

# THE GRADUATION COURSE OF VISUAL ARTS OF PARFOR-UNEB: BRIEF NOTES ON THE IMPORTANCE PARTICIPATIVE EDUCATION POLICIES

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## ABSTRACT

This essay aims at tracing some of the paths taken by the elementary education teacher training programs offered by the State University of Bahia (Brazil). From the 1990s onwards, this university offered three major programs: the Intensive Graduation Program (UNEB Network, 2000) and the State Teachers Training Program (PROESP), and since 2010, the National Training Plan for Elementary Education Teachers, also named Paulo Freire platform (PARFOR). Analyzing more in depth this last program, the article is an attempt to describe the strategies of resistance enacted by work groups that show how creative outputs may result from the own difficulties and shortcomings. In this line, tensions and incompleteness may be understood as opportunities for transformation and evolution regarding both actor's practices and political decision-making. The text explores the idea that policies were, in a way, forced to change in order to respond to the demands and realities of the populations and institutions involved.

## KEYWORDS

Public policy for education; PARFOR; teacher training; art; curriculum

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## INTRODUCTION

In Brazil, in recent decades, education policies have been challenged by the profound differences and inequalities that keep persisting in this country. It is our view that the expansion of graduate programs and the investments in Ph.D. researchers and postdocs through scholarships inside and outside the country must be thought about, together with other questions related to the initial levels of public education. It is the case of the *Plano Nacional de Formação de Professores da Educação Básica* (National Training Plan for Elementary Education Teachers), also called Paulo Freire platform (PARFOR). The objective of this program is to ensure higher education for teachers already working in public primary education, especially those who inhabit in more remote areas of the country, and who perform their jobs without the qualification level required by law.

In this essay, the intention is to specify the phases of this process, highlighting some of the main traits of the strategies undertaken in order to solve the impasses emerging during the process. In fact, it is said that these are strategies which result from the institution own accumulated experience in programmers developed by regional state in more inland areas of Bahia. The text describes the implementation of the PARFOR Visual Arts course at the UNEB, as well as the strategies undertaken to solve some of its endeavors. It also documents about other information which show the interest and pertinence in counting with the participation individual actors and local communities

in strategies development which favor education and culture, especially in contexts as these, marked by territorial and resources inequalities.

### STATE UNIVERSITY OF BAHIA INLAND: POLICIES, MISHAPS AND SOLUTIONS

The University of Bahia State (UNEB) was established in 1983, starting with an initial configuration consisting of the Bahia Technical Center - CETEBA - and other units (universities, institutions, and inner cores) created by the State government. The institution has, since its beginning, fueled the creation of both colleges and university centers in several locations, depending on political will and orientations, however with weak conditions for its survival and without medium and long term plans.

Those were the main characteristics of the former four administrations. But, between 2006 and 2013, departments and units were created. Presently, UNEB holds 24 campuses and 29 departments (corresponding to what other universities call colleges or faculties). From early on, the pole units of UNEB faced communication and maintenance problems (related to property, permanent material, material for consumption, difficulty in communication, and access to the central government in Salvador), as well as difficulties related to the establishment of teachers in more faraway areas. These are problems that have changed little all through the successive administrations of federal presidents and State governments, mostly due to funds insufficiency, or to the lack of priority given by State's government.

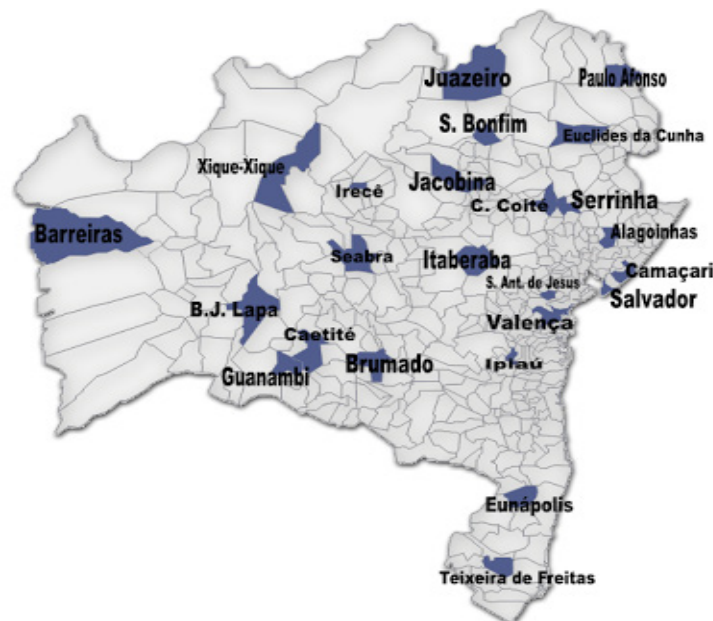


Image 1: Uneb's Campuses.  
Source: <http://despertarepreciso.blogspot.pt/>

Two terms after its foundation, the university started to promote elections for presidents and directors, while still facing a not well-organized policy for inland development, and without enough material quality or satisfactory academic excellence needed to meet the standards implemented by funding agencies. Budget problems had been

accumulating for a long time since demand and needs increased, but the State did not enhance the proportion of resources.

Unable to raise funds and create projects through its research expertise, which is still small for its needs, and being a large and geographically dispersed university, UNEB has tried to respond to the most urgent needs of the State of Bahia. These were mainly related to providing teaching apprenticeship in general. On the map below, we show the cities of UNEB campuses.

UNEB's campuses by order of chronological appearance:

- Salvador - Campus I
- Alagoinhas - Campus II
- Juazeiro - Campus III
- Jacobina - Campus IV
- Santo Antônio de Jesus - Campus V
- Caetité - Campus VI
- Senhor do Bonfim - Campus VII
- Paulo Afonso - Campus VIII
- Barreiras - Campus IX
- Teixeira de Freitas - Campus X
- Serrinha - Campus XI
- Guanambi - Campus XII
- Itaberaba - Campus XIII
- Conceição do Coité - Campus XIV
- Valença - Campus XV
- Irecê - Campus XVI
- Bom Jesus da Lapa - Campus XVII
- Eunápolis - Campus XVIII
- Camaçari - Campus XIX
- Brumado - Campus XX
- Ipiaú - Campus XXI
- Euclides da Cunha - Campus XXII
- Seabra - Campus XXIII
- Xique-Xique - Campus XXIV

The approval without amendments of the State Law No. 7176 of September 10, 1997 (Governo do Estado da Bahia, 1997) had consequences too, as it brought about several limitations, taking from institutions their already weak autonomy concerning resources management. It also changed their administrative and academic structure for the worse<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> In addition to the withdrawal of financial autonomy, faculties were transformed into departments. This change prompted the cutting of various positions and functions, and the combination of components and disciplines in the same academic and physical space, even if they did not have much relation to each other. This situation makes it difficult to manage colleges both academically and administratively to this date. The current government announced a revocation of this status.

Concerning the management of the major challenges faced by UNEB in these 32 years of existence, we could say the worst of them is perhaps the difficulty in fixating the faculty in the units located in small towns. Distance and absence of academic, cultural, and urban activities in those places can be pointed out as the main causes of such a problem.

The troublesome maintenance of the physical, academic and material campuses led to the implementation of a management system demanding that pro-deans, president, directors, and advisors have to keep traveling between the poles and the city of Salvador. Videoconferences are regularly held to solve this issue partly, but they are not enough to substitute monthly face-to-face meetings with all the directors, who still need to travel to one of the poles frequently. Materials transportations between Salvador and regional units is done weekly by car - the so-called “malote”- supposing long-distance travels, frequently done by precarious roads. There are also serious difficulties to improve teachers and staff qualifications due to the long distances and to the lack of academic opportunities in the small towns, as well as difficulties concerning career development plans and wages, in addition to the governance and communication problems between the departments and the central administration, as well as other governability queries.

Nonetheless, over the years, fueled by the courses offered and the number of campuses created, and in the absence of another large federal university system that would support teaching, research, and extension within UNEB, this university eventually transformed weaknesses in forces. It built its unique expertise, responding to all the problems it faces in a “half-breed”, precarious, and local way, within the institution’s possibilities. This response was possible due to the creation of special (temporary) undergraduate courses, initially in pedagogy and, afterward, in other areas as well, including, more recently, the Visual Arts course, within the context of PARFOR and which we are going to address in detail in this paper.

With the implementation of special undergraduate programs since the late 1990’s, UNEB penetrated the corners of Bahia; places that were uninteresting for academics from the capital and neglected by federal educational policies. In fact, for the purpose of such policies, these sites were not seen at that time as possible areas for the expansion and the decentralization<sup>2</sup> of graduation courses.

The offer of high education courses outside the state capital, taking the form of special undergraduate and graduate degrees, was strengthened after 1999, and became known as *Programa Intensivo de Graduação* (Intensive Undergraduate Program), and was also called *Rede UNEB 2000*. Created in 1998, this program aimed at offering complete undergraduate degrees in pedagogy in several cities of Bahia, according to the needs identified by the state government. These courses, mostly, were born due to the need of a high-level education for teachers working in the public educational system. The government of Bahia State recognized, willingly or not, that state universities - especially UNEB - were the institutions that had more chances of better addressing those necessities, since, among other reasons, they already had campuses in those locations<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> It must be taken into account the long period during which the expansion of the federal university system stagnated. This policy was modified by Lula’s administration.

<sup>3</sup> Something that continues to happen, although the actual governor’s official discourse only recognizes the federal

With its in-site undergraduate degrees, UNEB had established a kind of close relationship with the students at the most inland areas of Bahia. This mode of acting was later deepened and developed by the successive programs targeted to that audience, the aforementioned *Rede UNEB 2000*, PROESP (the State Program for Teachers Training), and, since 2010, the National Training Program for Basic Education Teachers, also known as *Plataforma Freire* (PARFOR).

For over 30 years, UNEB has been the public higher education institution that has developed the most intense work in inland areas. The university has maintained for the two past decades affirmative action policies and a close relationship with popular movements and local political leaders. In the towns where its campuses or units are situated, UNEB is more than a university; it is a part of peoples' lives. Day to day, this university embraces crucial partnerships with the community, solving several queries, such as the comings and goings of professors, accommodation and food issues, and the organization of events.

UNEB was, for example, the first high education institution in the State of Bahia to adopt the quota policy for Afro-descendants. Another example of the integration it has with communities was the moment in which the head office of the Barreiras unit was invaded by the '*trabalhadores sem terra*' (landless workers) in 2011. The building was occupied, and lectures were suspended. It was not an occupation carried by students. It was a temporary appropriation of an institutional territory undertaken by a community, by a social group that entered the unit and created a political fact. Why did the landless workers of Barreiras consider they had the right to do so? Why did they not choose another institutional building? In its past, UNEB had already received members of the movement within the context of other activities. It can be said that those workers, somehow, perceived that building as their territory. To better understand all of this, let us think about some significant points:

- In many inland towns of Bahia the ambition of becoming a "doctor, priest, deputy or lawyer" is still a reality. For the inhabitants of the municipalities where UNEB implements its courses, the institution has as a distinctive mark the ability to provide access to higher education without having to move to the capital to achieve this goal. That is its principal symbolic capital.
- Due to its work and actions during the last 30 years, UNEB thoroughly understands the cultural ways of each community and their leaders. It communicates well with both political authorities and pedagogic entities in charge of basic education training in the municipalities where the offices are located. UNEB is familiar with Bahia's cultural specificities and succeeds in managing them properly, following a working logic that is not always straightforward. In other words, such logic is based on complex and subtle negotiations linked to an attempt of maintaining the accomplishments obtained, which are always precarious and provisional.
- For decades, UNEB has faced the difficulties imposed by distance and has learned to deal with them. Thus, nowadays, the university has established an intense dialogue with the entities and agents that have influence within the communities with which it interacts.
- For better or worse, UNEB eventually set a standard of university results that strongly influences the educational, cultural, political and communitarian managers within these territories, because people who occupy such positions and live in these areas are, mostly, graduated from that university.

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universities; the Department of Education has just signed an agreement with UNEB, accepting 35,000 students for higher education courses in the State of Bahia.

Thus, the level of integration and collaboration between UNEB and the communities in the various areas in which the institution has implemented its courses over the last 30 years is deep. It also affects the education of the inhabitants of each pole, city, and town where the institution has acted, mobilizing with its actions several partnerships with different groups in the community.

In the last fifteen years, the special degrees offered by UNEB's network made a considerable difference concerning the implementation of higher education courses in most of Bahia regions. Thus, when the Freire Platform first appeared in 2010 demanding that universities should create more courses, UNEB responded quickly and with a plentiful supply of 125 classes spread by the several centers and municipalities where it already operated. In the first selection for PARFOR, disclosed in December 2009, UNEB offered within their campuses 63 classes in Pedagogy, 23 in Writing, 10 in Arts, 10 in Mathematics, 6 in Sociology, 1 in Physics, 1 in Chemistry, 1 in Computer Sciences, and 10 in Biological Sciences. More classes were added to the initial ones, mainly in Pedagogy, Humanities, Sociology and Biology. Such a large response to government demands was possible because UNEB had already established a structure of flowcharts and institutional procedures, both academic and practical. That allowed University to face teachers' and students' demands properly.

With almost as many students in regular courses, and with an initial prediction of 8000 registered students, PARFOR appears to be, in practice, a UNEB within the UNEB. The implementation of PARFOR fell on the shoulders of the local team, but also on those of the university's departments. However, it also brought about special training courses to a never before attempted scale, in terms of time of implementation and objective accomplishment. The experience accumulated in such actions allowed UNEB to assume, at that time, 40% of all the operations related to the Freire Platform in the country.

## **THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FREIRE PLATFORM AT UNEB**

CAPES' National Training Plan for Basic Education Teachers or Paulo Freire Platform (PARFOR) is a federal program, originated during the administration of Education Minister Fernando Haddad, in 2009. It is described as:

An emergency program created to attend to article 11, section III of the Decree nº 6.755, of 29 January 2009 and implemented in a collaboration regime with Capes, the states, municipalities the federal district and higher education institutions (CAPES, 2015).

Its objective was

To encourage and promote the provision of free higher education of quality for practicing teachers in the public system of primary education, so that these professionals can get the training required by the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (...) and contribute to improving the quality of the elementary education in the country. (CAPES, 2015)



The implementation process of PARFOR began with an invitation made by the Minister of Education to a group of teachers from different regions and programs so that, together with other administrators, they could build the Freire Platform. Professor Norma Neyde, founder of the *Rede UNEB 2000* program, represented UNEB. The first meetings were held at the beginning of 2009. In January 2010, the platform was implanted in UNEB, and the courses started on January 25, 2010. CAPES then assumed the responsibility of managing the plan nationally, creating a particular division for that purpose. Since the implantation phase, it became necessary to face several difficulties that went from the management of financial, human and physical resources to the design of evaluation instruments and curricular plans. The administration of the program also faced some troubles: a great concentration of power and responsibility in the hands of heads of departments, in addition to an initially erroneous internal communication policy, had to be dealt with through the use of some creativity and even with a certain degree of contestation. We will further explain these issues in the following paragraphs.

Between September and December 2009, heads of departments listed the degrees they could offer in their units at the small towns of the state. They would be in charge for receiving resources and spending them – according to CAPES' rules and under its supervision. They would also be responsible for – and this is extremely important – selecting, somewhat democratically, who would be the course coordinators inside the departments.

The directors also had the responsibility to sign a document authorizing the teachers of their departments to teach lessons in PARFOR - since the legislation, in principle, did not allow the allocation of more working hours to teachers. This situation concentrated political and academic power in the hands of directors and increased the competition for teachers and local coordinators jobs, bringing about several rumors and other similar disruptions that somehow characterize the academic ethos.

It was also directors' responsibility to sign out a document authorizing teachers belonging to their departments' to teach at PARFOR – since the legislation, at first, did not allow to increase teacher's workload. This concentrated political and academic power in the hands of the directors and increased the competition for the positions of teachers and local coordinators.

Another problem, noticed months after the implementation of the Platform, was the difficulty in dealing with the financial resources that came from the federal government, whose management was strongly centered on the overall coordination of the PARFOR, by determination of CAPES. That is, from the purchase of materials to equipment, everything had to be ordered by the central administration. Moreover, all the purchases were being made for the first time, on a large scale. Due to this reason, it was necessary to buy the material at least three months in advance. Thus, considering the difficulties to find them on the market, the purchasing of goods required an unprecedented capacity for prediction, especially when it came to the Visual Arts.

Communication between Central Administration and Coordinators or Directors had to be adjusted to make the ways of dealing with resources known and understood by

all. Another type of difficulty faced by this program had to do with student dropout rates, which were almost exclusively caused by the local communities' lack of compromise with the agreed payment of expenses.

### THE VISUAL ARTS PARFOR AT UNEB

The process of creating PARFOR's Visual Arts course followed, in general, the same strategy used for other courses from October and November 2009 onwards. The curriculum created for PROESP's undergraduate degree in Visual Arts a few years before was used as a starting point. Practical reasons justified that choice which consisted in the offer, during the first semester, of general courses (sociology, philosophy, and anthropology) that could be taught by teachers already employed by the institution, what would give UNEB more time to search for external teachers to more specific topics.

The majority of the students of PARFOR were teachers at municipal or state schools, teaching art classes without having a degree in the field. The teachers-students also committed themselves to the continuation of the teaching activity, except during the modules. The classroom worked out as their internship. This form of apprenticeship is the most powerful feature of this type of course: a student who is also a teacher (hence the nomenclature teacher-student we use some times in this essay) and who will use his/her experience as an intern to reflect on his/her practice as a teacher. Thousands of teachers coming from all over Bahia had access to the program by digital means. Due to the fact that there were more candidates than vacancies, the former were selected according to their results in general knowledge and orthography examinations. In total, 44 teachers-students were enrolled, 32 attended the course, and 29 finished it.

The methodology for composing the curricular plan was imported from *Rede UNEB 2000's* tested format. It consisted of offering an on-site module, with teachers and teachers-students, in a total of 80 hours – from Sunday to Sunday. The number of hours devoted to this model was the same as the amount demanded in any other regular program. These modules were not always scheduled well in advance, as they depended on the availability of classrooms on each campus, as well as on the agreements between students and teachers. In practice, PARFOR's curriculum is almost the same as that of PROESP, despite the differences as regards the “special topics” and the internship format.

As this methodology matured, it became evident that the internship, as traditionally used in pedagogy, was a mistake, especially considering that this public was composed of students that were already teachers. Therefore, considering this status, the internship should be used to put in question some taken for granted practices, instead of teaching a student (who is already a teacher) how to be an educator.

In 2012, a general meeting between local coordinators and the general administration of courses was held. During this encounter, it was decided that the first semester of the internship would be used to discuss the set of queries brought by the teachers-students. Thus, the output of that semester could be the preparation of a specific intervention project developed in the classrooms where the students of this course taught.



This project, to be implemented in the second semester, constituted the internship itself and had an emphasis on actions related to the area of arts and culture and the problems faced by the teachers-students. In the third semester of the internship that project could be used to the development of graduation works or monographs. The format of such work was variable, and it included group projects. These should, ideally, include students' experiences and reflections on the internship.

Even though it was not possible to change the curriculum during the course's execution, the relevance given to the intervention project was modified in practice. The instability of the program and its implementation in UNEB loosened the typical control loops of disciplines, charges, and terms, which enabled many new things to be tried and many mistakes to be detected.

As Duarte Jr. (2001) says, a curriculum is always a political result of both forces and conflicts. If there is something striking about the process we are currently analyzing it is the fact that PARFOR's Visual Arts curriculum, despite being regulated, had to be altered due to derangements and mutations. Therefore, it ended up being done and undone, subverted and betrayed. Those changes laid bare the dissection and devouring processes that happen between forces and that a curriculum always carries within itself, but does not always show.

The course plan, as already stated, is based on a previous one used on PROESP. This political-pedagogic project, although limited as regards objectives and the definitions of abilities and competencies, brought benefits and innovations through some disciplines, such as open seminars, internships, visual arts laboratories and ateliers. In the case of the latter, the positive final results were also due to the existence of good teachers in areas such as painting, drawing, photography, sculpture and introduction to the use of digital technologies.

The aim of these disciplines was to provide teachers-students, usually coming from teaching courses, with a practical experience in the concrete artistic field, giving them materials and tools, aside from a better conscience of their roles as educators in art. Interdisciplinary and creative workshops, for example, required teachers-students to be active and define what workshops made sense for their daily activities as teachers. In practice, many workshops were just replicated in the various campuses, partly due to the lack of teachers, and partly due to the high quality and success of said activities.

The interdisciplinary workshops were implemented in every undergraduate degree since 2000. They include a group assignment made with all the teacher-student community and are carried in the classrooms in which they already work. In their most accomplished form, the workshops start at the beginning of the semester, with a discussion, in class, of the subject or topic to be addressed. Often, there are ready and applied projects of interest to the teachers-students. In any case, the workshop is designed around a central theme defined in class. A teacher guides the subprojects of the teachers-students teams, which are performed in their original schools, involving, in turn, the students of these schools. The guiding lecturer is the one who monitors the logistical preparation, the teaching and the imagery construction of those projects.

The planning of this supervised internship took into account the subjects' autonomy, that is, their queries and angsts as public art teachers, in this case, students-teachers organized in groups composed of people from the same city or school. They are expected to elaborate a project to be developed within three months under the supervision of a lecturer. Normally this person is the one who also teaches the theoretical disciplines; this course of action promotes a confrontation of the theoretical discussions with the concrete problems faced by students-teachers in the classroom. In addition, there are creative moments shared within the interdisciplinary workshops. All these actions together produce artistic, surprising, and innovative results useful to those contexts, and which can also be applied in the student-teacher's classroom. Unlike other situations, in which the supervised student may be tempted to hide problems, there is a dialogue, which permeates the whole evaluation process and exceeds it.

The workshop comes to an end with a special school event. At this event the teacher-student gives a lecture, presenting all of his/her subproject's outputs. A supervisor or another lecturer representing this person participates in these sessions. The organization of these occurrences involves breaking with school routine. It also allows some innovation and energizing of the teachers organizing the course since it demands administrative articulations and academic negotiations between the schools hosting the workshop. This practice is developed since 2000, with the participation of local communities. It was initially funded by the local governments in the *Rede UNEB 2000* program, by the State government in PROESP, and, currently, it is financed by the federal government, in PARFOR.

The grade obtained in the Interdisciplinary Workshop is awarded according to the teacher-student's participation and the type of classroom action developed during the semester as well as during the graduation day. The "thematic seminars" are also part of the course plan. Their theme is chosen with the teachers-students at the beginning of the semester or proposed within a project developed in another module. The difference is that this discipline is carried out in the classroom with dynamic exercises or lectures about important subjects. It may also count with the participation of experts or professionals of the community, who speak about a particular type of knowledge. This activity has been transformed into a sort of master lecture, which includes several forms of interaction with the audience. Usually, the seminars are open to the academic and external communities. The evaluation of this discipline typically demands teachers-students to be present during the course. One could argue that there is no way of assessing their performance. But then we could return to the aforementioned personal motivation. The evaluation has to be intrinsic to the learner. And this procedure is increasingly dominant in the educational field.

When carried out that way, seminars, workshops, and internships can break with the formal structure of written examinations, which do not assess what is needed. They are also ways of renovating practices inside the school context, reinventing the old craft of teaching, creating collaborative learning opportunities and bringing to light other kinds of skills to be valued and made visible. Thus, they set examples for the organization of

activities that are distinct from the traditional ones. After all, these still constrain teacher's imaginaries in many places, as they lack options and knowledge about the modes of operating.

Before we get to the conclusions, there are some considerations we need to make about PARFOR's Visual Arts students. The first of which is that, as a general rule, these students don't perceive their own creative practices as cultural or worthy of a sense of beauty. They do not understand them as something outside of their day-to-day life. They don't consider them extraordinary. But one of the traits of the arts is its exceptionality. Thus, initially, the Art lectures were perceived as regular settings of a teacher's life: obligation, workload, and possibility of professional and personal progress. Therefore, because of this understanding, the group of teachers-students developed attitudes that can be seen in any learning process carried "from the outside": complaints about schedules, about dislocations due to educational activities, or even about the wait for a plaster to dry when making a mosaic.

What did this mean? As they did not understand initially the type of change they had to make to follow a new learning process, students had reacted based on old representations. They did not discern how this practice encompassed their culture, invisible to them. But, with time, their thematic choices, collective work, and the emerging and eventually overcome obstacles ended up creating conditions to let the extraordinary materialize. As Bião says:

To repeat actions means to teach them for the next eminent performance of the day, until an unexpected incident provokes a conflict and, with that, the flux of daily actions is broken (Bião, 2009, p. 125).

I would say more: until the flux of daily actions of those who develop it is broken. By understanding the difference, one opens the door to the outstanding or to spectacularity. This is nothing more than the moment in which the subject, reflecting on him/herself in a different state than the daily life psychophysical state, understands him/herself in a different way and changes. The inward learning – and, naturally, the knowledge about the changes a course such as the PARFOR Arts can bring to the student's self-awareness as an agent of culture – goes through the feeling of strangeness towards those activities, and then through an acknowledgment of them as something different and new. Once ordinary, after the obtaining of this degree students see those actions as permeated by another understanding of life and culture.

Thus, the teacher-student dealing with arts cooperatively, seeking personal improvement and working for the common good - that is, their qualification for teaching children and young people - reinvents him/herself. These teachers position themselves inside a "train of lights", an environment that moves while throwing light at others, and that gives new meanings to what teachers do and what they receive in return, at the same time illuminating what these professionals become.

One can make use of the expression "train of lights", that is the environment of artistic creation, artistic practices, and enjoyment of works and of processes. It encompasses

the experimentation of techniques and materials usually used only by arts, lead and orientated by teachers who are in majority, also artists. It is a discussion of change processes, educational and artistic perceptions according to the Arts point of view, and not just from a pedagogical perspective. In other words: to qualify for education through the immersion in procedures, processes, forms of action, materials and results in the field of visual arts. It is an experience that is very different from the traditional learning process, crossed out by a certain lack of control and by flexible evaluation structures institutionally endorsed.

Processes like these have changed everyone: the students, the local coordinator, myself. No one among the students was an artist, but, in a group and with guidance, they produced art of quality and beauty. So, faced with this product, this process, I rediscovered something that has always been right in front of us: the power of collectivity. A good example of this restored truth is the DEDC I - a ceramic mural with incredible simplicity and design that sits in one of the units of UNEB. Like the pyramids, which had many architects, or the grids designed by Carybé, which were made by numerous blacksmiths, a single person could not have made that artwork. It was due to the combined efforts of several individuals that this beautiful art piece was born. It is probably one of the few collective artistic productions made inside UNEB.

The chance to work collectively without censorship or judgment, and the recognition, by all, of the achieved results have reframed everyone's perceptions. They also allowed people to overcome the painful idea of being "second-class students". Having their creations disseminated across UNEB's spaces, and outside of their own class, made them well-known and respected in almost every unit.

The experience obtained through *Rede UNEB 2000*, PROESP and, since, 2010, through Paulo Freire Platform created a singular bond between UNEB and the communities, allowing a real improvement of public teachers' academic condition. In fact, during the special undergraduate degrees implementation, 15 years ago, UNEB created administrative and pedagogical methodologies to face problems, such as the fragilities of teachers trained in public schools, as regards elementary skills like reading, writing, doing calculations or develop investigative reasoning.

Finally, we need to say that this essay has tried to retrace a long path in which public policies and praxis confront in between each other along the own history of UNEB as well as the history of teachers education in the state of Bahia, more specifically of Art teachers. From that confrontation which took more than three decades new ways out, solutions, modes of doing were reinvented and recreated. Overall, they were resistance actions in which teachers, administrators, students, and the whole community have participated.

Translation: Flávia Serafim

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**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

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