

# voices rising

Latin America

Part I

GEO/ICAE YEAR X - N° 425

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# LATIN AMERICA



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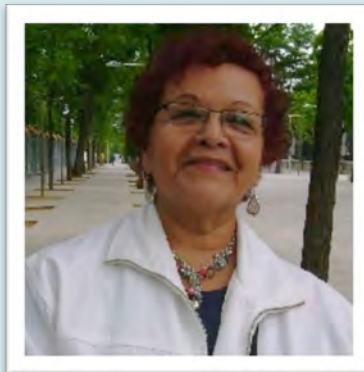
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## EDITORIAL

### Popular Education always alive and willing to talk!



Sharing a reflection on Popular Education refers to the face of Latin America and the Caribbean, the most heterogeneous and unequal region in the world, which marks are on the faces of millions of women, indigenous, youth, elderly people, especially from popular sectors, millions of them excluded from the right to education. We are witnessing profound changes and inequalities in the social, economic and environmental order: the rich have become richer and the poor have become poorer, the capitalist model has ravaged and subjected nature, and there is an exacerbated waste of materials and energy, which are destroying the conditions that make life on the planet possible.

The system operates not only in the economic sphere but it reaches also human relationships that, instead of relying on cooperation, are competitive. Love and mutual trust are replaced by trade and exchange of goods. What is hard is that humans do not recognize in the others a common human nature; they assume them as tools to satisfy their selfish interests. Humanity, under the exploitation of wage labor, appears divided and does not recognize its common humanity.

These outrageous social, economic and environmental realities are the reason of a deep dissatisfaction in popular and medium sectors, sparking protests from various continental social movements that, from below, raise their indignation and proposals for the construction of another social, economic, political, cultural and environmental model that breaks with the capitalist development model which has not led us to the supposed happiness but quite the opposite.

The situation outlined has clearly shown that the capitalist development model does not work any longer. We agree with all those who say that the current crisis is a crisis of civilization, in which theories, ways of relating and producing call for an ethic of care between us and the planet.

### ¡Popular Education is alive!

The Popular Education (PE) trend is characterized by its educational-political approach that seeks to subvert all exploitative, unjust, discriminatory order in the pursuit of full

By Fabrizio Roberto & Marcela Mazzei

ICAE Secretariat

Translation by ICAE

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democracy from the empowerment of the social actors. PE is constructed in interaction with social subjects and their context. As a result of this relationship between PE and context, in the 1980s other theoretical frameworks were required to interpret reality and guide the projects of social and political change.

The same happened with the understanding of the subjects leading social change that previously focused on popular sectors, on their class character. This category of analysis of reality extended in our continent in the presence of millions of people excluded, discriminated by their gender, ethnicity, class and generational condition. The work done with women and indigenous people are good examples of this, as well as the work with impoverished middle class, teachers, families, etc.

In this sense, new contributions in the development of social, cultural and scientific thought emerge. The categories of gender, ethnic and generational groups add to that of class and allow wider references to understanding and transforming reality. That is why the prospect of work in human rights, intercultural education and respect for the environment are a part of justice, participatory democracy with human development in a sustainable world.

PE, from its political, ethical and pedagogical approaches, tries to be a contribution to social transformation and, therefore, requires going for the organization with a new kind of education that does not promote individualism and competition but solidarity and cooperation. It aims at the democratization and therefore rejects authoritarianism, and is linked to action. It is a political education and links political aspects with the importance of knowledge as a form of power. Its methodological processes to work power and knowledge are primarily a dialogical process.

It is important to recognize that this educational perspective, like any other, has theoretical basis, ways to diagnose, investigate, build knowledge, which are based on the lines explained above and feed on the living reality of the social actors, feeding bottom-up dialectically. That is the commitment of CEAAL from its political-educational experiences and of many networks in Latin America and the Caribbean that follow the steps of the thinking of Paulo Freire.

## **Dialogue with other educational trends**

In the ICAE, due to its composition of international networks, we have the valuable opportunity to develop exchanges of educational contexts and approaches, seeking to improve youth and adults education. In this sense, there is a line of reflection and analysis between the inputs of Popular Education and Folkbiding, a popular education approach in the Nordic countries, which contribution is to link education and democracy building, hand in hand with open learning, which occurs in community settings, in social movements and in other popular education areas.

Recently the head of the Popular College Alma in Sweden indicated its features based on: a) free and liberal education for adults, b) voluntary and informal education, although imparted through a formal institution, c) institutions that operate under the premise that all citizens are free and independent and have the right to participate in all aspects of democratic society; d) the creation of conditions in which people freely pursue knowledge, e) the stimulation of curiosity and critical thinking.

Undoubtedly there are points of convergence about which we must keep on talking. But in the case of Adult Education in Latin America and the Caribbean stills remains the task of: a) Assuming ALE as a fundamental human right; b) Assuming the construction of knowledge as a liberating act; d) Building and developing policies and curricula based on cultural diversity; e) A vision of gender equality and equity involving women's access to educational programs and better quality and relevance, contributing to make the right to education of the peoples possible in the horizon of continuing learning and good living. f) Coordinating ALE to the subject of further development, and "Another world is possible" and finally, the urgency of strengthening a great movement of popular education articulating with other democratic social movements in different Latin American and Caribbean contexts. Paulo Freire said that our thinking and educational practice are nourished there, next to those who fight for their freedom against all exploitative order.

**Nélida Céspedes Rossel**  
**Secretary General**

Council of Popular Education in Latin America and the Caribbean - CEAAL: <http://www.ceaal.org/v2/index.php>

Vice President of ICAE for the Latin American Region

*Translation by ICAE*



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## Colombia receives highest world award in education

*Translation by ICAE*



Dear friends of ICAE,

We are pleased to share the news with which we are spreading in our country and the world the award we will receive from UNESCO, thanks to ICAE application. We look forward to your constant support and backing, and reaffirm our commitment, from Colombia, with youth and adult education.

María Aurora Carrillo - Rodolfo Ardila  
Transformemos Foundation

**Colombia receives highest world award in education.**

*"This is like getting another Olympic gold medal, but now in education to eradicate poverty and achieve peace, because the fact that education is for the poor does not mean that it should be poor, but of the highest quality."*

**Bogotá, August 20, 2012.** - The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, gave to the Colombian Foundation *Transformemos* the 2012 UNESCO Confucius Prize, the highest world award for youth and adult education, which will be delivered by the Director General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, on September 6 this year in a special ceremony held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, as part of the celebrations of the World Literacy Day and as start of the international round table called "Meeting the 2015 target, fulfilling the promise" convened by UNESCO to discuss the results of youth and adults education to date and forward actions to achieve the MDGs by 2015.

The significant global recognition was given to the Foundation *Transformemos* and its Pedagogical Director, the *vallenata* educator María Aurora Carrillo Gullo who has designed and implemented the Interactive System *Transformemos Educando*, which according to the jury, represents a decisive contribution to the eradication of poverty and the achievement of peace, through empowerment and education of vulnerable populations in regions where access to relevant and formal education is difficult.

More info on this news at the following link:  
[http://www.transformemos.com/2011/noticias.php?Id\\_Noticia=107&Idioma=esp](http://www.transformemos.com/2011/noticias.php?Id_Noticia=107&Idioma=esp)

Best regards,  
JUAN PABLO PRIETO SÁNCHEZ

## Public and democratic education for greater social and environmental justice

**1) How was your new appointment as special advisor on the implementation of the strategic areas of Ação Educativa?**

I have had more willingness to think strategic actions, since I have no administrative and management obligations after playing the role of overall coordinator for 15 straight years, since the foundation of Ação Educativa

**2) Regarding the Working Group on Education, what are your thoughts on the vision concluded in the document "Another future is possible" for youth and adult education in Latin America?**

The document is an important input in the discussion on the role and significance of education in the current stage of civilization. The social aims of the educational field have been seriously impacted by the influence of the neoliberal logic of the nineties, which saw in education a tool for consumer and labor force education, devaluing its character and emancipatory potential for

personal and social transformation.





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Young and adult education in Latin America was also impacted by this financing logic, technicist and economic approaches of educational policies that caused youth and adults to receive, in most cases, an education exclusively to meet market needs. Continuing training that seeks to promote citizens aware of their rights, critics and able to progress with dignity was placed in the background. It is essential, therefore, to redeem the public sense of education, strengthen it as a human right, which must first promote human capabilities in their plurality. The document "**Another future is possible**" <http://www.icae2.org/?q=en/node/1565> proves that idea and can be a support to help the society in the defense of promoting an education that ensures the redistribution of power and knowledge, thus creating more social and environmental justice.

### *3) How do you see the currently situation of adult education in Latin America and what are the biggest challenges it has ahead?*

Latin America has had a greater concern for Adult Education with the presence of center-left governments in most countries. Some show significant results in the field of adult literacy, but there is still much to be done, since we are far from an effective supply of quality. Many of these challenges can be found in deep social inequality in the region, one of the largest in the world. It will not be possible to provide educational democracy without social democracy. This is the region's greatest challenge: to make economic development reverse for all people and not only for the elites of the region

Portugués: <http://www.icae2.org/?q=pt-br/node/1614>

## **Improving literacy in Brazil needs specific curricula and learning materials**

**Filomena Siqueira**  
Área Internacional  
Ação Educativa

### Activities

With regard to youth and adult education, Ação Educativa currently serves on several fronts:

### **Research**

We are developing studies about public policy related to youth and adult education created in the country in order to get new data and conduct analyzes on the meaning and impact of these policies. This is to qualify the debate on adult education in the country. We are studying the proposal for the certification of youth and adults through examination (ENCCEJA), the system of financing education (FUNDEB), the education program created specifically for young people educated under Lula's government (PROJOVEM) and ethno-racial and gender relations in youth and adults education. We intend to produce articles and seminars with the results of the research, so that they may enrich the public debate on this type of Brazilian education.

Still in the research field, since 2001 we produced the Indicator of Functional Literacy (INAF). This is a review sample of the level of literacy of the population between 15-64 years-old. The results of the evaluations performed during these ten years make us reflect on the use of reading and writing in social life, signaling the advances and retreats of the Brazilian educational system in recent years. Completed ten years of applications, we will organize a publication on the subject and also a seminar using all the information gathered about the respondents in this period. It becomes possible to explore the practices of reading, literacy and numeracy of the population considering aspects such as age, gender, race, income, region and other various aspects.

In partnership with UNILAB, we are participating in the South-South cooperation, integrating ECOSS project, funded by the Ministry of Education of Brazil with the aim of consolidating reference centers of research on youth and adult education. Since 2011, research and training activities of educators and production of teaching materials are being structured together with the so-called PALOP countries. Ação Educativa participated in two missions: Angola and Mozambique. In the first case, the goal is to form a team to contribute to the construction of a training course for literacy that structures the literacy campaign they intend to start. Furthermore, we conducted an initial survey of the existing collection of documents on adult education in the country and the possibilities of conducting historical research on this topic in Mozambique. Both in Mozambique and in Angola we made contacts with civil society organizations, hoping to understand the dynamics of adult education in the country and also have an exchange of experiences. Finally, under the ECOSS project, we also intend to create a digital library that facilitates the exchange of texts and documents among the countries of PALOP about youth and adults education.



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## Advocacy

We integrate the coordination of the São Paulo Youth and Adults Education Forum, which aims to discuss and focus on youth and adults education in the state of São Paulo. In this state of the country we are in a context of reduced enrollment and closing classrooms, which raises the need to react to this, questioning the political direction of the state government. In recent years we have initiated several lawsuits demanding the opening of vacancies in various municipalities where there is demand but there are no schools.

We also have seats in the National Commission of Youth and Adults Literacy and Education (CNAEJA). This commission is linked to the Ministry of Education and aims at discussing the development of policies for youth and adult literacy and education at the federal level. This commission involves various social movements such as the Landless Movement (MST), rural organizations, indigenous movements and associations of municipalities and government secretaries, and representatives of NGOs and ALE Forum. Currently, the process of reformulating the Literate Brazil Program is under debate in CNAEJA that in almost ten years got much lower results than expected.

## Consultancy, training and educational materials

Ação Educativa also participates in projects of pedagogical training reorganization, educators training and production of educational materials specific to youth and adults education. In Brazil, one of the issues that has been the object of reflection is the need to create curricula and teaching materials appropriate to the demands and life conditions of youth and adults. We live in a context of reduced enrollment of youth and adults education in the country, which in part can be explained by the inefficiency of the school in the attendance of the general public and also by the organization of an inflexible school system which makes difficult regular attendance at school activities.

## Links:

INAF: <http://www.acaoeducativa.org.br/index.php/educacao/50-educacao-de-jovens-e-adultos/10004473-ipm-e-acao-educativa-mostram-evolucao-do-alfabetismo-funcional-na-ultima-decada>. ECOSS: <http://www.ecoss.unilab.edu.br/>

## ICAE REGIONAL MEMBERS

**Consejo de Educación de Adultos de América Latina (CEAAL)**, Vía Cincuentenario No.84B, Coco del Mar, Corregimiento de San Francisco, Panamá  
Telefax. (507) 270-1084 / (507) 270-1085  
E-mail: [info@ceaal.org](mailto:info@ceaal.org) Website: <http://www.ceaal.org/v2/index.php>  
Nelida Céspedes Rossel, Secretary-General

**Red de Educación Popular Entre Mujeres (REPEM)**  
18 de Julio 2095 / 301, 11200 Montevideo, Uruguay  
Tel/Fax: 5982 – 408 00 89 E-mail: [coordinación@repem.org.uy](mailto:coordinación@repem.org.uy)  
Website: <http://www.repem.org.uy>  
Patricia Jaramillo, General Coordinator

**Campaña Latinoamericana por el Derecho a la Educación (CLADE)**  
Rua Costa Carvalho 79. Sao Paulo 05429-130, Brazil  
Tel/Fax: (55-11) 3853 7900  
Email: [campana@campanaderechoeducacion.org](mailto:campana@campanaderechoeducacion.org)  
Website: [www.campanaderechoeducacion.org](http://www.campanaderechoeducacion.org)  
Camilla Croso, Coordinator

**Fundación Latinoamericana de Innovación Social**  
Purísima 251, Recoleta . Santiago de Chile – Chile 8420438  
Telephone: (56-2) 632 76 27  
Email: [funda.innovacionsocial@gmail.com](mailto:funda.innovacionsocial@gmail.com)  
<http://elinnovadorsocial.org/>  
Ronald Wilson Arenas, President

## Ayuda en Acción

2 Oriente 406-A – San Pedro, Cholula. Puebla 72750, Mexico  
Tel/Fax: ++52 222 261 9375 / 261 4028  
Email: [bberlanga@ayudaenaccion-mex.org](mailto:bberlanga@ayudaenaccion-mex.org)  
[umarquez@colombia.ayudaenaccion.org](mailto:umarquez@colombia.ayudaenaccion.org)  
Website: [www.ayudaenaccion.org](http://www.ayudaenaccion.org)  
Jaime Montalvo, Chairperson

## NATIONAL MEMBERS

**Society for the Promotion of Education and Research**  
5638 Gentle Avenue, P.O. Box 1766. Belize City, Belize  
Tel: 501 - 223 1668; Fax: 501 - 223 2367  
E-mail: [spear@btl.net](mailto:spear@btl.net), [admin@spear.org.bz](mailto:admin@spear.org.bz)  
website: <http://www.spear.org.bz>  
Nicole Haylock, Executive Director

**Asociación de Instituciones de Promoción y Educación**  
Calle Macario Pinilla 525 La Paz, Bolivia  
Tel: (591-2) 241 9723 – 241 9195 Fax:(591 2) 241 02 42  
E-mail: [unidad.gestion@aipe.org.bo](mailto:unidad.gestion@aipe.org.bo)  
Website: [www.aipe.org.bo](http://www.aipe.org.bo)  
Aquiles Dávalos Saravia, Executive Director

## Ação Educativa

Rua General Jardim, 660/51. Sao Paulo, SP 01223-010  
Tel: 55 11 3151-2333 ext. 102; 55 11 3151-2333 ext. 135  
E-mail: [secexe@acaoeducativa.org](mailto:secexe@acaoeducativa.org)  
Website: [www.acaoeducativa.org](http://www.acaoeducativa.org)  
Maria Malta, President



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## Instituto Paulo Freire

Rua Cerro Corá, 550 Sala 10. Sao Paulo, SP 05061-100

Tel: (5511) 3021-5536.

Fax: (5511) 3021-5589

E-mail: [ipf@paulofreire.org](mailto:ipf@paulofreire.org) / [moacir@paulofreire.org](mailto:moacir@paulofreire.org)

Website: [www.paulofreire.org](http://www.paulofreire.org)

Moacir Gadotti, General Director

## Programa de Formación en la Acción y la Investigación Social (PRAXIS)

Km 1.6 carreta via corta Santa Ana.

Apizaco, San Pablo Apetatitlan. Tlaxcala C.P. 90600, Mexico

Tel: 52 246 - 51 707; Fax: 52 246 - 45 116

E-mail: [coltlax@prodigy.net.mx](mailto:coltlax@prodigy.net.mx)

Felix Cadena, Coordinator

## Asociación Nacional de Centros de Investigación Promoción Social y Desarrollo del Perú (ANC)

Jr. Belisario Flores 667,

Lince, Lima 14

Lima, Peru

Tel: 511 – 472-8888 / 472-8944; Fax: 511 – 472-8962

E-mail: [anc@anc.org.pe](mailto:anc@anc.org.pe) Website: <http://www.anc.org.pe>

Francisco Soberón Garrido, Presidente

## Instituto de Promoción de Económico

Social del Uruguay.

P.O. Box Casilla de Correos 10690, Distrito 1

11200 Montevideo, Uruguay

Tel: 598 2 - 408 9158; Fax: 598 2 - 409 2343

E-mail: [acanapale@ipru.edu.uy](mailto:acanapale@ipru.edu.uy)

Alicia Canapale, Director

## Fundación para el Desarrollo Social Transformemos

Kilómetro 13, Via Bogotá, La Calera, Vereda San Rafael  
Cundinamarca, Colombia

Tel/fax: 8609532 - 8609226

E-mail: [aurora@transformemos.com](mailto:aurora@transformemos.com) /

[transformemos@transformemos.com](mailto:transformemos@transformemos.com)

Website: [www.transformemos.com](http://www.transformemos.com)

Maria Aurora Carrillo Gullo, Executive Director

## INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

### Claudia Alejandra Pioli

Jujuy 205, San Francisco, Córdoba. Argentina

Tel/Fax: ++54 03564 428771

Email: [claudiapioli@gmail.com](mailto:claudiapioli@gmail.com)

Web: <http://congreso.nocturna715.blogspot.com>

### Mabel Remon

Moreno 750. Buenos Aires, Argentina

Tel: ++5411 4522 2086 Email: [mabelremon@gmail.com](mailto:mabelremon@gmail.com)

### María Lorena Escobar

Honorio González 1347. Encarnación, Paraguay

Tel/Fax: 5957 1206636 Email: [emml\\_28@hotmail.com](mailto:emml_28@hotmail.com)

Web: [www.kunaroga.com.py](http://www.kunaroga.com.py)

## JOIN US

Fill in a Membership Application Form

<http://www.icae2.org/en/node/875> and submit it together with a copy of your Constitution, a detailed description of your work on adult education and lifelong learning, last annual report of your organization, and other relevant documents including publications. Documents should be sent in English.

## Education in Brazil: an unequal and discriminatory model

### Eliane Cavalleiro

Presidenta Asociación Brasileña de Investigadores Negros-ABPN  
Brazil

*1) Do you think Brazil has made a significant change in education policies in the last decade? How assertive do you find this statement?*

When thinking about the Brazilian educational system, beyond its own dimension we must consider the diversity that characterizes Brazilian society, and more specifically, how racism structures power relationships and confers social benefits to upper class white Brazilians, and simultaneously denies them to Afro-Brazilians and indigenous peoples.





Even though Brazilian society is made up of over 50% of Black people, the racism and the discrimination that students face within the educational system do not allow them to succeed in schools. In regards to formal education, there are many publications concerning the racial diversity that characterizes Brazilian society. Moreover, many researches have demonstrated the existence of problems affecting students produced by racism, prejudice and racial discrimination, emphasizing their influence on adult/adult, adult/child and child/child interpersonal relationships. They explore the mechanisms that foster the assimilation of prejudiced and discriminatory behavior against black women and man. More importantly, these researches have demonstrated that the Brazilian educational system does not provide an adequate education to the black portion of the population.

Within this context, the education legislation that was altered in 2003, making mandatory the teaching of Afro-Brazilian History and Culture in the curriculum structure of the basic level of the Brazilian educational system, which encompasses 9 years of the fundamental level, and 3 years of the high school level. The implementation of that legislation represented an important factor for opening the debate about racial inequality and racism in Brazilian society.

## **2) How does racism affects nowadays the overall education in Brazil, particularly in children under child's education (daycare, kinder garden) and Adult Education?**

Although racism and racial inequalities are deep in the most diverse sectors of society, it is essential to understand that education in Brazil disregards the issues affecting the development of black children as a generically eurocentric model of education is built. Our schools, which should combat racism, are institutions that spread it systematically, namely:

- Ø The Brazilian education system is full of sexist, racist and discriminatory pedagogical practices;
- Ø The curriculum reproduces and disseminates ideologies and concepts that devalue women and black people, with double prejudice against black women
- Ø The teaching practice and interpersonal relationships ensure black people a kind of treatment that hinders and even prevents their stay in school and also prevents school success
- Ø Everyday school is harmful to the emotional and cognitive development of children and young people who belong to the black population and women in general

We can say in a general way that the curriculum, teaching materials and interpersonal relationships are harmful and thus limit learning. Also, occurrences of different treatments for black children lead, directly or indirectly, to their exclusion from school, since they constitute a fertile ground for the construction of a feeling of inadequacy to the education system and also of racial inferiority and gender subordination. As a result, the black population has the worst school indicators.

Racism also affects white children as it makes it possible to experience learning about racial superiority that, although unrealistic, finds in daily school different elements for its realization. Education that leads to think of a racial superiority affects the development of white children to the extent that makes them consider themselves special beings having more intelligence and beauty, allowing them, leading them to act in a discriminatory manner in relation to black children.

Terribly, both for white children and for black children, such experiences can become permanent marks of their identities as adults. We can assume, and there are various social events that prove that assumption, that the socialized individual based on a supposed racial superiority, remains acting based on the same pattern constructed and lived in childhood, that is, feeling superior and excluding and/or discriminating black people whenever possible - explicitly or implicitly.

## **3) As a former coordinator of GELEDÉS, do you think that gender-based issues can sum up another layer of difficulty to this matter?**

When setting up an analysis of gender relations, a specific problem emerges about black women: for them, social relationships are highly complex, as racial discrimination is articulated in all structure of social welfare, by white women and men, and regarding gender, by black and white men. Jurema Werneck (2006) was accurate in stating: *It is necessary take into account that the way gender perspectives and gender equality between men and women are being developed and / or disseminated have not been enough to confront, in an incisive or deep way, other factors involved in the production of inequities that reach women in different parts of the world. Note that gender perspective in Latin America has allowed changes in the social structure in relation to the participation of women. However, this perspective does not face the existence of racism which directly affects black women.*

## **4) In which ways do you believe that NGOs, Civil Organizations and government policies can be combined in order to reach, for instance, the CONFINTEA VI's goals for 2012 and the forthcoming years?**

I understand the joint action of NGOs and civil society as a key element to demand, implement and evaluate public policies aimed at social justice and the realization of the racial and gender equity in education. Such equity demands attention to the physical, intellectual and social





development of individuals. Understanding issues such as strategies for solving the obstacles are more strongly built and implemented when born of collective, diverse and historically sensitive issues put into our societies. Together, these institutions are better able to evaluate in depth the social problems - choosing challenges, strategies and priorities, establishing proposals, plans and political programs -, and also being the very mechanism driving changes in the education system.

## **J.B. Iturraspe Night School: teaching adults and awaking consciousness for almost 100 years in Argentina**

Prof. **Claudia Pioli**  
San Francisco - Cordoba  
Argentina  
IALLA Graduate



### ***1. - How has been your experience throughout these years as a principal in the 715-J. B. Iturraspe night school?***

My first experience as a teacher was at the J B Iturraspe Night School. I started my studies to become a teacher at the age of 35, which means that I started training and learning experience in my adulthood, which has had (and still has) surprises, joys and new opportunities every day. A few months after graduating, in May 2002, I started teaching in the night school, a huge challenge considering that we are trained to work with an age range going from 6 to 12/14.

Shortly after that I had to assume the direction of the establishment. Slowly we formed a work team that already has 8/9 years and is the strength of the institution for its sense of belonging and work responsibility. And I take the opportunity to highlight the team formed by Gladys Gieco, Vanesa Castagno, the PE teacher, Gustavo Cravero and Mr. Jorge Perassi, who has been in the institution as Assistant for nearly 25 years. Together we undertook the challenge of making visible the school, of exalting the method, of making the society and the other methods of the system to recognize that students of night schools are people who have a desire to self-improvement, are role models and examples to highlight.

It's a constant work that has caused me some problems but, above all, many gratifications.

### ***2. - What are the main challenges facing the institution today?***

At first I noticed that society generally devalued and even despised people studying "in the night school". Today there tends to be another vision. The city newspapers and the media in general helped us a lot by making the experiences of students known; in this way, they make them be seen in a different light, from a more positive point of view that enables to build together. However, progress is still minimal because there is lack of interest from many sectors, especially when the employer must give permission for employees to attend classes...

Another major challenge is still to provide a real space for training. One experience marked my work from the first days of work in the institution, when a student, an old lady, said to me: "*Miss, I finished last year. I was given the certificate, but I keep coming because I cannot read and as there were already some years that I came, I was told I had completed the cycle, but you see I do not know. And I feel they mocked me by giving me the certificate, because I realize I do not know. Well, luckily I am allowed to continue coming and here I am*"... I was really shocked by this reality. I began to see that the many things they had written in their notebooks when I arrived made no sense and did not conform to reality; there were knowledge that not all students could assimilate.

As for the students, now reality has changed from previous years. Adults, in general, are not socially motivated to complete basic education, but those who come to school by choice undertake and keep the enthusiasm day after day. They never miss a class and they transmit their enthusiasm and desire to self-improvement.

As for the younger, the most important challenge is the large number of teenagers who have been left out of the system and who are incapable of joining the adult method. They don't have the support of their families; they are totally unmotivated and out of school. Particularly I think the solution is to offer something different from the school format in which they have already experienced failure; the problem is that we cannot do so due to the lack of economic resources and the general lack of interest of the sectors that might help. One knocks at different doors, talks, returns with a hope based on promises that sooner or later dilute into nothingness.



Working without economic resources, without spaces or suitable material for adults, the low enrollment and the pressure to increase it, the apathy of the younger (too young for the method), the lack of support from employers for adults to attend school, among many others, are stressing challenges which solution is not always in the hands of the institution. It is a work to be done together from many sectors, but especially with policies more committed to young and adults' continuing education understood as a program that goes beyond the walls of formal schooling. Laws and curricula are not enough; adequate spaces and materials are needed and above all, well prepared teachers that have resources, teaching strategies and psychological, medical, pedagogical, andragogical support... adequate to face that responsibility. We cannot forget that the reality of the people we work with is very diverse; their life experiences are so different (and some so difficult to imagine) that addressing many topics escapes our possibilities and knowledge.

### 3. - *What do you consider to have been the greatest achievements of the school in the community?*

I think that having managed to organize and conduct three international conferences on adult education was what exposed us most and gave more visibility to our little school.

In 2013 our institution will be 100 years old... a long way in anonymity and marginality, because despite all efforts, many people in the community still do not know there is such educational offering. The Centennial is the result of the work of people who during this century of life has left what could, or knew, so that many could improve their living conditions from the primary school completion.

Inserting the older student in the society in which he/she is already inserted seems redundant. But every time we can make a person aware of his/her place in society, his/her starring and deciding role in political decisions, in social actions, in everyday life in his/her community; every time we can make a woman understand she does not have to remain the victim of any man and that she is worth in herself and must assert her rights; whenever a young is willing to decide on his/her own future even in the short term, is then when we can say with conviction that we are doing our job as an educational institution.

### 4. - *What areas does adult education emphasize in the school?*

At the school we work on the basis of the proposed curriculum, which is one of the first proposals in force in the country, for the method. In our institution it is clear that the main thing is to work the human aspect, the social promotion and inclusion of the individual in the community to which he/she belongs, starting from his/her own life experience.

In 2011 we launched a project to provide a unique space of study for mothers with school-age children. We have seen that there is a high number of primary school pupils whose mothers cannot help them with homework because they are illiterate or did not complete basic education. This project was presented and spread but could not be applied because these mothers were not interested in going to school. Now we are about to relaunch it in another part of town.

We keep stressing the importance of the holistic education of women and the responsibility of the authorities in the promotion of the educational offering and the work together with the various agencies and institutions that offer training. Currently, the adult method is not a compensatory method, is not a "second chance" as was said before. It is necessary to open up to the new reality that involves this knowledge era; today it is not enough to read and write, **WE ALL NEED TO LEARN NEW THINGS EVERY DAY.**



### 5. - *How does the School articulate with the various networks and NGOs related to adult education?*

In 2008 we considered the possibility of organizing a Congress of Adult Educators. Although its goal transcended the institutional work, it was immediately supported by the corresponding inspection as it offered the possibility of a specific training area and exchange of experiences to all teachers. To organize it we had the unconditional support of a teacher and friend who, without belonging to the functional staff of this school, joined immediately taking a leading and fundamental role, Prof. Sonia Zini from the city of Cordoba.

We contacted different adult education figures and NGOs. From the first moment the ICAE was interested in our proposal and participated in the experience.



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We were overwhelmed by the turnout, the mayor asked us to continue with these events and so it was that we did two more. Each year we added new support from abroad that motivated us and allowed us to live unforgettable experiences (ICAE - CEAAL - DVV - UNESCO - OEI and others...). Although colleagues around the country continue to ask for new congresses, these represent an effort that exceeds the goodwill of this small handful of teachers who are part of this educational community.

Thank you very much, my respect and appreciation for ICAE's work, for the opportunities of growth and the friendship that they continuously offer to all of us.



<sup>1</sup> Today ICAE, CADE are unconditional support for the institution and we (Prof. Zini and I) participate in both of them trying permanently to involve our institutions in training activities to which we have access through these two very important organizations. The OEI permanently collaborates with literature and important resources. With all the institutions we maintain a bond of friendship that grew in the various meetings in which, somehow, we could participate (CONFINTEA VI, IALLA Mvdeo. And ICAE World Assembly in Sweden 2011)

## REPEM and GTL: Thirty years of empowering women and fighting for a liberating education



**Patricia Jaramillo**  
General Coordinator  
REPEM  
Colombia

*1. - As general coordinator of REPEM, which do you consider have been the greatest accomplishments that took place over more than thirty years of the Network regarding the empowerment of women in Latin American societies?*

The REPEM [www.repem.org.uy](http://www.repem.org.uy), in its thirty years, has conducted training and self-training for women and women's organizations, members or participants in the events organized by the Network, on topics related to economic, political and cultural empowerment of women. This is evident in the growing number of women and women's organizations that are undertaking productive projects, participating in processes of construction of public policies for women in their countries, participating in different demonstrations for the rights and freedoms of women, present in joint events at national, regional and global level, not only of women but also of social movements in general; in short, REPEM positioning at national, regional and global level is the result of that empowerment. It is worth noting in this process the projects oriented to empowering young feminists and their organizations which has contributed to strengthening young women's movements, thriving in the region.

*2. - What do you think at present of the problem of mainstreaming policies in different Latin American countries in terms of gender equity and access to education and employment of young and adult women?*

This topic could be really considered as a problem, because despite the advances in access to formal education in the region, as well as progresses in some countries in terms of policies and programs of adult education, this is poorly permeated by institutional initiatives towards the incorporation of strategies leading to gender mainstreaming in policies and educational programs, and even further is the



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integration of actions between education and work and even further between education and work for women. In public policies for women, major developments in actions toward cultural change and secularism still remain unresolved, important components for achieving a liberating education for girls and young and adult women.

**3. - "Así se hace" is a publication of REPEM that annually reflects realizations and success of economic enterprises led by women. How REPEM, GTL and other programs of the Network have articulated throughout recent years to collaborate and help women to make them come true?**

All of GTL products, including publications such as "Así se hace" have become working materials, not only of all partner organizations of REPEM but of other women's organizations, and several of their operational guidelines have been put into action with great success for them, not only to strengthen their projects but to advocate on their locations and countries. In many countries these publications have been accompanied by the products of the different partner organizations with their own products in order to give a new dimension to processes and actions.

**4. - In your opinion, what is the outcome of REPEM participation in the RIO +20 Summit?** REPEM participation in RIO +20 provided an opportunity to integrate actions and proposals with other regional and global networks and organizations, through which we managed to determine the importance of including the gender perspective in the dimension of environmental education. This reference considered environmental education with a gender perspective as a human right, an issue of great importance in development approaches, while it allows to give a new meaning to the role of women in improving living conditions for women and the recognition of the importance of relational approaches between genders.

Additionally, in the context of de-funding and changes in the conditions of international relations, the fact of advancing joint processes with other major networks as CLADE, ICAE, FME and CME, among others, represents a great profit to reposition the issue of education as a human right while strengthening partnerships and generating the emergence of new joint agendas.

Finally, the participation in actions performed by AMB and the Treaty on Environmental Education, as well as the linking with WMG, allowed REPEM to be placed in alternative spaces and reaffirm itself together with the women's movement in the ignorance "... of the validity of government commitments expressed in the form of minimum programs, unable to meet public accountability that governments and international agencies should take to ensure the human rights of women".



## A path together SOME LEARNING<sup>1</sup>

Latin-American Working Group - GTL  
Education, Gender and Economy  
Network of Popular Education among Women – Latin America and the Caribbean  
REPEM

By Iliana Pereyra Sarti  
REPEM  
Uruguay



### I- Introduction:

As a network of education among women, we assume a premise that throws light on our doing: *the right to education entitles – as an entrance door - to economic, social, political, sexual and reproductive rights and the fullness thereof results in exercise of citizenship.* With this strategic hypothesis we combine and integrate the educational, economic and political axes into planning and action, from a concept of gender justice, understanding they are interdependent to achieve results.

We are in this commitment since 1989, as a network of education among women, and this is how we formed the **popular economy and education group**, which began as an arena for collective reflection and action on the integration of women in the popular sectors in educational opportunities from the income-generating groups.

In 1992, REPEM launches the project "Education, Women and Popular Economy" which gives rise, in 1994, to a group focused on the complex combination: **education, gender and economics**, called **Latin American Working Group - GTL**. Today it is a regional group, located in 12 countries, that operates through national groups conducting advocacy and training, and in March 2013 will be 19 years.

### II- History and learning

#### 1. Ideas, problems, questions that gave rise to and guided the experience

From the Network we have considered the intrinsic potential of the socio-economic experiences as strategic: associative groups, cooperatives, associations, micro-enterprises, as instruments that facilitate the way for women to exercise their economic, social, cultural and political rights, that is, the way of their citizenship.

In this sense, lifelong learning appears as a central axis of the process of their women leaders, and of organizations, while being the basis for creating the conditions for social, economic and political self-sustainability of the experiences. This idea was the one that fed our action

Since the late 70s, and mainly in recent decades, in countries of Latin America many thousands of grassroots women who did not have access to paid work got integrated into those experiences of income generation. In subsequent meetings of evaluation and planning of the Latin American Working Group questions like the following came up:

- *How do we train to respond in a qualified way to the demands of women and to institutional goals?*<sup>i</sup>
- *What changes should occur, in whom, with whom, at what levels to create better conditions for the development of women and their experiences?*<sup>ii</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This note is an excerpt from the synthesis presented in the book "Asi se Hacen los Cambios Aprendiendo en RED REPEM 2010"  
[http://www.repem.org.uy/files/asi\\_se\\_hacen\\_los\\_cambios.pdf](http://www.repem.org.uy/files/asi_se_hacen_los_cambios.pdf)



## 1.1 The learning area.

Contest: an answer, a strategy, a

In 1996, after developing curricular bases, doing research and publications, we devised a contest to "Successful Economic Enterprises Led by Women" in order to answer the following questions:

- What experiences of enterprises are role models and why?
- Which have managed to keep in time, what are their strengths and their success factors?

At first, the idea of the contest was to convene and reward women and enterprises that demonstrated greater progress in economic autonomy, personal and social development and public participation, variables that we define as strategic for denoting changes in unequal and inequitable gender relationships. The objective was to know of the experiences in order to learn from them.

- **The Contest and the experiences in the public sphere.**

From the first contest, we confirmed that it facilitated the deepening of knowledge of women leaders and their enterprises through discussions, exchange and the achievement of agreements on the jury and the actions to be implemented in the organization and development of the Contest.

- **The Contest as a multiple instrument**

With the second and third Contest we identified that this was a really versatile instrument because while allowing the visibility of entrepreneur women and enterprises, it was a training opportunity for them and useful for the generation of links and relationships between institutions.<sup>2</sup>

- a) However, the agreement procedure was very complex after long discussions on the application of combined criteria coming from economy, gender and education.

- **The contest and its consequences**

The 10 years of the GTL marked a milestone in the path of reflection of the network and the GTL on the necessary policies to create the conditions for the development of these experiences. Several certainties and questions emerged from the debates on different round tables and panels in which the GTL shared the results of its history.

Certainties in that there was a long way to go to achieve policies towards equal opportunities, equity and effective exercise of the rights of women.

And new questions arose:

- *What policy tools exist to ease the changes? How do we advocate for changes in policies, on what grounds? What are the criteria for the elaboration of programs, laws, plans?*

Since 2005, the GTL/REPEN channeled their actions to "advocacy and enforceability" to advance public policy.

In late 2007, we identified components that converged towards advocacy which base was generated in conducting contents. For example, inter-institutional relations, coordination in networks of various entities, development of agendas and oversight committees, training of women leaders, studies on topics of special interest, systematization of experiences, visibility and publicity.

### III. Learning again...

Focusing on **learning** as regards advocacy, we identified paths or simultaneous and integrated processes that go in the direction of changes in thinking, will, commitment and action of those of us involved in achieving new policies. We found new benchmarks to see the problems we

<sup>2</sup> I. Pereyra Sarti, *Emprendimientos económicos exitosos liderados por mujeres de sectores populares, un desafío para los gobiernos locales*. <http://www.uia.mx/campus/publicaciones/jovenes/pdf/epieck18.pdf> Paper for the Seminar "The local arena, an area for gender public policies", Montevideo, April 2000.



want to change, that is, what is the state of the problems, which are the current policies and from which points of view we interpret them and seek solutions.

**The problems:** the lack of the necessary conditions or the opportunities to exercise the economic rights of women from popular sectors through entrepreneurship, the need to know more, finally, we can locate the problem from the great distance between reality and actions, plans, budgets aimed at.

Then we spot the **strategies for action** that are being developed to address such complex problems and an increased awareness of their potential to change. That is, knowledge about how to act with other individuals and institutions, through which methodologies to create the personal, organizational and institutional conditions to political change and for that change to result in budget allocation, development of new programs, laws, that is, contributions to new effective public policies.

The strategy of the contest and the so-called follow-up actions have significance in terms of learning for people responsible of the development and management of policies. The contest contributes to the reflection and definition of new conceptual perspectives that feed public management. This strategy is perceived as an area that generates, provides and triggers opportunities.

The contest designed with components including communication, permanent information, visibility, network integration, exchanges, is seen as a platform of opportunities to access other opportunities.

**The essential knowledge for advocacy** is another light that comes from the development of the experience. In this regard, we have adopted Jeanine Anderson's<sup>3</sup> concept of assets as intangible and tangible resources to satisfy personal or group objectives and that enable the access to other assets; in this sense, Brazil and Costa Rica have interpreted the path chosen for analysis and projection of the portfolio of assets or portfolio of powers as a methodological and political path in the sense of empowerment of women.

From the perspective of assets or powers portfolio, it is interesting to analyze how much do the strategies aforementioned contribute as platforms of opportunities and friendly scenarios to generate more assets.

And from this point of view is also possible to identify the third block of learning, which refers to **arguments for change**, why direct resources and programs for women and their participation in the economy.<sup>4</sup>

Which were the most significant learning for it? What structures were placed as platforms of opportunities or friendly contexts for the generation of these assets?

The training experience for what might be called the first launch base, the first support, the first platform and necessarily "short training processes, of quality, dynamic, flexible and having a significant subsidy", the "importance of mainstreaming other topics in training to raise teachers and the male population awareness before the fact that some women were faced with violent situations and jealousy on the part of their couples".

**A unanimous conclusion** refers to the concept of comprehensiveness: "Working with women always implies to consider, in a comprehensive way, a set of social and cultural factors that are essential to providing a quality and warmth service" as expressed by Tatiana Collazo.

<sup>3</sup> Jeanine Anderson is an associate professor of Anthropology and Gender Studies Program at the Catholic University of Peru, Ph.D. Cornell University. Born in the United States, she lives in Peru since 1970.

<sup>4</sup> From these approaches the contributions of Peru are eloquent and significant. In this respect, in the study of cases, contestants conclude that: "The economic enterprises are not just spaces in which women obtain economic resources, but they are essential for their development and growth, generating self-confidence". "Women undergo a process in which while they discover their assets, they develop themselves as persons. They get empowered and acquire the ability to break free from overwork, restructuring family responsibilities and chores. In so far as their couples observe changes in them, they not only value them more, but also admire, consider and respect them. This makes power to adopt a more equitable form, involving significant changes in the power exercised by women in their couple relationships. Most participating women were able to overcome their problems of family violence: a good percentage made their couples change, while others ended up separated, explaining that now they feel good, happy and fulfilled." "It is worth every effort we can make to find, from this text, what intangible assets these women have risked to change their lives that way, in relationships with their children, couples and other social relations, in brief, fairer gender relations.

<sup>4</sup> Felicia Torres, from Costa Rica, gives light in this sense from the view of economics conceived from women "as the sustainability of life itself", "integrating the care of life", "life experience as a starting point", "including assets in our own bodies" without partitioning.



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The methodologies, policies, processes, we would now say, has been one of the certainties of the GTL. <sup>5</sup> necessary comprehensiveness of

Today, the network is facing **new questions** and invites the reader/s to ask new questions about this process of learning from the conquest of the exercise of the rights of women citizens.

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<sup>i</sup> REPEM, *Género, Educación y Economía Popular. Una Agenda pendiente*, Montevideo, Lucy Garrido editora, 1995.

<sup>ii</sup> REPEM, *Para ayudar a las mujeres pobres a generar ingresos se necesita algo más que buena voluntad*, s/l, REPEM-KULU, s/f.

**Continues in Part II**