascination that Merleau Ponty and Sartre had for the book?

As always in the encounter with great minds many questions are left unanswered. Yet, even if they were critical, there is the certainty that Paulo would have taken them seriously and responded with a genuine open-mindedness.

HOMAGE TO PAULO FREIRE ON HIS CENTENARY¹

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When Paulo Freire returned from 15 years of exile, in August 1979, we met in São Paulo. We were neighbours, and we often visited each other. Our personal relationships became a lot closer, which allowed us to write a book mediated by the journalist Ricardo Kotscho; the book was titled *This School Called Life*.

Paulo became ill in 1997 and died on May 2 of that year. I was with him in the final moments, in the moments that I call *transvivênciação*, there in May 1997. And right after that I wrote a text and I want to end my speech,

¹ This testimony was taken from the lecture given by Frei Betto in the Paulo Freire Centennial debate cycle: *Paulo Freire Centennial: 7 Talks in Preparation for the Next 100 Years* held by Loughborough University London, in March 2021. See Libanio Christo (2021).

¹ Frei Betto is a writer, author of *For a Critical and Participative Education* (Rocco) and *This School Called Life* (Ática), in partnership with Paulo Freire and Ricardo Kotscho.

enunciating to you this text, which I think translates the entire methodology of Professor Paulo Freire:

“Ivo saw the grape”, taught the literacy manuals. But Professor Paulo Freire, with his method of raising awareness, made adults and children, in Brazil and in Guinea-Bissau, in India, in Nicaragua and in many others places, discover that Ivo didn’t just see with his eyes, he also saw with his mind and wondered if grapes are nature or culture.

Ivo saw that the fruit is not the result of human work. It’s Creation, it’s nature. Paulo Freire taught Ivo that sowing grapes is human action in and about nature. And the hand, a multipurpose-tool, awakes the potential of the fruit. Just as the human being was sown by nature in the years and years of evolution of the Universe.

Harvesting the grape, crushing it and transforming it into wine is culture, Paulo Freire pointed out. Work humanizes nature and, when doing it, men and women become humanized. Work that establishes the relationship node, social life. Thanks to the teacher, who started his revolutionary pedagogy with workers from the ‘Sesi’ of Pernambuco, Ivo also saw that the grape is harvested by workers (so-called “boias frias”), who earned little, and traded by intermediaries, who earn much more.

Ivo learned from Paulo that, even without knowing how to read, he is not an ignorant person. Before learning letters, Ivo knew how to build a house, brick by brick. The doctor, the lawyer or the dentist, with all their study, are not able to build like Ivo. Paulo Freire taught Ivo that no one is more cultured than another, there are parallel, distinct cultures that complement each other in social life.

Ivo saw the grape and Paulo Freire showed him the bunches, the vine, the entire plantation. He taught Ivo that the reading of a text is more understandable the more the text is inserted in the context of the author and the reader. It is from this dialogical relationship between text and context that Ivo extracts the pretext to act. At the beginning and at the end of learning it is Ivo’s praxis that matters. Praxis-theory-praxis, in an inductive process that makes the student a historical subject.

Ivo saw the grape and did not see the bird that, from above, sees the vine and does not see the grape. What Ivo sees is different from what the bird sees. Thus, Paulo Freire taught Ivo a fundamental principle of epistemology: the head thinks where the feet step. The unequal world can be read from the oppressor’s point of view or from the point of view of the oppressed. It results in a reading as different one from another as between Ptolemy’s vision, when observing the solar system with his feet on Earth, and Copernicus, when imagining himself with his feet in the Sun.

Now Ivo sees the grape, the vine and all the social relationships that make the fruit a party in the wine cup, but he no longer sees Paulo Freire, who died in



God's Love on the morning of May 2, 1997. He leaves us with an invaluable work and an admirable testimony of competence and consistency.

Paulo was to be in Cuba, where he would receive the title of Doctor Honoris Causa, from the University of Havana – and in which I could not represent him. However, before embarking to Palestine I went to pray with Nita, his wife, and their children around his calm face: Paulo saw God.

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JOURNEY TO THE “INTIMACY OF THE OBVIOUS”

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For Leda Gusmão Chiappini

⁵Educator and lawyer, deeply engaged in the democratization of quality public education, she studied and reinvented Paulo Freire in the classroom, having also had a personal contact with him in a congress she participated in in Bahia, still in the 1960s. His enthusiasm for the human figure and the pedagogical-philosophical-political thought of this great educator, infected me through many exemplary conversations and readings.

Background and highlights on an unforgettable conversation

This brief text is based on the conversation in the subtitle mentioned, briefly circumstantial by some previous memories, because long before it, there were some decisive encounters, even if indirect, with Paulo Freire, either by references to his work, or by testimony of those who had already seen him and listened to him personally. As was the case, of my sister, Leda Gusmão Chiappini, to whom I dedicate these memories⁵.

⁶From the dissatisfaction with this work, conceived by the University as recycling, my desire was born, associating myself with others and other equally dissatisfied colleagues to create alternatives more in the Freirian line. From there was born, at the end of 1970, the Association of Teachers of Language and Literature, of which I was a founding partner and first vice-president and, later, already in the years of 1990, a project that to this day is the girl of my eyes, training the educator in service (EFES), which yielded, among others things, 14 books from collection *Aprender e Ensinar com Textos* (Chiappini, 2015).

Hence to begin to read and reflect on the great educator and his so-called method, it was almost a natural step, as, finishing my studies of Letters and starting in teaching, in the so-called high school and in college, I was increasingly trying to practice a dialogical pedagogy, which also included the extension courses, teachers of first and second grades⁶.

Between 1978 and 1979, I did a postdoctoral research in France on Literature and Teaching, which, in addition to seminars in different universities, and internships, colloquiums and lots of reading on education in general and literature teaching, in particular, motivated me to conduct several interviews with students and teachers more varied. In the case of Paulo Freire, after a systematic study of his work, published until then, I took advantage of the relative proximity of Paris and Geneva, to interview him as well.⁷

In this tribute to his jubilee, having been invited to narrate a little of my conviviality with him, I chose to briefly recall that meeting of ours in Geneva,

⁷With postdoctoral fellowship, granted by FAPESP.

when we had a friendly, fruitful and therefore unforgettable conversation. Yes, because it was not just an interview, in which the interviewer asks and the interviewee answers. It was a true conversation, in the etymological sense of the word, related to the verb⁸ to live together and *also to direct and redirect* thought and speak in contact with another person(s). More than talking and listening, it was about dialogue, a key concept in Paulo Freire's thought and practice.

The questions I had sent him by letter, in advance, I realize today, were "about God and the world"⁹. But Paulo knew how to choose those that could be the leader of a reflection from some founding practices of his pedagogy¹⁰. Thus, he set the tone of the conversation, recalling the beginning of his pedagogical work, in the Serviço Social da Indústria (SESI), with parents and teachers at their schools. It was the "circles of parents and teachers", later considered by himself as "a chapter of adult education". From this experience he highlighted a remarkable episode for the theoretical and practical development of his pedagogical work, emotional and narrating in a very moving way his first attempts to interfere with the families of the students, to end the frequent physical punishments they suffered from their parents. His attempt to teach that this should not be done would have provoked a real lesson on the part of one of these parents, who taught him to learn from the student. From, above all, the direct perception of the social problems they faced, being workers always tired, living, sleeping and eating poorly, in contrast to the social conditions he seemed to guess in *the master*, describing with great concrete condition the house of Paulo and his family, comfortable, with a room for each child and lots of food on the table (Leite, 2005, pp. 309-310).

Episodes like this have become, for the since then, educator-educating, in paradigmatic references to guide the work of thought through the labyrinths of knowing. And this resulted, among others, this reflection about the seemingly obvious:

I am convinced today that one has to break the obvious and expose the intimacy of the obvious. And when you do that, you find that the obvious isn't as obvious as you think. It's obvious to you at a certain point, but it's not for a lot of people. (Leite, 2005, p. 311)

An obvious text?

Among many other things, in the long conversation, it is also worth highlighting what Paulo spoke about his performance in the post-literacy process in São Tomé and Príncipe, carried out already in full Geneva exile. To better illustrate the material elaborated there, under its coordination,

⁸ It was a three-way conversation, as she also attended a colleague of the Seminars we attended at the École de Hautes Études of Paris. This is the Chilean philosopher Antonio Faundez, also exiled at the time. His participation was accepted by Paulo, to whom I presented him in the letter requesting confirmation of the interview. Giving an example of openness and readiness to dialogue, Paulo not only received it, but he listened with patience and respect to his criticisms, as an Orthodox Marxist, seeing in them an opportunity to take advantage of to better clarify his ideas, for the other and for himself, learning democratically from the contradictory, rare attitude to this day, when polarizations tend to present themselves in an angry and insupersive way. This exchange was so important that it brought about a lasting partnership between the two, including the publication of dialogical books, books that talk, as is the case of *Por uma Pedagogia da Pergunta* (Freire, 2012).

⁹ Resuming the master expression Antonio Candido, on some initial formulations of the thesis projects he guided.

¹⁰ The full interview, with all questions submitted and an initial updated comment, was republished in Leite (2005).

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and its political-pedagogical objectives, he read aloud a text, apparently simple, which has much to do with the Freirian concept of dialogue and dialogical communication, in the process of study and learning, linked to the life and work experience of the students. Here's the text¹¹:

¹¹This text, with small differences, circulates in other publications before and after the notebooks edited for use in São Tomé and Príncipe.

It had rained a lot every night. There were huge pools of water in the lower parts of the terrain. In certain places, the land, so wet, had turned mud. Sometimes the feet just slipped on it, sometimes more than slipping the feet to get mired in the mud up to above the ankles. It was hard to walk. Pedro and Antonio were transporting baskets full of cocoa in a truck to the place where they were supposed to dry. At one point they realized that the truck wouldn't cross the quagmire that was ahead. They stopped, got out of the truck, and looked at the quagmire, which was a problem for them. They crossed on foot about two meters of mud, defended by their long-barreled boots. They felt the thickness of the mud. Thought. They discussed how to solve the problem. Then, with the help of some rocks and dry branches of trees, they gave the terrain the minimum consistency so that the wheels of the van could pass without becoming tossed. Peter and Antony studied. They tried to understand the problem they had to solve and then found an accurate answer. You don't just study at school. Peter and Antony studied while working. To study is to assume a serious and curious attitude in the face of a problem. (Leite, 2005, p. 321)

¹²It is worth remembering, however, that he dedicated one of his first books to the theme, but focusing, we could say, in the lack of real communication of most of the work developed by experts in extension programs, especially in the rural context, in which he worked, in the Departamento de Extensão Cultural of the Universidade de Recife, where the practice of teaching the language, linked to the communication process, would have led him to reflect on education as an extension. Therefore, it is difficult to think about the extension in Paulo Freire without the act of communicating, beyond the mere "communicated".

¹³In this sense, his books would not be books, but "book-reports".

¹⁴Education as a producer of knowledge, it is revealed, therefore, a political act, to the extent that those who educate themselves thinking and thinking dialoguing, learning and teaching, resist the impositions of ready, unrelated and alienating thoughts. This underlines not only the conception of non-neutrality of education, but also its dialogical character, conceived in the formation of citizenship, as an act of educommunication, which is explained exemplarily in the text of Citelli et al. (2019).

Paulo wrote little and spoke little about communication¹², but dramatized it tirelessly in the dialogue with his students of various backgrounds and ages. And in our conversation, he explicitly said that he considered communication the basis of education, thus revealing, as in the case of the Marxist and Christian basis of his thought and practice, part of what, in his writings, is often expressed in silences full of meaning. He also explained that teaching and studying the Portuguese language and reading in the field of philosophy and psychology of language would have made evident the close relations between education and theory of knowledge. Knowing and educating, enabling students to exercise the work of thought, would imply thinking about practice, always social¹³. And dialogue, in conversations that would gain a dimension of work, by examining, analyzing and proposing. Exactly what happens in the short text, in which Antonio and Peter stop, get down together from the car to examine the terrain, look, think, discuss, identify the problem and jointly find the solution to get out of the quagmire. The text thus gains an allegorical dimension, pointing out the confusion that prevents the advance to the light of knowledge and imposes the proposition as an act to overcome a problematic situation¹⁴.

Study, communicate, discuss, talk, all this is in the theoretical and practical work of Paulo Freire and showed itself in several aspects of our conversation, including this small-large-simple and complex example of the post-literacy work in São Tomé and Príncipe.

Then I tell you: come back to relearn, reteach and reinvent the Brazil

Upon returning from exile in the early 1980s, Paulo told journalists for the first time, who asked him what he would do: first of all relearn Brazil.

In the first half of the return, we had the privilege of being welcomed into his home by him and D. Elsa, his wife and, at the beginning of everything, master. Then we resumed, in the midst of a delicious Pernambuco's *feijoada*, our conversation about his work, which at that moment, according to him, had been criticized. But only from a theoretical point of view, without due attention to his permanent effort to relate theory and practice. This, however, was not the central point of the resumption of our contact. This occurred when he became secretary of education of the government of Luísa Erundina (between 1989 and 1991) and made a broad invitation to professors from São Paulo universities, especially Universidade de São Paulo, Pontifícia Universidade Católica and Universidade de Campinas, to act as advisors in the curricular reorientation of elementary and middle schools in São Paulo, as well as in the training of educators and educators. In this project, which counted in its beginning with close to one hundred advisors of these three universities, I had the honor of collaborating from beginning to end, when only ten of them remained. But this is another story to be retold with more time and space, perhaps in partnership with other participants, who persevered there. It is open to the possibility of, later, in this or another specialized magazine, we think of something broader, including this pioneering experience of the city of São Paulo¹⁵.

ESTABLISHING THE CORE IDENTITY OF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION IN PAULO FREIRE: A TESTIMONIAL BY THE UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES – COLLEGE OF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION (UPLB CDC)

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¹⁵Where the role of the so-called *pedagogy of correspondence*. The letters were used and later published in a book as a communication strategy and training of teachers, especially who sought to rid the condition of aunts to reintroduce them to the readers and themselves, as educators. See: Pereira Coelho (2011).

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For us, the soul and essence of development communication as an academic discipline, profession, and practice finds grounding in Paulo Freire’s philosophy and approach in the humanization of the oppressed through the awakening of their critical consciousness via dialogue within his matrix of love, humility, faith in the poor’s capacities, hope, and critical thinking.

Generations of development communication (devcom) practitioners and professionals, teachers, and researchers mostly in the Philippines but also spread out in Southeast Asia and other southern regions like Africa and South Asia, who are alumni of University of the Philippines Los Baños – College of Development Communication (UPLB – CDC) or UPLB – Devcom, have embraced the core principles of Freire’s philosophy and teachings as the foundation of participatory development communication that empowers the poor and marginalized as subjects of their development toward the realization of their full potential as humans with dignity. These devcom alumni are also mentoring future professionals, teachers, and researchers in the discipline in 22 other academic institutions in the Philippines plus some in other developing countries.

UPLB Devcom emerged as a pioneer to offer bachelor’s, master of science, and doctor of philosophy in devcom in the 70s, seeded by Dr. Nora Cruz-Quebral’s seminal paper defining the concept and budding discipline in an agricultural development conference in 1971 in Los Baños¹⁶.

The focus of Quebral’s (1971) definition of Devcom on the poor and marginalized, that UPLB Devcom alumni have considered foundational, aligns with Freire’s focus on the oppressed and their empowerment as human beings with dignity:

the art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country and the mass of its people from poverty to a dynamic state of economic growth that makes possible greater social equality and the larger fulfillment of human potential. (p. 1)

Revised in 2012 as “the science of human communication linked to the transition of communities from poverty in all its forms to a dynamic overall growth that fosters equity and the unfolding of individual potential” (Quebral, 2012, p. 9).

¹⁶UPLB Devcom traces its roots to an Office of Publication and Extension established by then University of the Philippines College of Agriculture (UPCA) in 1954. It was elevated as an academic department, Department of Agricultural Information and Communication, in 1962; renamed Department of Agricultural Communication in 1968; and again renamed as Department of Development Communication in 1973. It started offering the MS program in 1973; the BS in Development Communication (BSDC) in 1974; and the PhD program in 1976. It was elevated as an Institute of Development Communication in 1987 and as a full-fledged College in 1998. To date, it has graduated 3,019 in the BSDC, 309 in the MS (Devcom), and 95 in the PhD (Devcom).

As third- and fourth-generation faculty members of UPLB Devcom (Quebral, Juan F. Jamias, Ely D. Gomez among the first generation, and Felix Librero, Teresa H. Stuart, and Madeline Mag-uyon-Suva among the second) we first heard of Paulo Freire briefly mentioned by our mentors in some undergraduate classes, and took up his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in depth in graduate class if we were lucky. To those of us who were privileged to interrogate his work, we pleasantly discovered the very essence of devcom in Freire's publications, whose discourse fired up our hearts¹⁷.

Our first-generation teachers Quebral, Jamias, and Gomez in their respective 1970s writings have asserted that devcom is value-laden, and Dr. Quebral drove this home to us time and again in our many privileged firsthand formal and informal interactions. We found this dimension articulated in Freire's works. While Devcom influenced by Freire is often labeled *participatory*, Dr. Quebral always asserted the label as redundant, underscoring that Devcom is intrinsically participatory.

In our curricula, we review among other concepts and theories Freire's dialogue in foundational courses in the undergraduate and graduate programs. They specifically comprise the basis of the undergraduate core course DEVC 70 *Interpersonal Communication in Development*, instituted in 1992, taken in the undergraduate's third year. The course is more practical and reflexive than theoretical – it invites the students to examine themselves and ascertain their values; emphasizes outlook and perspective rather than technique; arms them with some ground rules in community work; exposes them to real situations in community; challenges them to facilitate problem-posing dialogue and self-reflection to address real challenges in a community with the help of simulations and exercises; and hopes they could deliberately facilitate or experience (given the practical time limits) praxis or the process of reflection-action, which otherwise lies on their teacher's shoulders to jumpstart in the class, at the very least. This provides the balance that Dr. Quebral had long urged the curriculum needed above the media skills it offered undergraduates.

DEVC 126, *Participatory Development Journalism* (PDJ), instituted in 2014, is a journalism course that aims to apply Freire's praxis as learning-in-action. It expands the concepts of community journalism to embody dialogue in teaching the students and communities about the importance and relationship of communication and social change at the grassroots. The course values community agency, that is, a perspective in development that emphasizes the power of the communities to improve their own situation by telling their own stories, in this case, with the use of media-based communication and imbued with the principles of journalism,

¹⁷Since the 1960s, many faculty members in UPLB Devcom observed a profound shift in the institutional notions of communication and development. Most of them have agreed that there's an awareness and critical attitude toward the diffusion of innovation and behavioral change communication. Senior faculty members, in particular, believed that many of them had been doing work very similar to participatory communication even before they read Latin American critical authors (Dagli, 2018).

i.e. verification towards truthful storytelling. The stories produced by the DEVC 126 classes go through the process of joint storytelling – a dialogue between equals – where each learns from the other. Here, we emphasize that the output is only as good as the process of storytelling that engages participants in reflection and self-reflection toward conscientization and eventually seeing ways toward emancipation. Our students learn from the communities about strengths and opportunities at the grassroots, a grounded view of aspirations of the ordinary folk, about being in a privileged position and how that privilege can be useful in working for social change.

Although it emphasizes the role of digital media, the core of participatory development journalism lies in community engagement that privileges the voices from the ground. Thus, undertaking participatory development journalism requires humility and a certain mindset that respects local knowledge, multiple perspectives, and shared learning about a particular community development concern.

A key feature of PDJ is community immersion. It allows our students to experience community life and converse with community folks hoping to instill understanding and empathy that could make the stories they write truly carry the voices from the ground. This activity also tests the skills in interpersonal communication that they have learned in DEVC 70, and heightens their awareness that knowledge resides in everyone who can articulate experiences and aspirations.

In 2014, UPLB Devcom institutionalized a model of student-community engagement in most of its higher-level courses in the undergraduate program through an academic field instruction program. In this model, undergraduate students and communities work together in planning, developing, and sustaining devcom initiatives that address community-based issues. A committee facilitates activities that support the continuity of community-driven plans from one academic year to the next and ensures that academic outputs of students from various courses contribute to partner communities' long-term visions. In many ways, the academic field instruction program of UPLB Devcom can be seen as a pedagogical experiment where students and partner communities learn to discover what *conscientization* looks like in practice: that learning to perceive and identify the root causes of oppressive elements in society can only happen in spaces and relations of conviviality and through institutional practices that foster emancipatory dialogue and action (Freire, 1970c).

A PhD course, DEVC 391, Participatory Development Communication, includes a rationale that reads,

Development in the 21st century is marked with transitioning communities and sensitivities to different cultures and contexts and highlights inclusiveness in decision-making and charting directions for change. Participatory approaches embrace a plurality of perspectives and cultural diversity that are fit for the demands of the time.

The course discusses participatory approaches in development communication and research that are derived from Freire's praxis in community communication, adult learning, participatory action research, and participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation. The discussions also include the locally adapted models and approaches such as ADIDS or action, discussion, input, deepening and synthesis (Networks, 2001 in Daya, 2010) process in learning, and Socially Shared Inquiry (Alfonso, 2000) for research.

Along with the movements in thought of communication and development and the growing influence of Freire, there has been a shift in focus and theoretical grounding of faculty and student research. Development communication Los Baños style is rooted in the American agricultural extension model (technology adoption models and modernization) informed by socio-psychological and information theories of communication. Research in the first decades of the College was heavily influenced by these theoretical frameworks, with some exceptions.

Alexander G. Flor (2004) wrote and published a few pieces about his own articulations of Freire's conscientization: conscienti-cancion for social movement protest songs in the Philippines back in the 1980s-90s and conscienti-action looking at the role of community theaters in rural change during the same time.

In more recent years, however, research has gained broader horizons moving into the territory of critical and cultural traditions that pay attention to marginal and authentic voices (e.g., Amoyan & Custodio, 2019), and the poetics and politics of participation and empowerment (e.g. Baurile, 2014; Guanio, 2017; Timbreza, 2018).

Recognizing that educational institutions carry vestiges of conservative, authoritarian, and colonial ideologies, the influence of Freirean values in research and course offerings can be seen as paving the way toward decolonizing the curriculum of the College and reimagining an identity for ourselves that is more grounded in critical ways of seeing.

Amid the strong waves of competing discourses on development and communication, Freire's pedagogy and values has provided an anchor for development communication to look into itself and see its value as a field and discipline.



As institutions across the world find ways to address highly complex social-ecological problems, UPLB Devcom will continue to find inspiration in Freire's liberation pedagogy in transforming the root causes of inequality, vulnerabilities, and injustice through reflexive and dialogical communication. Unlike in previous decades when Devcom's role was largely in support of establishing what has now become the dominant regime of knowledge and power on global development and in critiquing the limits of such regime, Devcom's role in the next few decades should be about contributing to the co-production of new regimes of knowledge and power, those that support societies and institutions to transition toward sustainable, more just, and equitable futures. Now more than ever, reflexive and critical reflection is needed to transform previously held assumptions about science/knowledge, power, communication, and change.

PAULO FREIRE AND THE MEANING OF THE ACT OF EDUCATING

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I'm a teacher, but more than that, I'm a teacher trainer of teachers. That said, I explain myself by stating that my concern goes far beyond presenting to my students the teaching methods and techniques. I'm concerned about the understanding that they may have of what the professional exercise of the teaching function will become for each one of them.

During the period when I studied my Degree in Pedagogy, at the Universidade de São Paulo (USP), Paulo Freire was excluded from Brazilian universities because of the military dictatorship that began in 1964, which even led him to a long period of exile (from 1964 to 1979). It was only after I graduated that I had contact with his work and knowing it was like giving meaning to the daily actions I had been performing as a teacher.

The contact with Paulo Freire's philosophy and work clarified for me the meaning of the act of educating. From the resignification of the practice of dialogue and the appropriation of various concepts presented by him, such as critical awareness, liberating education, unheard of feasible among others, such concepts were incorporated into my daily pedagogical practice and a new meaning of the act of educating was constructed.

If education is awareness, how could I, the teacher that I am, awaken in my students the desirable critical curiosity about the facts and effects of their reality if I did not look at it myself, critically, in my professional duty?

According to Freire (1983), what characterizes a critical, non-prejudiced, restless consciousness, among many other peculiarities, is the search for knowledge of facts, knowing that reality is changeable and that the individual, also changeable, is the subject of its own history.

“If men (and women) are beings of what to do is exactly why their doing is action and reflection” (Freire, 1968/2015, p. 121). Every teacher should, consequently, stimulate in their classes, with the student group, the act of acting and reflecting on the action. The autonomy of our students will depend on this. Educating them with the responsible autonomy is our task, more than that, it is an ethical imperative, given that autonomy,

while maturing the being for itself, it is a process, it is becoming to be. It does not occur on a scheduled date. It is in this sense that a pedagogy of autonomy must be centered on experiences that stimulate decision-making and responsibility, it is worth saying, in respectful experiences of freedom. (Freire, 1996, p. 121)

From traditional or banking education to a democratic, progressive and liberating education, as Freire wanted, there is a wide space to be transposed. Forged as I was, from the first steps, with the mark of the first form of education, becoming a democratic teacher cost me (and still costs) a constant exercise of review of my didactic-pedagogical acts.

The respectful dialogue, advocated by Freire throughout his work, the result of a horizontal relationship developed in the classroom, was the engine of this change. Listening to the students, gently and patiently, giving them a voice throughout the process, made all the difference. Everyone should express themselves and respect others for they expression of opinions, wills and questions that are due. But not the dialogue converted into “unobligated chat that marches to the taste of casualty between teacher or teacher and students” (Freire, 2000, p. 118), but the dialogue seen as a possibility of true encounter. To Freire (1969/2013b),

What is intended with dialogue, in any case, . . . is the problematization of one’s own knowledge in its indisputable reaction to the concrete reality in which it is generated and on which it is based in, to better understand it, to explain it, transform it. (p. 52)

And, if in the classroom, the atmosphere of respect to the knowledge and sayings of both students and teachers is established, everyone will understand the importance of accepting the other without discrimination of any kind. With lucidity, Freire stated that “any discrimination is immoral and fighting it is a duty, even if recognizing the strength of the constraints that will be faced” (Freire, 1996, p. 68). The teacher of the democratic option will always have to express an environment of acceptance and respect in the classroom, based on their own equally respectful actions.

Throughout my many years of teaching in courses, lectures and meetings focused on teacher training, I have always wondered what my purpose is, as an educator, at that time and in those spaces. Would it make any sense to those who listened to the message I was carrying? What has guided me – and still guide – is the hope of getting it right was what Freire’s teachings told me, that interacting with the student would, in fact, be our main task. Guide their doubts, which will always include

more doubts, and, in an open manner, friendly, sometimes quiet, inciting the . . . student. Quiet in with safe response, with timely suggestion, with the necessary bibliography, which will lead to new restlessness. Stillness cannot be a permanent state. It is only in the relationship with restlessness that stillness makes sense. (Freire, 2003, pp. 215-216)

If alive, Paulo Freire would have completed, on September 19, 100 years. An occasion to be marked with his presence, despite his death in 1997.

Without Paulo Freire in those 24 years ago, what has changed in the education of our country? Very little! Truly very little!

Brazilian education continues to be offered unequally to the rich and poor. The quality of education as a whole still leaves to be desired, but for the socially excluded, and to those oppressed by an absolutely perverse economic and social structure, inequality accentuates the precariousness of the means and the efficiency of the ends. The neglect in relation to this problem, deliberately continues to reproduce injustices. Even nowadays we have illiterates in the country: 11 million! If we add to this number the functional illiterates (those who have difficulty interpreting texts and/or perform simple mathematical operations) we will reach 29% of the population¹⁸ (Indicador de Alfabetismo Funcional, 2018)!

About 30% of the Brazilian population, therefore, does not even have the minimum conditions to fully exercise the citizenship to which they are entitled!

¹⁸Rate of illiteracy in Brazil: 6.6% in 2019 (Pnad, 2020).

However, I'm not a hopeless educator. In the hope, as Freire said (2000), I hope to do my best for all those of whom my honorable profession brings me closer. And I expect better days, but "I hope to the extent that as I begin the search, for it would not be possible to seek without hope" (p. 29), knowing, though, "that there is no hope in pure waiting, nor is it achieved what is expected in pure waiting, which thus sees vain" (p. 11). I think our hope can't be in vain. We hope so.

COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE FOOTPRINTS OF PAULO FREIRE

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Paulo Freire's ideas constitute a watershed between the current of communicational thinking that defends modernization as a so-called way out to promote rural development and the theoretical current of dialogical communication constructed from his thinking.

The communication model for development, in the version of the Rural Extension/Rural Communication, implemented in Brazil in the 1940s, aimed to enable the modernizing policy of the field from the diffusionist model coming from the universities of Wisconsin and Michigan, and with the support of international organizations such as the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Kellogg Foundation (Tauke Santos, 1994), through a system headed by the Brazilian Association of Technical Assistance and Rural Extension (ABCAR, later Embrater – Brazilian Company of Technical Assistance and Rural Extension), the Brazilian government creates a rural communication system, according to the precepts of Timmer's *Planejamento do Trabalho em Extensão Agrícola* (1954) which recommends "persuading rural populations to accept our propaganda". It referred to the technological information that rural populations should incorporate to produce the intended social changes with a view to modernizing the field. The notion of change, within the diffusionist model of Rural Communication was, therefore, that of an induced process, planned from the outside into the environment where it should happen.

The most fruitful criticism of this model was that of Paulo Freire (1969/2013b) in his book *Extensão ou Comunicação?*. Retorting the persuasive posture inherent to the diffusionist model, Freire states: "we cannot persuade and accept persuasion

as an educational action... Neither the peasants nor anyone is persuaded or submits to the mythical force of propaganda when one has a liberating action” (p. 23). “Liberating option” is understood as the problematization of the concrete situation of men so that they, capturing their reality critically, are able to develop actions to transform it (Freire, 1969/2013b).

In the 1970s, philosophical thought was based throughout Latin America, a continent oppressed by military dictatorships, economic and cultural imperialism, and oppression experienced by workers and peasants at the hands of the country’s economic elites (Tauk Santos, 2002).

The flexibilization of authoritarian regimes in the 1980s favored the dissemination of Freire’s theory in the fields of education and communication. It is in this scenario that, when he joined the Departamento de Educação da Universidade Federal Rural de Pernambuco in 1984, it began, under the inspiration of Paulo Freire’s theoretical contributions, in the works *Pedagogia do Oprimido* (1968/2015); *Educação como Prática da Liberdade* (1999); and *Extensão ou Comunicação?* (1969/2013b) an extension action and academic research in Communication for Development.

Right below are brief reports of some of these academic experiences in teaching in undergraduate and graduate courses in Communication and Agrarian Sciences. Experiences I carried out with the help of a constellation of authors, maintaining, however, fundamental matrices of Paulo Freire’s thought: the option to work with popular cultures in a critical posture; valuing knowledge and dialogue with men, women and young people in the countryside; and support for popular forms of struggle, organization and participation:

Communication, Catholic Church and participation of family farmers

- analysis of problematic pedagogy to stimulate participation and struggle in the field (Tauk Santos, 1992);

Action in agrarian reform settlement

- political support and technical advice to the population based in Engenho Pitanga - PE (Tauk Santos & Callou, 1993);

Agro-ecological agriculture

- encouraging participation in the fight for policies favorable to family farming (Tauk Santos, 1994);

Subsistence fishing communities

- actions for the construction of local development on the Ilha de Deus, PE. (Tauk Santos, Callou, et al., 2009);

Subsistence fishing women

- analysis of leisure and cultural consumption of women in artisanal fishing (Tauk Santos, Fox, et al., 2009);

Digital inclusion

- research of digital inclusion policies from the perspective of social inclusion in popular contexts (Tauk Santos, 2009);

Local development and citizenship in Municipal management

- analysis of the challenges and participatory communication strategies of the Municipality of Camaragibe (Tauk Santos, 2014a);

Popular media and cultures

- analysis of the role of radio in the construction of participatory democracy in the city (Tauk Santos, 2014b);
- analysis of the commitment of the television media to the populations and the local communities (Tauk Santos, 2013);

Creative economy and popular contexts

- analysis of the appropriations of creative economy policies by the young people of Bomba do Hemetério, on the outskirts of Recife (Tauk Santos, et al., 2019).

The results of how Paulo Freire's theoretical matrix had repercussions on the training of students of the Programa de Pós-Graduação em Administração Rural e Comunicação Rural; the Programa de Pós-Graduação em Extensão Rural e Desenvolvimento Local and the Programa de Pós-Graduação em Consumo e Desenvolvimento Social of the Universidade Federal Rural de Pernambuco, is found in more than 1000 pages of the book *Travessias Acadêmicas das Tecnologias da Comunicação para o Desenvolvimento* (Tauk Santos & Callou, 2019).

The opening of the work brings an unpublished text by Paulo Freire (2019), "A Educação como Espanto" (The Education as Amazement). A loving tribute to the footprints of this educator who inspired our academic journeys.

PAULO FREIRE AT CAMBRIDGE AND UNICAMP

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So soon everything passes by!
–Fernando Pessoa. *Odes de Ricardo Reis*.

Taking a trip down memory lane about Paulo Freire, I can only remember him in the voice of Vera Queiroga, a roommate of mine, when we used to live together in a university house in Abílio Soares's Street. In the early 1960s, we were

a group of twenty-four girls from the countryside who decided to study in Sao Paulo. At that time, I studied Languages and Vera studied Pedagogy.

She joined an adult education development project in the Vila Helena Maria, Osasco, and excitedly told us about a Northeastern educator who had totally original ideas about education. His name was Paulo and as his ideas were brilliant, it guided the project in which my colleague was participating in.

However, time passed by and the coup of 1964 came up. Popular education projects were cancelled and educators who engaged in it were persecuted. Even though all student good memories stayed in the past, the image of Paulo, that Northeastern educator, remained even more present. Unfortunately, he was persecuted by the dictatorship, arrested and then exiled to Chile.

Moving on time, I got married with Franco and Vera married Zé Carlos – we used to call him Barretão. Zé also participated in the adult education development project, and he was very excited about the “Freirean pedagogy”, which at that time wasn’t called that... (yet).

After my marriage, I lived in Boston for a while.

It was there, a city of snow and beautiful red brick buildings, that I met in person the Northeastern educator that Vera and Barretão spoke so enthusiastically – Paulo Freire was invited as a visiting professor at Harvard University. He arrived with his family: his wife Elza and children. The news spread in the Brazilian community and when I heard about it, I remembered all those references my colleague mentioned to me so much. The city – notably Cambridge, home to Harvard University – was teeming with political movements: Black Panthers, feminists, and anti-Vietnam War rallies.

The announced arrival of Paulo Freire – the pride of a patrician persecuted in his land and visiting professor at one of the most prestigious universities in the world! – awakened the Brazilian community. Personally, I got involved in a cloud of issues. Where would Vera and Barretão be? Would I really meet Paulo Freire? I was hoping so.

For my luck, I met him at a lecture at Harvard: a bunch of Brazilians along with people from all over the planet, went to the university to hear that educator who had original – and more than that, revolutionary – ideas about education.

The place was packed. As I recall, the theme of the conference was *Popular Education*.

Looking thin and bearded, in addition to being very calm, Paulo began by explaining that he would speak in Portuguese, while a young man beside him would do the simultaneous translation. In Paul’s speech, I was amazed, on the one hand,

by certain rhetorical constructions, enthusiastic remarks about his experiences; on the other, the tone of intimacy with which he aligned his reflections on the right to education and the importance of knowing how to read and write.

After the lecture, I looked for him. I introduced myself as a colleague of Vera and Barretão. He informed me about his university office and then I went to visit him, thrilled.

And since then, we've become friends for now...

I was very impressed by what Paulo told us about his experience of living in a foreign country. He said Chilean Spanish was less foreign than Cambridge English. It was in these conversations, absolutely informal, that I learned the deep relationship that Paulo had between language and life and between language and the world. I began to understand that his literacy proposals – which I will summarize in Freirean's expression of reading the world – were based on the intimate relationship he had in language and in life.

I had the opportunity to accompany Mrs. Elza to the market a few times. During these shoppings, I learned about the family's longing for Brazilian food, and how Paulo has disconnected from his domestic life. After a while, Paulo left Cambridge and went to Switzerland. Franco's postdoctoral work ended, and we (me and my husband) returned to Brazil.

* * *

Again, time passed. About ten years later, I met Paulo again in Unicamp, when he was at the Faculdade de Educação, and I was at the Instituto de Estudos da Linguagem. The conversations returned, in the scenario of Anhanguera and Bandeirantes Highways, roads that unite São Paulo and Campinas. Paulo gave me a ride, and Bernardo (was that his name?) was the competent and good-humored driver of the car, all decorated with objects that reminded me of the Northeast...

Paulo asked me about popular readings. After all, his work was primarily focused on popular education, but I couldn't answer. I had no idea what was being read outside the inner circle of the people of Languages. One day, Paulo asked me to organize a handout with literary texts that I considered appropriate for readers unfamiliar with writing...

After he asked me this, I thought about it a lot. I talked to colleagues, just to make sure and in the end, I decided on poems – as a matter of fact, I like it. Even by hypothesis, rhythmic, close to orality; some love poems and others of what I would call now militant texts. Suddenly I had an idea. I decided to include a concrete poem, somewhat avant-garde of the time: a poem whose verses did not follow the traditional linearity of written language. Some words are no longer those that flow vertically.



So, I gave it to him. A few weeks later, he told me that the concrete poem was the text that the students liked the most.

I was puzzled by this news.

Paulo explained that the students liked the poem because it looked like the writing of the buses, where sometimes the final stop was written and left standing rather than lying down.

...great lesson, coming from an adult education room that morning on the way to university...

In addition to conversations on the road, some dinners, at his house or mine where, always, the eternal pasta – the only dish I have the courage to serve my friends! – Always accompanied by authentic cachaça from Pernambuco, it still reminds me how much I miss everything...

MY MEETINGS WITH PAULO FREIRE

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My first contact with the work of Paulo Freire was in 1967, still as a high school student, at the house of the, then Congressman, Franco Montoro. There, together with a group of colleagues, I participated in a course about the literacy method developed by the educator, a preparatory stage for an action aimed at young people and adults who lived in a community close to the school where I studied. We already had, at that time, access to his book *Educação como Prática da Liberdade* (Freire, 1999).

Paulo Freire no longer lived in Brazil, he was exiled in Santiago, Chile, with his wife and five children, due to the civil-military coup of 1964, which persecuted him as he coordinated, from Brasília, the preparatory actions for the National Literacy Program to be launched by President João Goulart. A year earlier, in 1963, a literacy experience with forty rural workers in Angicos, Rio Grande do Norte, would make Paulo Freire a national reference. His method would teach basic literacy skills in 40 hours and he did it by expanding the workers' awareness of their problems, seeking the causes and discussing solutions that were within their reach to overcome them. Such a method, with such characteristics, implemented nationally, would not only put millions of people in a condition to vote, in a society in which illiteracy was a barrier to obtaining this condition, but would put them in

a much more conscious way about their problems, threatening traditional electoral corrals. For the civilian-military group that took power, it would be a threat to political stability, resulting in his imprisonment and, later, exile.

Years later, in 1974, I took over the coordination of a Supplementary Course, in the same school in which I had studied and fulfilled, as a student, the literacy experience mentioned above. The challenge of the course, aimed at young people and adults who had not completed their basic education, was very great. Paulo Freire was once again a reference for the group of young teachers, many recent graduates, who assumed that responsibility. We were in the most difficult period of the military dictatorship, and we saw in that course, from a “Freirian” perspective, an opportunity for political and educational work with working-class people from popular sectors.

Paulo Freire was no longer in Chile. After spending a year in the United States at Harvard University, he had lived in Geneva, Switzerland, since 1970, when he took over the educational department of the World Council of Churches. He had already written *Pedagogia do Oprimido* (Freire, 1968/2015), which would become his work of greatest worldwide recognition, translated into more than 20 languages, inaccessible to Brazilians, as well as several other texts, due to political persecution. We obtained his writings through copies or publications from other countries, in particular from Uruguay and Argentina. They served to guide our work, recognizing that the students had their own knowledge and life stories that should be considered in the processes of collective learning and teaching. We learned from him that we should be consistent with our study programs that talked about democracy and freedom of expression, exercising these values also in our methodologies and practices. We learned to respect the diverse cultures of a classroom formed by people from different places and who lived in the city of São Paulo.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the “Freirian” thinking fueled the work of popular education, those carried out in non-school spaces, in the Christian Base Communities (CEBS), in the popular movements who fight for housing, daycare, and against the lack of essential resources, in unions. In those years, I combined my work in the supplementary course with that of a non-governmental organization called the Centro Ecumênico de Documentação e Informação (CEDI), founded by a group of activists, mostly Protestant, to advise the basic work of CEBS. I immersed myself in these advisories, with Paulo Freire under my arm, working with participant research in Goiás Velho and literacy of adults with rubber tappers in Acre, at the request of Chico Mendes, and in the region of the Solimões River, at the request of the Movimento de Educação de Base (MEB) of the Conferência Nacional dos Bispos do Brasil (CNBB). Paulo Freire, his thinking and literacy method were the basis of the work performed.

On his definitive return to Brazil, in 1980, the educator went to live in São Paulo to work at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo (PUCSP) and, later, at the Universidade Estadual de Campinas (Unicamp). He was an internationally known person, having made more than 150 international trips to several countries on all continents. He continued to respond to invitations to work abroad, but now also in Brazil, thirsty for updating himself about the Brazilian reality. His works were already published regularly in the country and became easily accessible.

It was on his return from exile that I met him personally as a colleague at PUCSP, where I started teaching after I left the coordination of the adult course. I exchanged with Paulo Freire conversations about my work, sometimes in his residence, to discuss and ask for his support, always attending, despite his busy schedule.

In 1987, I applied for a post at the World Council of Churches as Executive Secretary of the Adult Basic Education Program. To support my process, I asked for letters of recommendation, one of them to Paulo Freire, who promptly answered me, writing at the end of his text: “Being a member of the staff of the WCC, for 10 years, I am pleased to strongly recommend Mr. Haddad... He seems a ‘right person’ for this position, at this moment of his personal history”. I keep his letter to this day as a reminder of his generosity.

When Paulo Freire took over the Department of Education of the Municipality of São Paulo, under Mayor Luiza Erundina, in 1979, he invited me to take responsibility for adult education in the municipality. Unfortunately, I was unable to accept, but I was flattered by the invitation and trust.

Paulo Freire has always been a reference for me as a social activist, working with popular education at CEDI and, since 1994, in The Educational Action. My research in master’s and doctorate and later as a researcher of CNPq or Fapesp, were in the field of adult education and their thinking. The last of these, the results of which were published in the e-book *Grundtvig e Freire: Escolas Populares na Dinamarca e no Brasil* (Haddad, et al., 2020), which introduces to the Brazilian public the pedagogical ideas of the Danish thinker Nikolaj F. S. Grundtvig in comparison to those of Paulo Freire.

In view of this history, I made the decision to dedicate two years to reread his works, read what he had not read, interview people, research in newspapers, magazines and articles about Paulo Freire and, finally, write the book *O Educador: Um Perfil de Paulo Freire* (Haddad, 2019). In it, I trace a biographical profile, seeking, in literary and less academic language, to tell his story, speaking of his life, of the conjuncture in the places where he lived in exile, about his thoughts and works. I wrote in the presentation that the objectives of the book were of

two natures: one conjunctural and the other personal. The conjuncture alerted to the moment of attacks and defenses of his legacy, a mirror to the political polarization in which Brazilian society was divided, sometimes an uninformed debate about the educator and his work. The book intended to cover this gap by offering a text that would be a gateway to a deeper understanding of the biography subject. The goal of a personal nature was to pay tribute to those who accompanied me as an educator and social activist throughout my personal and professional career. ■

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