



EVERYONE A CHANGEMAKER

SHIFTING THE CONVERSATION ABOUT EDUCATION

In his final writings, ***Pedagogy of Indignation – pedagogical letters and other writings***, Paulo Freire said, “The denouncements and announcements that happen critically during the act of reading the world are what give birth to the dreams for which we fight.”

The denouncement of our reality and the announcement of new horizons are in the voices present in the book ***Everyone a changemaker - shifting the conversation about education***, produced by the Changemaker Schools Brazil program, an initiative by Ashoka in partnership with Alana.

New legislation for rural education, restructuring an entire neighborhood, replanting trees taken from one place to another. These and other examples show that the school is a special space for educating people engaged in changemaking.

What do the 15 schools presented in this book have in common with the rest of Brazil's schools, and how do they lead a new understanding of education in their territories and the country? In this book, these stories are brought to life in the voices of the students, educators, families, community leaders, thinkers and education professionals.

In these four chapters, the reader will be asked to reflect on the role of education in dealing with social, economic, political and cultural challenges, the paths they found to overcome them, and what they changed.

The first chapter is a transcript of the ***What kind of education are we talking about?*** debate, which featured the participation of four women: Ana Lucia Villela, Anamaria Schindler, Natacha Costa and Ana Elisa Siqueira. The second chapter brings us the voices of the students, along with essays on changemaking skills by writers inspired by these voices: ***Empathy***, by Mary Gordon; ***Changemaking*** by Flávio Bassi; ***Creativity***, by Wellington Nogueira; and ***Teamwork***, by Manoel de Andrade. The third chapter presents the paths, motivations and stories of these 15 schools. Finally, the fourth chapter reveals the impacts of a changemaking education.

This is an invitation to the reader to engage in a new conversation about education and dream of a new world, one where every student, educator, and the entire community can be a changemaker.

Antonio Lovato and Raquel Franzin

Organizers



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1st Edition | São Paulo | 2017



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The Changemaker Schools Program is an initiative by Ashoka, a global organization that gathers social entrepreneurs from every part of the world. Based on the belief that anyone in a society can be a changemaker, the program sees the school as a special space to promote experiences capable of teaching people a sense of responsibility towards the world. Children and youngsters willing to take on an active role in the face of necessary changes, in a variety of social contexts, and supported by tools and values such as empathy, teamwork, creativity and changemaking.

The program began in 2009, in the United States, and since then has spread to 34 countries. Today, it has a network of over 270 schools, with 15 of them in Brazil. Here, the initiative was launched in September of 2015, in partnership with Alana. By the time of this publication, there are 18 schools recognized by the program.

After a careful review process, the schools are invited to engage with a community consisting of a variety of professionals who share the vision that everyone can be a changemaker. This group consists of journalists, college professors, representatives of the government and the third sector, experts, and artists.

This co-lead community sees the child and the youngster through an integral perspective of development, in which the body, emotion, and reason are not separate, and all three are essential to the development of free and independent people, capable of relating and acting in the world in a more empathetic manner. The stories and experiences of these schools and the other members of the Changemaker Schools community inspire and help expand the social demand for this kind of education.

By recognizing, promoting, and connecting Changemaker Schools, among them and the community at large, we seek to help the staff in these schools position themselves as leaders in a profound transformation of the nation's educational context.

Together with this community, Ashoka and Alana accepted the challenge of sharing a common message: that education, in many parts of the country and around the world, is changing.

More than simply creating or replicating a new program or curriculum, we are talking about fighting for a change in the mentality and view of education. We are talking about creating and promoting, together, a new point of reference for education and people's lives in our society.

In order to do this, the program promotes roundtable talks and debates, organizes publications, connects and promotes the engagement of its co-lead community and partners, such as public entities, education programs at universities, and the press and, together with other movements and forums, strengthen and disseminate its message throughout our society.



About Ashoka

Ashoka is a global social organization founded in 1981 that gathers over 3 thousand social entrepreneurs in 84 countries. It aims to collaborate in the construction of a world in which Everyone is a Changemaker, where any person can develop and apply the skills needed to solve today's biggest social challenges.



About Alana

The Alana Institute is a nonprofit civil society organization that bets on projects that seek to guarantee the conditions for the full experience of childhood. Founded in 1994, today the Institute has its own projects as well as partnerships, and is maintained by the earnings of an endowment fund since 2013. Its mission is to "honor children."

INTRODUCTION

When the Changemaker Schools arrived in Brazil, in 2014, the question we most often heard from the educators, students, and third sector professionals with whom we spoke was if the program's goal was to map innovative schools.

To us, Changemaker Schools has never been a project in defense of innovation – at least, not in the sense that our society normally thinks of it, that is, it is not about discussing technological tools that augment post-modernity and life in schools.

Schools are made out of students, educators, its staff and community, so when we talk about changemaker schools, we are talking about people. The kind of change we are interested in comes from the potential for action within the relationships in the school community, which is responsible for creating an environment where anyone can lead a change for the greater good.

Early on, we realized we had to show why certain schools could be considered changemaking, and how they had worked to become a reference in their community. Beyond discussing concepts, we had to offer visibility to the challenges and paths their staff had followed so that other change-making movements in schools, territories, and public policies could cause change and also be changed.

And so the research and school visits began – ten of them, at first. A year later, this number had already risen to 15 and, later on, went up to 18 and keeps on rising. We know their stories, the challenges they faced, the paths they took. We established connections with their communities and, more importantly, promoted an exchange of knowledge between the leaderships from different schools.

Parallel to our effort to locate and build this group, we invited into the discussion other people whose work was not attached to any school in particular, but who, as social entrepreneurs, communicators or experts, could help develop the program's outcomes – changing the conversation we have about education in the country.

Together, they came to be a part of a larger community, which we call our Co-lead Community. We believe that it is from the sum of these efforts and attitudes that effective social change happens. Just like a stone that falls into the middle of a lake, its impact sends waves that expand slowly, until they reach the edges. It starts off small, but its reach can be immeasurable.

We started to think about this publication during the program's third year, when the moment to spread this message around our society, to establish new partnerships, and to deepen our strategies to influence Brazil's educational policies, became clear. During this time, debates around a new High School curriculum, the National Common Curricular Base, and wrongheaded initiatives like Escola Sem Partido (School Without Politics) appeared within Brazil's political discussions. Why shouldn't we present an opinion on this and so many other subjects that affect the lives of each and everyone of us, and from the perspective of those who experience the school on a daily basis?

We recognize that, considering a field of over 180 thousand schools, between public and private ones, talking about 15 of them may seem like small change. What cannot be seen as small is the impact these schools have on the lives of thousands of children, youngsters, families, educators, workers, department staff, community agents, and their neighborhoods. The movement these schools can spark in the rest of Brazil's schools is not small either.

So, to help with this, nothing better than a publication presenting not only our voices as narrators, but also that of a variety of agents from the school community, principals, experts, and communicators.

We hope that everyone we have talked to during the Changemaker Schools' first three years in Brazil can find an echo of their words in this publication. To our readers who don't yet know us, we hope these stories inspire partnerships and change: welcome to our conversation!

The Changemaker Schools Brazil Team

PREFACE

At a five-day gathering of 350 Ashoka young (in their teens) changemakers, a truly tiny young woman sat down next to me at lunch. She introduced herself and very quickly said, “I’m twelve” (no doubt because she’s sick of people thinking she is eight).

I asked her the obvious question in that setting: “What’s your venture?” She explained that her brother is autistic and that all through school she would cry when he was mistreated. “But now we’ve fixed that.”

I asked her how she had done that. She said, “We get together and whenever we see a special student not being treated well, we figure out what to do, and then we do that. And we are very persistent.”

If you had been with us, not one cell in your body would doubt that she has her power – for life. She will never be afraid of anything. She is a changemaker, and she knows it. And she has brought a team of her peers along with her.

I asked her one more question: “How many student groups are there in your (poor, rural) middle school?” “Over 50.” That’s wildly unusual, but it explains how she got her power.

When, at age 11, she entered middle school, she entered an “everyone a changemaker” culture where having your own dream/team/impact was the norm. Not today’s usual pattern where she would have been confronted with an all-but-impossible series of adult and youth culture barriers.

She entered her new school with a problem – and everyone said to her, “Imagine a solution, build a team, make this a better place. Look around – that’s how the world works.” At the same time, she was absorbing “how-to” skills while many student groups recruited her to join their teams or to use their services and while she watched her friends also engage with this “everyone a changemaker” society.

What we all – young people, parents, society – urgently need is for all middle and high-schools, youth programs, and other teen communities to become “everyone a changemaker” cultures so that every young person can have this gift.



The ultimate measure of success in growing up now is “What proportion of 12- or 16-year-olds know they are changemakers?” And they can't know this unless they have had the sort of experiences the young woman I've just described had.

Why is this the new measure of success in growing up (and therefore for education)?

Here one must recognize that over the last three centuries the way society works has shifted radically.

For many, many centuries, success was efficiency in repetition (think assembly lines, law firms). A person was given a skill (banker, barber) and then went to work in a world of walls that allowed them to repeat that skill for life.

However, after centuries of no growth in average per capita income in the west – from imperial Rome to 1700, growth broke out and has been accelerating at an exponential rate ever since.

There's a second exponential curve since 1700, the demand for repetition – but this one is plunging downward. IBM's Watson is designed to take over roughly half of what doctors and nurses do. Alibaba's huge lending operation achieves far superior results without lending officers or their managers; it uses a self-correcting algorithm instead. Truck drivers are toast. And so on.

These are facts. Not opinions or preferences.

The old repetition arrangements don't work anymore. The failure of these familiar patterns is part of this era's disquiet.

We now live in an opposite, everything-changing world. Every person, group, and system is changing and “bumping” all the others faster and faster, broader and broader – and with ever-more universal and instant connections. (Consider, e.g., the web.) This also is a fact, not a preference or a guess.

In today's new reality, then, the world is becoming an ever more intricately interconnected and morphing team of teams. And those teams need all their members to quickly see new value opportunities and form and work skillfully in new teams of teams organized for these new ends.

Anyone without high changemaking skills cannot play – and will be marginalized. Already we can see this all across the planet. The hundreds of millions who don't see the new game and don't have the necessary skills are falling off the edge of society. They are understandably afraid and angry. Not least for their kids who they correctly sense have little future, who cannot contribute in the new game.

One hundred fifty years ago the rate of change had accelerated to the point that society needed everyone to be literate in written language. It needed everyone to read street signs and instruction manuals. Now it needs everyone to be a changemaker.

This is not a teaching technique. It is a need. A need defined by the unavoidable fact that we now live in an everything-changing world where everyone must be a changemaker to play.

What specifically does this mean for today's children and young people?

First, it is essential for young children to master and practice and practice, in very precise language, “cognitive empathy-based living for the good of all”.

The prophets and now the scientists tell us very clearly that happiness and health and longevity comes from living life expressing love and respect in action for those around us. We used to be able to do that by following custom or the rules.

But this is the first generation where no one can be a good person no matter how diligently s/he tries to follow rules. As the rate of change accelerates, and as we must live in today's kaleidoscope of myriad changing contexts, less and less of life is covered by the rules. Unless one can rely on high-level cognitive empathy-based ethics, one will hurt others and disrupt groups.

Such people are being pushed aside. They are perceived (correctly) as hurtful and disruptive. (They, of course, also don't have the changemaking skills needed to contribute.) Those in the game don't want them anywhere near. It's their fault, and anyone who looks like them is suspect. That's why ironically and tragically prejudice is rising again.

We are all born with both mirror neurons and cerebral cortexes. However, it takes serious, sustained work to get them to come together into the cognitive empathy that is the foundational skill of changemaking. (In retrospect, I now hugely appreciate the gift I was given growing up when I was time and again asked how someone else felt when I did what I just did to them.)

When one simply feels another's pain (the mirror neurons), brain scans show the same pain areas lighting up in one's brain. We then feel our pain and focus here.

By contrast, when a person has developed his/her cognitive empathy skills, that person's brain experiences healthful happiness, not pain, as s/he goes to work to help the other person. Because the person with these skills knows s/he can help and because happiness comes from helping, that's what s/he will do.

In an "everyone a changemaker" world where everyone is powerful, it is critical that everyone is thus actively committed to the good of all and has the skills in fact to be helpful (and to do no harm) in both personal and team settings.

There are many ways to help young children master cognitive empathy-based living for the good of all. (See, e.g., Ashoka Fellow Mary Gordon's Roots of Empathy, (www.rootsofempathy.org.) But how many elementary school principals know that they are failing if one second-grader has not grasped this most critical foundational skill? And if all their students are not practicing it in and out of school? They are graded and rewarded for (1) information transfer (test results) and (2) no mayhem in the hallways (rule-following).

That's why our job is changing the framework across society. We all need to know the new game and what it requires.

Around age 11, children begin the transition to being young people. The brain rewires. Almost all societies used to recognize this fundamental change (as confirmation, bar/bat mitzvah, the Hindu sacred thread ceremony, and innumerable tribal rites attest).

At this point, it is critical to help all young people be and practice being changemakers – like the young woman we have already met who changed how special students in her school are treated.

Although this will be far more critical for this and future generations of young people, it has long been the experiential roots that explain who has become a key leader later in life. Over 80 percent of Ashoka Fellows had an idea and made it happen in their teens. And 360,000 out of 430 million LinkedIn profiles report starting something in the author's teens. They are four times as likely to be a C-level leader and five times as likely to be a founder or co-founder. (Many of the 360,000 ventures reported were probably a teacher's project and not the young person's idea and owned undertaking. Therefore, true entrepreneurs are probably even more likely to be C-level leaders and/or founders.)

Richard Branson launched a magazine at 16 and dropped out of high school to pursue it. Robin Chase launched a philosophy club and got 10 percent of the students to join. Sarah Toumi, an Ashoka Fellow increasing farmer incomes 60 percent while fighting climate change in North Africa, began getting her power at 11 when she started a campaign for a bus so that girls wouldn't drop out of school because the long walk was unsafe. The pattern could not be more clear.

Now that everyone must be a changemaker, every young person must have this experience. Which means that every youth culture (school, youth program, workplace) must be an "everyone a changemaker" culture.

Thus practicing being a changemaker leads to mastering four critical, interconnected skills:

1. Cognitive empathy-based living for the good of all. This foundational skill must grow rapidly and mesh with the others and guide/give purpose to the young person.
2. Sophisticated teamwork. Basketball practice helps, but building a (changing) team amid many others is key to being able to create and lead in a giant team of teams society.
3. New leadership. An “everyone a changemaker” “team of teams” society requires a very powerful form of leadership which is opposite to that of the past. It is an “envision, enable, ensure” leadership. Spotting a new opportunity and then team members is the first step towards enabling all the team members to co-create the vision and team. Developing the best synaptic architecture for that team of teams further empowers all to envision, mutually empower, and ensure.
4. Changemaking. Humans are coming together in a brain-like whole characterized by infinite elements and combinations of elements all changing ever faster and more broadly. To be effective in this world, to see new opportunities, and to do the practical how-to work of engineering the needed teams and synapses requires not only seeing and understanding this reality but foreseeing where it will be in the future.

One cannot master these essential skills by reading ten books. Young people must be changemakers.

When 12- or 15-year-olds have seen a problem or opportunity, given themselves permission to imagine a solution, gone out and built a team and then persisted and persisted until their tutoring service for younger or immigrant kids, their virtual radio station, their anti-gang education program, their dream... has become the new reality in their school or community, then they will have their power for life.

They will be changemakers – and know it.

The other subjects, math and languages, etc., are still essential. But anyone who is not a changemaker will have little opportunity to use them.

All these reasons explain why society must now apply two key measures to know how we are doing as parents, in the schools, and in all the other places where young people live and work.

The first is: What proportion of each age group of teens knows that they are changemakers? (They cannot know if they haven't played this game and experienced early success with the four skills.) As with literacy, one can assess a teacher's success by comparing this measure at the beginning and end of each year. Similarly, one can compare schools, cities, ethnic groups, or countries.

The second measure is: What proportion of the stakeholders in a school or other youth community know that they have a successful or failed program depending on whether or not it is an active “everyone a changemaker” culture?

Both are measures of mindset change. Because that's what we must do. We will have won when parents interviewing the principal of a school where they are considering sending their kids ask, beady eyed: “What proportion of your kids know they are changemakers – and at what level?” And both sides know what the right answer is.

Bill Drayton - Founder and CEO of Ashoka

CHAPTER 1

WHAT KIND OF
EDUCATION ARE
WE TALKING
ABOUT?



WHAT KIND OF EDUCATION ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

The discussion around education is never simple. We are dealing with a complex and wide-ranging issue, experienced all the time, at every moment, and throughout a person's entire life.

This debate becomes even more relevant if we consider that education is an issue that directly impacts the kind of society and country we want. For this reason, education is so essential, engaging, and touches each and every one of us.

At the same time, a debate as profound as this one cannot be removed from today's context. It is being held during this unique social, political and economic moment that Brazil is going through. On one hand, a variety of political uncertainties, budgetary restrictions, and the loss of fundamental rights won by Brazilians over the past decades have a direct impact on the right to education. On the other hand, we have witnessed the rise of Brazil's youth, who made their mark in the years of 2015 and 2016 by occupying schools, in dozens of cities throughout Brazil, bringing with them a desire to create an education that belongs to them and actually respects them.

So, then, what kind of education are we talking about? What does it actually provoke in people? To give some clues to questions as provocative as these, we offer an open space to discuss this kind of education. Nothing is off the table, nothing is mandatory: just an open, realistic and exciting conversation among four different voices and perspectives on the issue.

What we are sharing with you is the result of this meeting between great, inquisitive thinkers and instigators of social change: Anamaria Schindler, member of the leadership team at Ashoka; Ana Lucia Villela, president of the Alana Institute; Natacha Costa, director of the Associação Cidade



Escola Aprendiz (Apprentice School City Association); and Ana Elisa Pereira Flaquer de Siqueira, principal at the Desembargador Amorim Lima Municipal School.

The discussion reflects the experience of those who seek, everyday, to influence public policy in order to guarantee universal rights; of those who follow, support and bet on the power of collective work. At the same time, this debate brings to light a series of issues about how frequently 'talks about education' today focus only on technical and instrumental perspectives, sidestepping the essence of education as a social pact.

Changing the direction of this conversation includes the belief in and strengthening of the view of education as a privileged space and period of time for building relationships in which feeling, thinking, creating and acting can be at the service of a common good, of transforming the lives of each and everyone.

Follow and take part in this conversation:

Changemaker Schools

To start off our conversation, we would like to talk a little bit about the origin of this program: the idea of change. First, why does education, in a general sense, need change? And, since we are talking about a change that is not only internal, but also leads to changing the world, what are your views of the transformational potential that education can have in forming people who are more conscious of their role in the world?

Ana Elisa

I think that when we go into school, we should come out of it changed. In order for this to happen, there needs to be policy actions, possibilities and encounters that change me, that make me better than I was before. I think this is very important in a school that offers this process of transformation, in the sense of change, of improving the human being. At my school [Amorim Lima], the transformation the families go through is clear, how they were when they entered and what they are like when they leave. When people enter a school, participate and live in it, this is an opportunity for change. And this can happen even in conflict. A school has conflicts at all levels and, because of this, I think people become transformed. They learn to listen, to respect and to relate to themselves. I believe that education can offer this: for people to find themselves and others.

Ana Lucia

To me, change can have a similar meaning. Every relationship requires an encounter and, if this truly happens, it already brings change along with it. From the moment you meet the other, you are being transformed because you start to look and listen differently. In this sense, a changemaker school has the role of forming responsible citizens, and this must be everyone's vision: teachers, students, parents and community. So, if they are in a changemaker community, that is, one that wants to make an impact on the world, they will be able to do this through every relationship. There will not be an encounter caused by this school that is not changemaking.

Anamaria

Many families determine the path for their children as soon as they are born: they will study in a certain school, join a certain club, go to college and become an engineer, for example. Now, when we talk about a society of changemakers, we are breaking this cycle to some extent, which

**ANAMARIA SCHINDLER**

Co-president emeritus and Ashoka's Latin America director. Created and directed the Institut Arapyau, from 2008 to 2011, founded in Brazil by Guilherme Leal. Served as Global Co-President of Ashoka from 2005 to 2008, dividing her time between São Paulo and Washington. Has dedicated herself to human rights for over 10 years. A council member at various civil society organizations in Brazil and Latin America, including the International Advisory Council at Fundação Dom Cabral, Fundación Avina and Conectas Direitos Humanos.

is a kind of determinism for what this person will become. What will a changemaker citizen be like 50 years from now? I believe it will be someone who is critical 100% of the time. In other words, no matter where they are, be it at school, with their family or friends, they will self-identify as someone who proposes change and takes part in this change. I ask myself what more do we have to change in our educational process in order to have an actual transformative citizenship.

Natacha

I believe the school is a very important agent for socialization, a space where we can produce an emancipatory and connective experience. However, most of the time when we think of education, we refer to a more traditional concept of the school, related to the idea of passing down the knowledge accumulated by humanity. This is important, but the essential aspect of any educational process is to be able to find ourselves, and also to find ourselves in relationship to the other and make our space in the world. And this process depends on the establishment of a bond. The stronger the bonds are, the more this experience of finding yourself is an experience of building a collective meaning, the more people will be committed to the world, and the more they will feel like they belong.

And we can only understand this when we do things that change our environment. Because of this, I think education plays the role of creating this experience, where a human being has a dialogue with themselves, always through a relationship. And education will become more transformative the more it is capable of being meaningful to people. This happens as people start to find their place, bringing greater meaning to their lives.

Changemaker Schools

But do you think education has, in general, offered this opportunity to children and teenagers today to find themselves, to relate to themselves, to others, and propose change?

Natacha

Honestly, no one can be a changemaker if they do not feel in charge of themselves. And this is what an educational experience can help with. What I have seen in many groups of students in schools is what they are able to do with the content they are accessing, the space they are building to have a debate on how they can influence the world. I think that's the big question: how does life offer experiences, inside and outside of school, so that information, content and experiences can connect, in the sense that this person can feel autonomous in relation to their own story. What really matters is when the person takes ownership and takes charge of their life.

Anamaria

I think this has to do with the process of self-permission. I see that many young people don't want to propose something because they are afraid of being ridiculed and not being accepted by the collective. So, for a child or teenager to be a changemaker, they must feel empowered in themselves, in order to propose, be a part, or even engage with someone else's proposal.

**Ana Elisa**

I think that self-permission has to do the experience of success, that is, how often do I put myself out there and they listen to me, see me and allow me to be present. I think there is a social question that must be discussed. Many children have other spaces where they can experience this but, in most of Brazil, the school is the only place where they will have this experience. It's the school that will teach them or help them along this path.

I had an interesting experience a few years ago, when I used to go to schools to talk with school councils and student body governments, and what I noticed is that the parents that were participating in these spaces happened to be the ones who had gone through an important experience of participation in a school environment: they had done theater, the newspaper, etc. That is, they had some kind of connection to this possibility of being present.

Because of this, I think the school must give this permission in some way, because it can change everything. When I feel that I can talk, that my opinion is worth something, I can learn to listen in relation to others and myself. All of this is very powerful for the possibility of change. So the school today must ensure this space for speaking, for listening, for people to have self-permission to say things they are not even that sure about.

It is crucial that people have spaces where they can speak and think differently. The school must be framed by these possibilities, the people have to give themselves permission. If they don't, they shut themselves out.

Changemaker Schools

And this process of talking and listening is directly related to empathy, which happens to be one of the four skills emphasized by the program?

Anamaria

I think empathy is what we are really talking about. On one hand, there is this process in which the person questions; and, on the other, there is empathy, which is a process related to others: I and others, the others and I. I don't know how you learn this, but one of the key factors in empathy is listening. There are many kinds of listening but, maybe, education's biggest role is to present those possibilities.



ANA LUCIA VILLELA

Graduated in Pedagogy, with a Master's in Educational Psychology from PUC/SP. Founder and president of Instituto Alana. She is also an advisor to third sector institutions, such as Conectas Direitos Humanos, Itaú Cultural, Akatu and Instituto Brincante, in addition to being a member of the Ashoka Fellow social entrepreneurs network.

I think that today words like 'consensus,' 'agreement' and 'listening' are part of a new lexicon that is being developed. And this new lexicon is what is making it possible for a child or teenager to see themselves in the future, to identify as a person capable of proposing change and making it happen together with others.

Natacha

The big question around empathy is how far the child, teenager or young person's experience, during their education, is empathetic with them, with who they are and what they bring. The challenge is that we still have to deal with certain discourses that appear in society, that praise certain situations and describe a time when children had to basically follow order, respect and discipline as "the good old days."

Recollections like these are rarely based on empathy, because you are not considering the child when your starting point is order, respect and discipline. It's as if the child doesn't exist. It's like the script set in stone that we talked about earlier. We can't read about empathy and execute it: you experience it when you feel an empathetic gaze from the other towards you.

And I think schools are still going through this conflict. Now, when they understand the meaning of the collective and embody the idea that it is through these relationships that much of the necessary learning will come from.

Ana Lucia

Deep down, I notice that we are talking about values. We can change the methodology, the setting, the school's condition, it doesn't matter, because what we are trying to preserve are values. If the family or place where the child grew up cares for these values, it's essential, and the school's work becomes much easier after this. And the school must keep doing this.

Ana Elisa

But values can be developed too. We develop values and can help people do that. There are many children that notice their condition, and unfavorable and violent situations in their family and manage, in some way, to transcend them. That's where the school and other places where they can take part in the community, in society, are important. We had a complicated case in our school of a student with lots of family problems, who was sent there by Juvenile Court, and for a long time no one could establish a dialogue with him. He always tried to tell me something, but never had the courage. Until one day he said, 'You know what it is, Ana? It's that he [the teacher] thinks I want to be a criminal.' At that moment, I saw something so honest in him, and it was different from anything I could imagine. In that quote came something powerful: I don't want to be a criminal, you guys think that I want to copy what my family does, but I don't want to. We need to notice this and, sometimes, schools are not ready to do it. It means abandoning determinism.

Beyond this, it's important to remember that the conflicts experienced at school are also crucial because, as transformative as the teacher may or may not be, the children are different. And this is a powerful mix. What matters is how the student looks at all the issues being raised and manages to create empathy. I think that can be the big change: when we create empathy, we find some answers. For example, I always try to understand what is happening, I can say 'look, I don't believe in this, I believe in something else, but I can respect you.' In a way, this is a great skill, especially today. This can cause a paradigm shift that would be very important to all of us. And I see that this is much stronger in young people than in adults.

Changemaker Schools

But do you believe that Brazilian society sees this value in education and, more importantly, in the role of the school as an essential agent in the formation of critical citizens? What happens to our discussion, considering a broader context, and understanding that we have very unique problems, right now, in relation to education in Brazil. While we're talking about self-permission, we also have movements like "Escola Sem Partido" [School Without Politics], as well as the occupation of schools by students?

Natacha

I think we need to understand that a country's education is a national project. But, unfortunately, this idea has not taken hold in Brazil. Of course education occupies a bigger space in Brazilian society compared to 20 years ago. However, our discussion around education is very focused on practicalities, on issues that are not related to values, but much more utilitarian, traditionalist and technical. It is treated like something you use, like buying a car or going on vacation. And, to those of us who believe in education, it plays a different role.

If we look at the history of education in Brazil, starting in the 1930s, we will find many disruptive educators who offered this concept of education as a social project, like Anísio Teixeira, Darcy Ribeiro and Paulo Freire. But all of these movements were drastically repressed. At the same time, we drafted the 1988 Constitution, the Children and Adolescent's Statute, and were discussing a second generation educational policy, since we had already accomplished the first, which was to guarantee access to primary education to all children and teenagers.

That is, it looked like we already had an agreement on rights and citizenship.

But deep, deep down, these are very advanced legal documents, but they are only legal documents. Brazil does not have a culture of citizenship. We can't develop the education we want because full citizenship is not present as a concept in the country's design. So the way society has operated doesn't follow what is stated in the Constitution. So much so that all of this is happening now in the country: a dismantling of public policies.



However, we made a choice in Brazil to guarantee universal access to school - to all children, teenagers and youngsters. And, for this reason, we have to discuss the experiences that these children are having in school. This is essential and we cannot lose sight of it. In this sense, the school must, today, recognize its role. It must see itself not as a reinforcer of a culture, but as a tool that will make people's minds click. When we are going through transformative educational processes, whichever they may be, when we experience this possibility, we see all the time this moment when someone's mind clicks, and it's beautiful. Imagine if we could make the mind of 50 million students click?

Ana Elisa

I think that, despite all the issues schools are facing right now, there is a lot of potential for action. When we talk about the school as a social contract, this is very powerful. The school will survive. And we are going through a very important moment for the country because we have, at the same time, the youth saying 'we want a different kind of school' and a government saying 'we are going to dismantle every public policy.' And we aren't talking about whether these are left wing or right wing policies. The issue here is education as a public policy. And this has a different meaning.

I feel that our youth, even if it's a few of them, are talking about education as a public policy. When they question what the schools are like, what they allow and make possible in their discussions, in political terms, I think that's very big, because it helps us think about a different kind of public policy. What kind of school do we want? It's a school where they can talk, a school for empathy, in which people respect differences. For example: in many discussions I witnessed during these occupations, what most impressed me was how the students respected each other, despite their differences. I think that's something very new in this generation. They can listen to each other in a different way.

And this is very important, because they're saying: 'We don't want things to be this way.' It's very powerful.

Ana Lucia

I see more than just listening. I think they want to have a bigger role in coming up with solutions, something that was kind of dormant for many years. Now they say, 'How can I change this? I want to participate too.'

Natacha

I also think that the occupations are, in some way, a result of this whole process that took place over the past 20 years in schools and social organizations, of including the students, the teachers, etc. in discussions and debates, encouraging participation. This process is happening for a reason.

It is necessary for people to experience new processes of citizenship in school and other spaces because, normally, the experience these children have is of a denial of their rights. And I don't mean in relation to certain material things. I mean when they can't go into a cultural space without being looked at with distrust, or go to a health post and actually receive medical attention. This denial is everywhere, all of the time. To me, this is why this gaze directed at each other is so important. We need the school to cast this gaze, of care, and allow every child to experience citizenship.

Ana Lucia

But making these changes is not simple. There must be engagement, there must be people around who really want this to happen. You can provoke change and do something that brings meaning to their lives through educational projects - be it with children, teenagers, the elderly, families - but it takes a lot of work. You need dedication from many people for this to happen.

I believe that for our dream to come true, we need lots of people in our team, in the team of those who want to promote change in our society.

Changemaker Schools**Who, then, are the people that would join this team?****Anamaria**

We have to remember that the school is an environment that involves many communities, and one of them is the parents. However, much of the work done by the schools with families today is only through events with the children. But, when you do this, you are not necessarily creating new relationships and, in a society of changemaking people, it's very important to value, legitimize and bring attention to these people's roles. I also think that, beyond the teachers, other actors can contribute a lot to this formative process. There are many cases around the world, for example, of social entrepreneurs that go to schools and offer experiences so

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significant to the students that they change their lives. There's a lot of knowledge that comes from outside that can be added. It's a model for a more open school. It's bringing society into the school.

Natacha

I think it's not just the family, but everyone. The issue to me, however, is that too often we have the habit of calling people for talks. And I think it's necessary to call to action. In Brazil, we associate democratic participation with spaces like councils, for example. Of course they are important, and there are people who identify with it, but it's not for everyone. I think we need, right now, to promote and combine processes, that is, mechanisms to produce references, reflections, for doing, for experimenting, being together, creating. I think the creation of this new society will pass through experience and doing things together.

Ana Lucia

I believe the same thing. In some places, to some people, it's only through doing that things start to make sense. Sometimes, we put so much time and resources into meetings and talks, and the most important thing is, first, that the person experiences something, that they go and do something that has meaning to them. Then they start to understand that this thing is important. It's through experience that people become involved. And, if there's no involvement, there's no point.

Ana Elisa

I think you need many different fronts. There can be one front that is the more practical side but, sometimes, there's a group that is already in a

stage of reflection, and it's important to bet on that. In our school, for example, we went through a time when we had various forms of participation. There were people that wanted to participate in a more practical way, others thought it was important to be at the School Council discussions, and others would only go when there was, for example, an activity called Futpizza. I think that's what matters: getting people out of their comfort zones. The important thing is to empower people, make them leave the place where it says: the only way you can participate is going to a Council meeting. And it's not true, since there are many other forms of engagement.

Natacha

A change in reality really consists of this combination: create new perspectives and possibilities. It means making people see other things happening. That is, we have an influence from public policies, from community networks, and there is also experience. It's a combination of all of these things.

Changemaker Schools

We are talking about a kind of education that offers the possibility for encounters, for changing yourself and the other through these relationships. We have talked, also, of forming changemaking people, capable of looking at themselves and their context, and proposing changes. And that all of this must be tested and experienced at school. How, then, do we reconcile this 'training for life' and the school's need to respond to a system focused on content and evaluation rankings?

Natacha

I don't think it's an issue only of content, but what you do with it. For example, when you understand the formative contribution of mathematics, how it contributes to developing this kind of person we want, which is someone who is capable of producing knowledge, criticism, understanding and intervening, then it makes sense. In this sense, we don't have to let go of the school's role in teaching content, but we need to understand how this content can contribute to a person's life.

Ana Lucia

There isn't a human being on Earth who doesn't love to think and discover. Everyone wants to know and try to understand how things work. The

problem is that we always take that opportunity away from the student. The school says: 'Wait a minute, I'll listen to you soon, you can ask me soon.' But then it never listens to that person again. It won't ask them again, it won't help them form a hypothesis and seek knowledge. It only gives answers. And that's where the education ends. What's the fun in being educated in this way? Now, when you put a problem in front of a student, in front of a teacher, and make this person shift in their seat, think, become curious and search, this leads to creativity. And this is what humans have been doing forever: creating.

Changemaker Schools

And what is the teacher's role in these processes?

Ana Lucia

I can't imagine a changemaker school without very interesting teachers who actually have a lot of knowledge, who are self-assured, who know how to enthusiastically transmit this knowledge, know how to listen, who make the student question and go after what they would like to learn. That's why I ask: how can we have teachers like this - who are so necessary - if most people didn't have the opportunity of going through this process, don't have self-awareness, don't have self-permission, didn't seek out their knowledge, and didn't experience this? We need to care for these teachers. Otherwise, how can we have a changemaker school without a teacher who has been changed and is a changemaker?

Ana Elisa

I believe we need to be connected to the best that educator has to offer. If they are honest about what they believe, I think the children can make a great leap in quality.

Changemaker Schools

And what happens to the relationship between the schools and their territory? Many innovative and transformational projects for schools take their territories into account. How do you see this relationship? What kind of education do we need for the territory?

Natacha

This territorial dimension has many aspects to it, but there are two that I think are important to think about. One interesting point is that we have the idea of the school as something that sustains itself, as if it didn't matter where it was. That is, it has an objective and it doesn't matter where it is located. And that's a big lie, because it does matter, for many reasons. The most important is to understand to what community it will relate, since the school establishes itself through relationships of shared experiences, with the people that live in that place, who have a history, etc.

And this has a lot to do with how educational policy was conceived in Brazil. We went through a very quick and dizzying process of universalization in 20 years. And, to do this, we built schools everywhere, with policies structured and mass marketed from top to bottom. We have school buildings from southern Bahia to Campo Limpo, in southern São Paulo, that are exactly the same. And this is not a coincidence. For a long time, the FNDE [National Education Development Fund] only financed one type of model for schools. All of this conformed a way of being for a school that is totally removed from the context of the people who live there.

We need to profoundly territorialize our educational policy. When we talk about taking down walls, we don't mean it poetically, because the school and its project, the way it develops, must be highly connected to those who are there, those the project is aimed at. We don't establish a bond with someone we don't truly, honestly recognize, or with those we aren't willing to know. The best thing for children is that they receive recognition, and they will be recognized when the place they live in is taken into account.

The other aspect, which is more ambitious, is the school being made into an agent of change for the territory. We see great experiments like this, especially in rural areas, where the school develops as a center of knowledge production and local development





ANA ELISA PEREIRA FLAQUER DE SIQUEIRA

Is a pedagogue and works in the municipal education system in the city of São Paulo. She has worked as teacher, educational coordinator, and has led the direction of the Desembargador Amorim Lima Municipal School for over 20 years.

Ana Elisa

At Amorim, this question of territory is interesting because it is a school that has students from all over São Paulo. Many students come from very far away because their parents want them to study there. So our challenge is to find this opening, to consider the students' different realities, the differences in their lives.

We have practiced the act of looking at the school as a space in which each person can think about their territory while thinking about the whole at the same time. The school becomes a space that makes this interaction possible, between people from different realities, who come together and have a dialogue.

Natacha

There is an important aspect to be considered in this discussion: recognizing someone's living condition is not the same as restricting them to that; it's a starting point. The problem is that public policies tend to leave people where they are. But the city, as a space for learning, also offers the possibility of accessing different territories and all of them becoming your territory.

Changemaker Schools

From this point of view then, the school ends up being a space for encounters and the possibility of experiencing diversity, right? After all, people who are very different have the opportunity to be together in the same space.

Ana Lucia

That's why we have to safeguard the school's place, which is the space where people come together, the collective. And these encounters, in all their forms, are wonderful.

Natacha

And, even in homogeneity, in environments that are not very diverse, we have differences, since every child is unique, and this is fantastic. Shared experiences are essential. What we have to discuss is what kind of space this is, and what kind of promotion and quality of interactions we are encouraging in schools.

Ana Elisa

We have to remember that adversities also arise in this space, and they are very important. It's not what we want, but they come up, and you have to learn to deal with them. This can be very formative. That's the story of education: how to make it so people are there, attentive, so they can, together, overcome.

Changemaker Schools

In your opinion, are schools and teachers prepared to experience these differences inside the school?

Natacha

Young people are showing an interesting aspect of diversity. In some of the school occupations I visited, the students removed the gender separations from bathrooms, for example. And one of the girls put it like this, 'We don't understand why you need this separation. If we trust each other, what difference does it make?' What I found most interesting is the value given to trust in her words. It's something that is integrated into how they relate today. A part of this new generation is showing us a new way of facing things, they have assimilated this and live it in a very coherent manner.

What we see today is a series of values that are creating tension in the structures, including schools, which are feeling the pressure. We have teachers who were trained as a person and a professional to fulfill a certain role and now have to fulfill a different one. But they don't know where to go, because their experience doesn't provide the tools for this.

We urgently need to invest in the teacher as a person, as a human being, allow them to also have a diversity of experiences. They have to live in the collective, have access to the theater, go to the movies, and be thrilled by these experiences. Otherwise, how can they create these experiences with the students if they have never actually experienced them?

Ana Lucia

Many social projects manage to make this possible, for example. But how can we guarantee this as a public policy, so teachers can have the opportunity to experience new things and develop a new perspective?

Natacha

I think that, today, we need to make some choices in public policy and direct resources towards actions like these, which will actually make a difference in the life of the teacher. Because, today, what happens is that we too often look at the teacher as a professional who needs to be increasingly instrumentalized for teaching, and we don't see them as people. If we start looking at the teacher as a person, they can look at the student in the same way.

Changemaker Schools

After everything we have talked about, what would be your bets on education for the coming years? What do you expect of the future? How can each person contribute?

Natacha

I think that sustaining Brazilian education as an actual fundamental right and, therefore, a priority at the level of public policy will require a huge effort from society at large, especially organized civil society. The conflict of viewpoints and the dismantling of important pacts, like the National Education Plan, puts at risk what have been unquestionable advances in this field. I think it is more and more important that we affirm and reaffirm the values of democracy, citizenship and participation in each of our fields. And that we stay united and firm in the fight for a changemaking education for everyone, without exception.

Ana Maria

Beyond betting on education, we have to make a bet on human society, and redesign many systems that need to be updated. For example, we know about the need to redesign educational systems in order to adapt them to the requirements of the modern world. We recognize more and

more that the world today is defined by change, by complexity and hyper-connectivity, and that educational systems are lagging behind in terms of equipping our youth with the skills that are needed to prosper in the world and make it a better place.

This new bet is built upon the foundation of relationships with people who may think differently from you - who can look at the world in a very different way, who come from a different academic field. Success will be measured by how able you are to collaborate and connect with people that are very different from you. It requires a capacity to see the world through different lenses, to appreciate different value systems, to respect different cultures.

We will not just be tolerant, we will be empathetic. We will not just follow orders, we will co-create our plans and actions as a team. And we will identify ourselves as citizens who propose transformations in society.

Ana Lucia

I believe that people are changing. Despite a whole bunch of backward things that are happening, like building walls, schools without politics, etc., I see a beautiful movement of people who are more open, participatory and engaged. And I made a bet on humanity, and this bet is that, each year, children come into the world more and more provocative, more interesting, more transformative... This destabilizes the system that is in place and fills me with optimism.



CHAPTER 2
WE ARE A PART
OF THE SCHOOL.
AFTER ALL, WE ARE
THE STUDENTS



The title for this chapter comes from Karoline da Silva Oliveira, a high-school freshman at the **Luiza Mahin Community School** in Salvador, in the state of Bahia. It may seem obvious, but it is not always taken seriously or comes into play during conversations about education.

And in order to change the direction of this conversation and make room for this voice, we got in touch with students in the 15 Brazilian schools in the Changemaker Schools program for three videoconferences during December of 2016.

In each meeting, we spoke for two hours with groups of children, youngsters and adults from five schools, organized by age group.

From Elementary School to Adult Education, from the northeastern state of Ceará to the southern state of Paraná, these students described their school experiences and listened to their peers.

Between their melodious accents and distinct experiences, their love of school life was aligned by the possibility of a school where affection and diversity are guaranteed.

A school they enjoy being in, where they are welcomed and can actually see themselves being changed just by being there. Marina Cartum, 14 years old, a ninth-year student at **Colégio Equipe** in São Paulo, expressed this feeling clearly: "I believe I am what I am today because I study there. I think the way I do, in my way, because this space allowed me to change. It is more than I was made out to be."

This conviction was also shared by Adriele de Jesus Lima, 16, an eighth-year student at **Escola Rural Dendê** da Serra in Serra Grande, in the state of Bahia: "I think my school is a changemaker because we don't just learn to read and write. We learn to learn. We learn concepts for life. Love your neighbor, respect others. We learn lots of things so we can leave the school a better person. I think that the school is not just made up of books, it's made up of parents, students and teachers."

In the conversations, we tried to understand how the program's skills - empathy, teamwork, creativity and changemaking - were taught and incorporated into the student's perspectives. Without using these words, or any predefined concepts, we explore the universe of their perception of daily life at school. The answer was profound and simple at the same time, in the best definition of simplicity, revealing essential, human questions.

The students talked about the learning process, religious practices, environmental issues, the methods and difficulties of working in teams, problem resolution exercises. Youngsters and adults talked to us about having political discussions at school, relating to people of different sexual orientation, about their life projects. We listened to testimonies, stories, confessions, laughs, and even a poetic melody about Brazil's political moment in the voice of Senhor Francisco, an Adult Education student at **Cieja Campo Limpo**, in São Paulo.

We offer you, our reader, a valuable selection of accounts, as well as essays by thinkers who, inspired by these stories, add their contributions in a dialogue with the students' reports, which will certainly generate new themes for discussion.

Just like a good conversation - and life - the themes are complex and overlapping. Empathy and changemaking, teamwork and changemaking, empathy and teamwork, creativity and empathy. The accounts say a lot, and show that the driving force is in the capacity to listen and welcome the other, expressing ideas and thoughts by developing the individual and their capacity to accept difference and, therefore, connect with and change the world.

And, in order to do all this, we have the school.



"We have a vote in the classroom and choose what we want to study. We have normal classes, but we also have group projects. We also have seminars that are pretty fun. It's cool because we tell our parents or visitors [what we are studying]. This way, even older people end up learning with us."

Gabriella Monnerat, 11 years old, fifth-year student at Acliméa Nascimento Primary School in Teresópolis (Rio de Janeiro)

"We also work by project at our school. Every 15 days, we choose one. At first, there's always an agreement and we decide how we will work with what we picked. Before researching, we share what each person knows. I think it's important for us to have more trust in each other."

Davi Scheid, 10 years old, fifth year student at Escola Amigos do Verde Primary School, in Porto Alegre (Rio Grande do Sul)

"It's great to hear and respect other people's opinions, because someday they will have to hear ours. We work out our differences by talking. The right thing is to always find an agreement among everyone."

Gabriella Monnerat, 11 years old, fifth-year student at Acliméa Nascimento Primary School in Teresópolis (Rio de Janeiro)

"We take home what we learn during the week. We apply this knowledge to our area and share everything with the community. We know how hard things are in rural areas."

Iraci Helena do Nascimento, 38 years old, Agroecology student at Serviço de Tecnologia Alternativa (Alternative Technology Service - SERTA), in Gloria do Goitá (Pernambuco)

"I like this school a lot because I can dance, sing, and we choose what we're going to do."

Kaame Ribeiro Guimarães, 6 years old, first-year student at Luiza Mahin Community School, in Salvador (Bahia)

"We have what we call a Responsibility Group. Each one takes care of a different space in the school. And we also have the parent-teacher meetings, where the students also take part. With the Responsibility Groups, one time we take care of the lab, another we take care of the bathroom. Each group takes care of one space, in the sense of organizing. Everyone participates in everything."

Laura Toledo, 13 years old, seventh-year student at Desembargador Amorim Lima Primary School, in São Paulo (São Paulo)



EMPATHY, *by* Mary Gordon

How can you recognize a Changemaker school? The shining eyes of the children are testament to their meaningful engagement and the smiles that greet you in every hallway tell a story of inclusion and connection. All my life I've been asking children questions. Not the kind of questions that have factual answers but the kind of questions that speak to their dreams, their worries, and their fears. For example, "When are you most lonely?" So often in schools, children's experience is one of competition and coming up with the answer that they think the teacher wants. In Changemaker schools the job is to come up with the right question so the learning is meaningful. In their first two or three years of life, children ask questions all day long. That wonderment unfortunately often fades as the children start formal schooling and with the compliance that often accompanies it. The voices of the children in this book do not speak to compliance but echo the values of democracy, inclusion, diversity, trust and the honoring of difference.

In the Roots of Empathy classroom all the instructors are trained to support the students' learning by asking authentic questions. Meaning all the questions are related to the students' personal experiences and the questions invite them to reflect, to imagine, and to wonder. The instructor does not praise the students' contributions, but simply acknowledges or repeats what the child has said. When the children realize that their answer will not be judged by either praise or criticism all children become engaged, even the shy children and the children who feel unsuccessful. Research has shown that the most important thing in learning is a good quality teacher. However, what I think is even more important to learning is a good relationship with the teacher. We may never remember what we were taught in school but we will always remember how we felt. Neuroscientists will tell us that babies and young children learn through relationships. I believe that our whole life long we learn through relationships, but in schools the learning is often solitary, screen-based or competitive. Empathy flourishes in Changemaker schools when children build relationships through shared problem solving. We can expect empathic leadership in the future when the children of today are committed to fostering empathy in their own schools.



When the children in the Changemaker schools describe how they come together to identify problems or answer a question they have, they are learning the crucial skills of respect as they listen to each perspective and try to include all views, resulting in consensus. In the Roots of Empathy program the curriculum offers students many opportunities to build consensus and, like Changemaker schools, the classroom becomes a participatory democracy. Unlike many schooling experiences where children tell us that they don't feel respected and often feel embarrassed or humiliated, in a Changemaker school children are treated with dignity and are taken seriously. In the valuing of empathy there is collaboration in Changemaker schools. Children have opportunities to plan together and to see the unique contributions of each student and honor difference. Unfortunately, too many schools operate on telling and yelling, with not enough time for creativity, imagination, dreaming, experimenting and playing. School is more than bricks and mortar, desks, and computers. Changemaker schools are vessels of learning, loving, and places where human rights and social responsibility flourish.

In Changemaker Schools, where empathy is in the water supply, children are encouraged to build consensus rather than compete to get ahead of the other. Using competition as a tool for learning is counterproductive.



Measurement of academic achievement is a growing field in education, yet often the things that really matter are under-measured and under-treasured. Using empathy as bedrock for learning allows children to learn in the social and emotional realms while improving their receptivity to cognitive learning. When Changemaker schools organize around children's ideas and support them in learning how to problem solve collectively, they are developing skills that will have applications in their personal and public lives. There are great synergies between the Roots of Empathy classroom and the values of Changemaker schools. In the Roots of Empathy classroom a neighborhood baby in its first year of life, along with its parent and an instructor from the community, become part of one classroom for a whole year. The children develop empathy as they are guided through observations of the baby's feelings and intentions. As they learn names for the baby's feelings, they are given opportunities to talk about their own feelings and come to understand the feelings of their classmates. Finding the humanity in the baby or the baby's vulnerability allows the children to find their own humanity and the humanity in one another. Not surprisingly aggression and bullying go down when children understand that what would hurt my feelings would also hurt your feelings. To be a Changemaker you need to have self-empathy. Empathy is a searchlight to finding connection to others.

Let me sign off with a question for fifteen-year-old José, a grade 8 student at elementary **School Villa Verde**. Jose, how do you think we can maintain our humanity as our technology advances to the extent that soon artificial intelligence and robots will be helping with the care of the elderly?

Mary Gordon

PhD in Law and a member of the Canadian Bar Association. Mary is founder and president of Roots of Empathy, an organization created in 1996, in Toronto, Canada. The organization's mission is to help build a society of peace and caring by developing empathy in children and adults.

"At my school, the kids participate in everything. We have a group to run the newspaper and the radio. During the assembly, we talk in groups about what's bad and how to improve things. From there, we pass it on to the newspaper, interview the principal, the staff. And, at the end, we distribute it to the parents and students so they know what is going on.

I think the connection between the teachers and students is very cool. We talk about what's good and what isn't. We find a consensus. We have the opportunity to work together. We talk about what the school management needs to do, what we need to do. Always together. We try to reach a consensus as often as possible."

Gabriella Monnerat, 11 years old, fifth-year student at Acliméa Nascimento Primary School in Teresópolis (Rio de Janeiro)

"The good thing [about teamwork] is that it makes planning easier. One person doesn't have to do everything. The hard part is when one person wants to do things one way and another wants to do things differently; when people can't agree. But we meet halfway at the end."

José Pedro Rebello, 15 years old, eighth-year student at Escola Vila Verde Primary School, in Alto Paraíso de Goiás (Goiás)

"Our differences enrich our work. There's always one person that doesn't want to do it; there's always one who leads. But I think that's good, because we have these labels and, when working as a team, we end up surprising ourselves. We learn about each other, how to deal with each other's problems, how to act so everyone does their part."

Marina Cartum, 14 years old, ninth-year student at Colégio Equipe, in São Paulo (São Paulo)



"SERTA is an alternating school. Some weeks we are here, other weeks we are not. Here you learn, go home, apply it, then come back to share the results."

Jardel de Santana Silva, 20 years old, agroecology student at Serviço de Tecnologia Alternativa (Alternative Technology Service - SERTA), in Glória do Goitá (Pernambuco)

"Cieja offers the students the opportunity to work in groups. For example, we'll choose a play, organize everything, the educators also help. They help us do the work together. On the last Thursday of the month, we perform it. People like it a lot, they applaud. It's a school that opens doors, and we get express our talents, our knowledge. We spend our time with people of all ages."

Francisco Miguel da Silva, 55 years old, Primary Education student in Adult Education at Cieja Campo Limpo, in São Paulo (São Paulo)

"Here, priority is given to teamwork. It's a way to get to know your colleagues, and also hear their opinions. We get together after the teams are formed, discuss our opinions. There are people from different professions that came to study agroecology. We share our life experiences with them. There are people of all ages. They are people that teach us a lot. We learn about each person's culture, it's very enriching. There are difficulties too, and when they come up, we try to listen, but we also resolve them."

Iraci Helena do Nascimento, 38 years old, Agroecology student at Serviço de Tecnologia Alternativa (Alternative Technology Service - SERTA), in Glória do Goitá (Pernambuco)

"We learn to always respect each other's ideas. No one here is above anyone else, even between teachers and students. Everyone helps each other."

Jardel de Santana Silva, 20 years old, agroecology student at Serviço de Tecnologia Alternativa (Alternative Technology Service - SERTA), in Glória do Goitá (Pernambuco)

"Here at Dendê, the teacher respects the students' opinions. The teacher lets us make decisions for the group. When something happens, we open up and discuss. I think that since we are involved in these decisions, we can see and shape the school in the way we like. We build the school's dream together."

Maria Clara Sampaio Pereira, 14 years old, eighth-year student at Escola Rural Dendê da Serra, in Serra Grande (Bahia)

"We like our teachers a lot here. When we are sick, they visit us and bring other students to our home."

Karoline da Silva Oliveira, 7 years old, first-year student at Luiza Mahin Community School, in Salvador (Bahia)

"Equipe makes a lot of room to the staff. A lot of the time we forget about them, but they are the ones that keep the school going. We interview the staff, we want to know about their lives. There are people who have been here for years and created a bond with the school. For example, at my graduation, there is a teacher and a staff member to talk about our how we grew up. They are always with us, they're the ones that take care of us. This is one thing that Equipe taught me."

Marina Cartum, 14 years old, ninth-year student at Colégio Equipe, in São Paulo (São Paulo)

"My school is always willing to listen, really. First they listen, then they analyze the situation and, after that, we decide what to do. This is very important to the students. If we have an interesting idea, we have to justify it and, in this way, we solve our problems."

Glender Leonardo da Silva Santos, 15 years old, ninth-year student at EM Paulo Freire, in Belo Horizonte (Minas Gerais)

"There are a few people with disabilities here at the school. During the school olympics, which we do once a year, those who can't run get help from another friend. I think it's cool, because it makes them feel welcome. There's none of this 'you are different because you have a disability' business."

Davi Scheid, 10 years old, fifth year student at Escola Amigos do Verde Primary School, in Porto Alegre (Rio Grande do Sul)



CHANGEMAKING *by Flávio Bassi*

Dear changemakers,

I write this letter after having read your accounts about how you practice changemaking in your schools. Right away, your words reminded me of when I was your age. I saw myself in many of these moments, while in others I lamented the fact that some of the schools I studied in didn't embrace the drive to act that I had – and that we all have at this age – the way your schools do. I remember, when I was in the 6th grade, the frustration I had with my school was so great that I went to the office of another school where I really wanted to study and tried to enroll on my own. I had everything planned out: once it was done, I would just tell my parents I decided to change school and had everything taken care of already. Of course it didn't work, right? At the time, I was angry for not being able to pick my school, but today I can take a few steps back and see why my parents thought that school I hated so much was so good for me. It wasn't due to bad faith or ignorance. They were trying to give me the best they could, coming from their own experience at that school.

In my grandparents' days, it was hard for poor immigrants like them to get an opportunity to study in Brazil. For the following generation, my parents were the first people in the family to have access to public schools, which sadly did not happen for most of Brazil's poor, largely black population, who were (and still are) systematically discriminated against. Even so, back then, during the 50s and 60s, it wasn't a given that every child had to study. Quite the contrary, school continued serving the elites, and only offered access to a small, emerging middle class. My grandparents wanted my parents to learn to read and write well, and they saw the school as their opportunity for this. They knew that if they were illiterate, every door would be closed to them. They knew this because they had experienced the consequences of illiteracy in the flesh. My great-grandmother, Este-la, who died at 101, basically only knew how to write her name, and she worked hard for many years and long days in São Paulo's garment factories, at a time when labor rights didn't exist in the country. She never believed that a formal education could save her daughter from a repetitive

and exhausting job like hers in the future, precisely because there wasn't an awareness of the emancipatory power of education, so the forces of necessity and circumstance spoke louder. Estela had to send her daughter, my grandmother Dulce, as a child to work at a farm in the countryside.

But when my grandmother had her own children, the country was already in a period in which literacy was seen as a valuable asset, a demand made by mothers and fathers who wanted the best for their children. You can imagine the importance my grandmother gave to school and how much she encouraged my mother to study. And this idea, of the value of education, was passed down to me. For as long as I can remember, I always saw the monumental effort my parents made so that my sister and I could have the best education possible. But, what was the best? What defined a quality education? What effects did it produce if it was good? Since they had lived through this transitional phase – the first generation in my family to go to school – and since, being grandchildren and great-grandchildren of poor European immigrants, they didn't experience the same



discrimination that the poor people of this land experienced and still experience, it was quite natural for them to consider a good school one that allowed their children to have everything their own parents didn't have, and that made all the difference for them: ensuring a solid learning of academic content that would allow them to ascend socially, that is, be able to go into higher education, something they only managed after the age of 50, to have a job that paid well and, with that, have a good quality of life. So they would never go wanting. I don't mean to say that these goals and expectations are not good and desirable at any era, I just want to bring attention to the fact that the focus of their expectations is on learning academic knowledge with the goal of entering the job market. This was the paradigm. This is still the paradigm, but it is changing – and changing fast...

Over the past two decades, we have been transitioning from a world in which a small elite controls everything to a world in which everyone wants and needs to play a transformational role. To do this, people are no longer satisfied to be only the object of changes that often impacts them negatively, but would rather be its subject, its agent, and promote transformations that can actually change the lives of most people for the better. Don't take my word for it. Look around you, see how the most innovative companies are organized, in teams where the leadership roles rotate. Look at how knowledge is produced and disseminated today, notice who the authors are. In the big cities, notice how people are increasingly claiming and transforming public spaces. Other examples: the emergence of a strong demands for new institutional arrangements, like the one that plagues political institutions due to the representational crisis being felt around the world; the intensification of collective movements, organized more organically, with new leadership models, and so on. And yet, the best proof of this change is in you, it's in your stories. That's why it's so important that you can talk about it, about your changemaking projects, about your dreams for the future. You are living proof that a new paradigm for education and society is being created, and that this change is irreversible.

The divergence between what this world, now defined by change, demands of us and what is offered to new generations like yours is the biggest challenge of our time. The strategic opportunity for this is, once again, to bet on the central role education can have in changing this scenario by



promoting a new paradigm, a new vision of education and society, so that each one of us can fulfill our potential to act. If we don't do this, we will accentuate social inequalities and injustices even more because, since this change is irreversible, in a few years the new demands created by this new paradigm will only be met by those with the most economic power and the opportunities for this. Just as a child not being fully literate in school is undoubtedly an unacceptable injustice, we should be equally outraged if, in addition to this, this child does not have the same opportunities to develop the skills needed to grow up and become a changemaker.

Your words and practices fill us with the hope that this change is possible, and shows that it does not compete with the adequate teaching of the much-desired academic knowledge. Quite the contrary, a student that learns to relate with empathy, to work in a team, and that develops their creative capacities will study, learn and teach better. Just as you, Bruno (Proença), said about the importance of your trash collection project: "This way, I think I become more interested in my studies. Being stuck in

a classroom, just with books, is not the same thing." And, above all, that you learn and teach when you can put your ideas into practice, like your story, Davi (Scheid), where you taught your family and friends to recycle, or Gabriella (Monnerat)'s, who learned a lot from the elderly during her school's social activities and says: "We always try to do things outside, so we're not just learning inside the classroom. This way we learn a lot more."

Therefore, don't accept these false divisions between learning math/Portuguese and learning teambuilding. Between learning science and creating a social project. Between doing well on your entrance exam and fighting for the changes you want to see in the world. This trap was created to keep you submissive. They are nothing more than the reflexes, in education, of the same divisions that support the assumptions of the only existence possible that everyone is supposed to follow: reason x emotion, work x leisure, nature x culture, I x others. These are the divisions that have brought us to the critical social and environmental moment we are witnessing on a global scale.

Since this new vision, in which everyone is a changemaker, challenges those who expect only passivity and conformism from us, we must be aware of the strategies used, seldom explicitly, to make us feel like we are being leaders when they are only trying to domesticate our potential for action. Have you noticed how a lot of people say that young people "must participate" and, at the same time, that "young people don't want to participate, are not interested?" They want you to play the game, but without being able to help write the rules. To be heard, to cultivate your space for participation, for decision making, are important steps, but are not actions in themselves. Beware of opportunities for "changemaking" where the rules are already written and are set in stone. It is essential that parents, teachers, and the school offer structure, safety, guidance, and the reper-toire needed so that children and youngsters can create their own ideas, organize into groups, and put into practice the changes they want to see in their schools, neighborhoods, cities, and the world. But this embrace cannot happen by silencing the ideas and ways of doing that arise from children and youngsters themselves. Without the new ideas you are creating, and will keep creating, and without sharing these ideas and putting them into practice, there is no future world. Just as you, Marina (Cartum), reminds us, the kind of learning that sticks with us is the one that comes from exchange: "When the teachers exchange, the students exchange."

[Changemaker schools] are those worried about educating people to look at the world, to experience the world and want to change it.”

This is a unique moment and, because of this, it calls for us to take a stand. We must answer this call and contribute to the creation of an environment that embraces the changemaking potential that everyone carries inside. I am very thankful that you shared your practices and reflections, and for inspiring us all in this movement for a changemaking education that continues to grow in Brazil and around the world.

Best regards,

Flavio

Flavio Bassi

Director of Ashoka, responsible for the strategic management of the organization's work in the field of Childhood and Youth in Latin America (Mexico, Central America, Andean Region, Chile, Argentina, Brazil).

“We get very involved in neighborhood issues. For example, we noticed that some kids were throwing garbage next door and we organized a cleanup.

We explore this area a lot. We study the rocks in the school's backyard, which is huge. We hike trails and camp there. One time there was a treehouse project. This way, I think I become more interested in our studies. Being stuck in the classroom, just with books, is not the same.”

Bruno Proença, 14 years old, ninth-year student at Colégio Viver, in Cotia (São Paulo)

“I taught my family and friends to recycle plastic bottles, for example. Give them another use for the future, instead of just throwing them away. Every student does this kind of activity. It's something the school encourages a lot.”

Davi Scheid, 10 years old, fifth-year student at Escola Amigos do Verde, in Porto Alegre (Rio Grande do Sul)



"We have coffee and books, when people from the community come to the school, grab books, have coffee. Outside the school, we also do lots of field trips. We've been to a retirement home, we learned a lot with the elders. We also have a choir, performances, and presentations outside of school. We distribute our little newspaper at the school gate.

We always try to do things outside, so we're not learning just in the classroom. This way, we end up learning more. Besides, we play and learn while we play."

Gabriella Monnerat, 11 years old, fifth-year student at Acliméa Nascimento, in Teresópolis (Rio de Janeiro)

"When I arrived at this school, it was so different, I got scared. Since there's so much diversity - of opinions, politics, sexual orientation - it was hard for me. I learned not to see differences as flaws. This ends prejudice and makes the school enjoyable in many different ways.

The teachers end up being our friends. Whenever I have a problem or need advice, I talk to them.

At IFE, the students don't all come from the same city. Since it's a federal institution, there are people from many towns. Since we have activities in the afternoon, we have lunch together, take the bus together.

I was boxed in before. With all this diversity, I learned that you need to respect others. Politically, I have learned a lot. There were right-wing and left-wing people, I learned to listen to both extremes. It was very good."

Carolina Hikari Ivahashi, 16 years old, second-year student at the Integrated Computer Science High School at Instituto Federal do Paraná/Jacarezinho Campus, in Jacarezinho (Paraná)

"Our school teaches knitting, gardening, applied arts. The students don't learn manual labor at other schools. Many people still think that men shouldn't do this kind of thing. When I arrived at Dendê, I thought the same thing, but I have changed. There, everyone is equal.

At our school, we respect the time it takes for others to learn. We have classmates with learning disabilities, and we respect that. We never exclude a classmate, we help them learn the subject. This is what respect towards others means."

Adrielle de Jesus Lima, 16 years old, eighth-year student at Escola Rural Dendê da Serra, in Serra Grande (Bahia)

"We, the students, gave a talk about gender identity, sexual orientation and sexuality to parents, teachers, and even students from other schools, as well as former students. This expands the mind, adds knowledge. I am very grateful that I am not in a closed off, totalitarian school. It's a school that's always open to new ideas, which come up all the time."

Rodrigo Antônio de la Cuadra de Melo, 14 years old, ninth-year student at Escola Vila, in Fortaleza (Ceará)

"Many girls were taunted here at school for having curly hair. Today, they feel better after we did the 'Papo Cabelo' [Hair Talk] project. Society values straight hair and this project showed that it doesn't have to be like that, that curly hair can be beautiful too. With this, we also learned more about African history. We won the Racial Equality Prize because of this project."

Raianny Helena Fiúza França, 13 years old, seventh-year student at Escola Municipal Anne Frank, in Belo Horizonte (Minas Gerais)

CREATIVITY, by Wellington Nogueira

Read closely and choose the correct option:

1. In the statement by Karoline da Silva Oliveira, first-year student at the Luiza Mahin Community School in Salvador, in the state of Bahia:

“We are a part of the school. After all, we are the students.”

The expression “are a part of the school” can be substituted by:

- a) Create space without fear of making a mistake, constantly changing
- b) Have fun and, in this way, create a school speaks to us and our surroundings
- c) Do not have all the answers, so we go after them together
- d) All of the above

2. How would you fill out the acronym for SCHOOL so it expresses your vision of what a school should be? Here is an attempt, as an example for you to create your own.

Space that
 Can always
 Have lots of
 Outstanding
 Opportunities for
 Learning what excites me and makes me want to know more...

How many new definitions can we come up with by playing around with these letters?

I have no idea. So let's go after these answers, following the path we are creating with each step, in a constant dialogue with not-knowing, with curiosity, with the desire to discover.

In how many ways can we create these journeys?

As many as we want, for as long as this game keeps flowing.

It's in this flow that creativity lives.





Choose the correct option:

The word “lives” can be substituted by which word?

- a) Dances
- b) Resides
- c) Hides in
- d) Plays
- e) None of the Above

You don't know? You're not sure? Then put this book down right now and go after the answer. You will broaden your perspective and your experience, going beyond what is right and wrong, on a journey of your own making as you leave your comfort zone and take risks. Yes, you will make mistakes, get things right, have doubts, and that's how you will CREATE your experience! And you will have fun doing it. You heard the call, now get off your chair and go! But come back to tell us how it was, what you learned, and how you overcame the challenges, OK?

Wellington Nogueira

In 1988, became a member of Michael Christensen's (director of the Big Apple Circus) Clown Care Unit, which started its work in 1986 as a group to bring joy to hospitalized children in New York. Upon returning to Brazil in 1991, Nogueira founded the non-profit organization *Doutores da Alegria (Doctors of Joy)*. Wellington is a social entrepreneur recognized by Ashoka.

“We only meet our academic goals when everyone does their part, every person shares a collective goal. In addition to this, we work on activities outside of school. We have a cooperative cell, where different people from Pentecostes and other towns nearby participate. The best part is that there are people of all ages. People who never finished high school study with others who are getting ready to go to college.”

Jordânia de Souza, second-year high-school student at Alan Pinho Tabosa State School for Professional Education, in Pentecostes (Ceará)

“We did a project for the spring at a park near our school. We have taken care of this place since 2004. We go to the spring, clean it up, plant trees. It's something for the neighborhood. We've already made comic books, taken pictures.

I think it's very cool to participate in projects outside of school. The students end up becoming more interested. It grabs our attention more because we participate, we don't just look [at the subject] there at the blackboard. We are encouraged to do research, we feel like we're inside the story we are learning. It was through this project that I learned more about the neighborhood. I didn't know that it used to be a huge farm that was occupied by people who struggled to build the neighborhood we have today.”

Raianny Helena Fiúza França, 13 years old, seventh-year student at Escola Municipal Anne Frank, in Belo Horizonte (Minas Gerais)

“The main thing is that we develop our creativity. We seek innovation through teamwork. The principal always says that ‘no one is too good, no one is good by themselves. That's why we have to try to be together.’ We always get together to do activities that bring the community into the school. We have to break the taboo that the school is a closed space.”

Jordânia de Souza, second-year high-school student at Alan Pinho Tabosa State School for Professional Education, in Pentecostes (Ceará)

“At our school, the students did a project about fires, because they happen a lot during the dry season. So they decided to do an awareness campaign. This was a good way of relating to the community.

Another example was a group that went to a river close to town, one that’s very popular with the locals. They saw that it was very dirty and decided to do a project: they studied the water and the river, and made signs alerting people about the garbage. The whole school picked up the trash.

And, everyone once in a while, someone goes there and trashes it again. I think it’s important for us to see that there are people who have no awareness about the environment. I think it’s important to leave the classroom and learn through practice, too.”

José Pedro Rebello, 15 years old, eighth-year student at Escola Vila Verde, in Alto Paraíso de Goiás (Goiás)



“In the social projects I take part in, we go to Elementary Schools, hospitals, hospital-schools. We plan the games we will play with the children. We are players and have total freedom to interact with people.”

Marina Cartum, 14 years old, ninth-year student at Colégio Equipe, in São Paulo (São Paulo)

“Since the Instituto is federal, we have lots of scholarship projects with the community, like introduction to science and extension courses. We’ve visited a landless workers’ camp, retirement homes, etc. We’ve also participated in Robotics Olympics. In all these experiences, you have to learn how to work as a team. Another cool thing is that we work with younger students. We share our experiences with them.”

Carolina Hikari Ivahashi, 16 years old, second-year student at the Integrated Computer Science High School at Instituto Federal do Paraná/ Jacarezinho Campus, in Jacarezinho (Paraná)

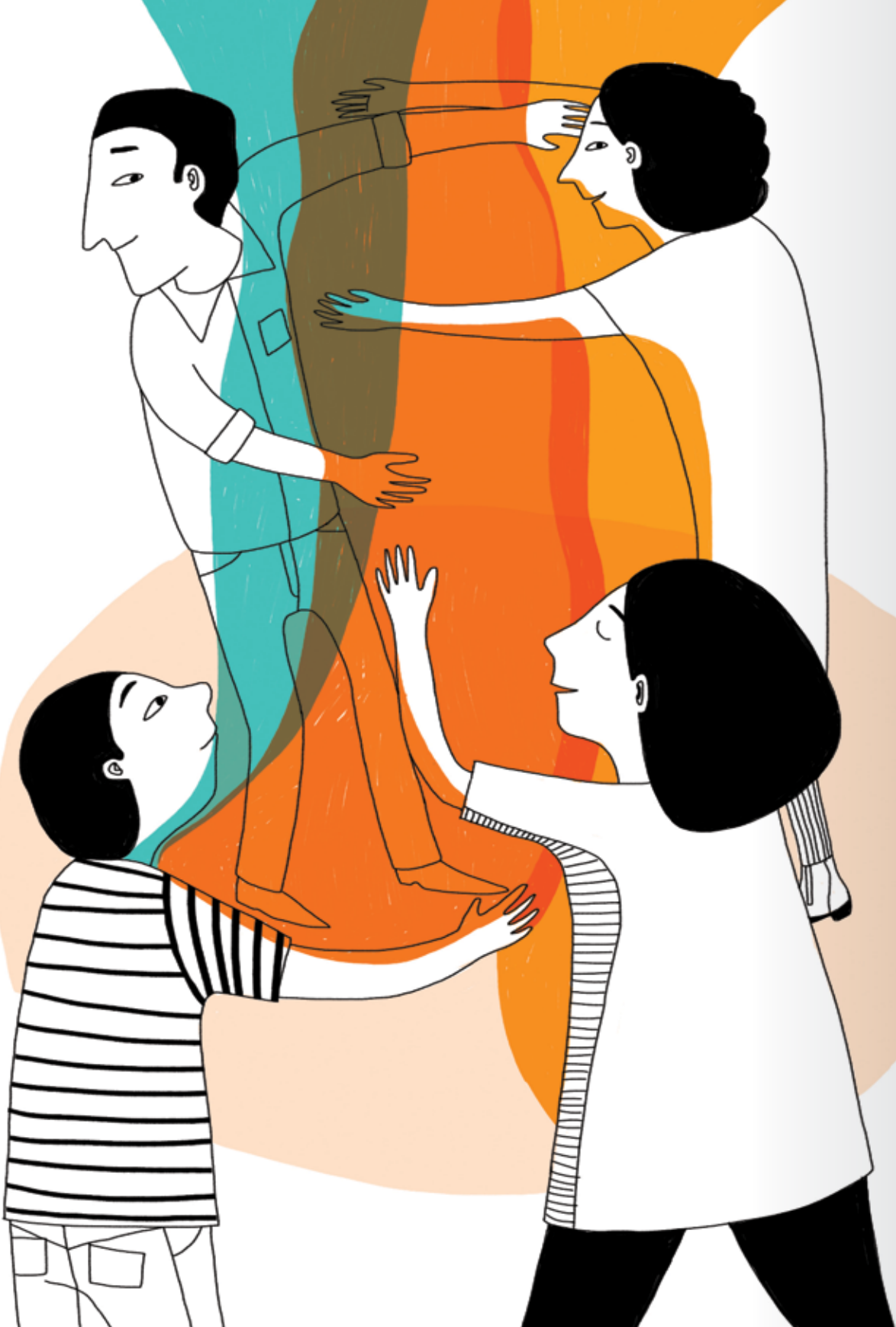
“At Colégio Viver, we hold an assembly every Friday. We decide everything with the whole school. There’s a blackboard accessible to everyone, and you can propose any issue to the assembly. Then, we vote and discuss. We discuss everything. Sometimes, we vote on issues that not even the teachers like, like making the wifi password available to everyone. What the majority decides, wins. I like it a lot because this way, you can put yourself out there and you won’t be at a disadvantage, like when a teacher talks and the student just obeys. Here, everyone is on the same level. Everyone’s vote has the same weight.”

Bruno Proença, 14 years old, ninth-year student at Colégio Viver Primary School, in Cotia (São Paulo)

TEAMWORK, by Manoel Andrade Neto

Spread out among a few Brazilian schools, a group of kids is making a difference when it comes to changing the reality of education in Brazil. Young people, from the Changemaker Schools Network, who already know what to do as a creative, empathetic and cooperative changemaker. Based on some of the testimonials I had the privilege of reading, I noticed that these kids are already in the 21st Century when it comes to these skills. For example, we can see that they already know that in order to have cooperation, there must be individual responsibility, and this responsibility is encouraged when each person has to develop a specific and individual task to help reach a common goal. This is what I got from the words of Jordânia, a student at the **Alan Pinho Tabosa Professional Education State School**, in Pentecoste (Ceará), when she talked about how they work in her school, showing her experience in this area, and clearly and objectively stating, "We only meet our academic goals when everyone does their part, when every person shares a collective goal." This understanding of the importance of individual responsibility and the awareness of the positive inter-dependence between team members expressed by Jordânia are essential requirements to guarantee the efficacy of teamwork which, unlike a conventional group, is based on working cooperatively.

José Pedro, from **Escola Vila Verde** in Alto Paraíso de Goiás (Goiás), also seems to experience this practice of shared duties on a daily basis, as he explains that he likes to work in teams because "one person doesn't have to do everything." Additionally, he brings to light another important element that is always present in teamwork – the harsh reality of conflicts. His demonstration of his understanding of this issue is fantastic, as he states in his interview that "the hard part is when one person wants to do things one way and another wants to do it differently. When people can't agree. But we meet halfway at the end." I am impressed by the fact that a 15-year-old boy does not seem to be afraid of conflict within a group setting. In his words, he expresses the idea that conflict can be experienced in a positive, even constructive manner. Being able to handle conflicts is an essential element in guaranteeing the efficacy of cooperative work. Experienced teams normally conduct a group recap at the end of the work, a moment specifically reserved for conflicts to be dealt with without necessarily compromising the team's goals.





I would also like to bring attention to the opinion of Marina Cartum, 14 years old, ninth-year student at **Colégio Equipe** in São Paulo (São Paulo), about the importance of the teams being organized in a heterogeneous fashion. Those who use Cooperative Learning in the classroom know that one of the challenges in implementing this methodology is the reluctance that students normally have to working with classmates who are not part of their circle of friends or are different from them. However, the creation of heterogeneous groups has been recognized as the most adequate strategy to stimulate the development of the social skills needed for cooperation, such as creativity, empathy, handling conflicts, etc. Marina, only 14 years old, clearly shows that she understands the importance of this approach as she talks about her experience with teamwork, saying that, “our differences make the work much richer.” She also sees an important result of teamwork when she says, “and, when working as a team, we end up surprising ourselves. We learn about each other, how to deal with each other’s problems, how to act so everyone participates.” This is a way of expressing empathy, of welcoming the other and contributing to the development of healthy relationships.

It is also worth talking about the statement by David Scheid, 10 years old, a fifth-year student at **Escola Amigos do Verde** in Porto Alegre (Rio Grande do Sul), who talks about the importance of working with differ-

ent people to developing a spirit of solidarity and the ability to embrace the other. He says, “There are a few people with disabilities here at the school. During the school olympics, which we do once a year, those who can’t run get help from another friend. I think it’s cool, because it makes them feel welcome.” Working cooperatively in heterogeneous groups is a great way of encouraging the practice of promotional interaction, solidarity and welcoming, everything today’s society needs to avoid succumbing to these times of individualism and exclusion.

I congratulate these youngsters taking part in this journey in defense of changing our society through education who, despite being far apart from each other, are sharing their experiences as leaders specializing in the practices of cooperation, solidarity, and empathy.

Manoel Andrade Neto

Professor of Organic Chemistry at the Universidade Federal do Ceará (UFC), coordinator of the cooperation between UFC and primary education (COART), creator of the Programa de Estimulo à Cooperação na Escola (Program for the Encouragement of Cooperation in School – PRECE) and Ashoka Fellow.

CHANGE EVERYWHERE

Recognizing the school as a force and environment for change, and the students themselves as agents of change.

"My school is a changemaker because it changes the lives of those who need it. It's changing my life. All of this so when I grow up, I become an intelligent and hard-working woman."

Karoline da Silva Oliveira, first-year student at Luiza Mahin Community School, in Salvador (Bahia)

"The school encourages us to develop, we're always talking. They always present new issues for us to discuss and change. If I were to tell you how much they have influenced me as a citizen, in the way I feel and express myself, I would say it's been an extraordinary experience. It's a different concept, there's an affectionate bond of friendship. It's a very enriching experience."

Rodrigo Antônio de la Cuadra de Melo, 14 years old, ninth-year student at Escola Vila, in Fortaleza (Ceará)

"Dendê doesn't just educate us as students, but also as human beings, so we can be more well-rounded, and have a different notion of society. We do musical education, gardening, woodwork, manual work, sewing, knitting, theater. All of this changes you a lot."

Maria Clara Sampaio Pereira, 14 years old, eighth-year student at Escola Rural Dendê da Serra, in Serra Grande (Bahia)

"I think my school changes its students. Viver has taught me how to live, it has given me a personal project. We want to learn, we don't want things easy."

Bruno Proença, 14 years old, ninth-year student at Colégio Viver, in Cotia (São Paulo)

"I think the Anne Frank school changes the lives of many people; not just the students, but also those who live in the neighborhood. The community leader said the school is the community's heart. The school changes those inside and outside."

Raianny Helena Fiúza França, 13 years old, seventh-year student at Escola Municipal Anne Frank, in Belo Horizonte (Minas Gerais)

"It's a school that's open for you to talk, express yourself. Here you can meet many cultures and other realities. It's a school that listens to you."

Iraci Helena do Nascimento, Agroecology student at Serviço de Tecnologia Alternativa (Alternative Technology Service - SERTA), in Glória do Goitá (Pernambuco)

"Change means encouraging the students' changemaking along with the school staff. It means knowing how to observe something and critique it, think about what we can do to change it, and what is the network of people that can help me change what I've noticed. Besides teaching the content, the school helps the student notice what is wrong in society and change their reality for the common good."

Jordânia de Souza, second-year high-school student at Alan Pinho Tabosa State School for Professional Education, in Pentecostes (Ceará)

"This school has helped me so, so much that I can't even tell you. I've had many experiences. It was also an opportunity for me to offer my knowledge."

Francisco Miguel da Silva, 55 years old, Primary Education student in Adult Education at Cieja Campo Limpo, in São Paulo (São Paulo)

"My school is a changemaker because it gives the students, the parents, and the community a voice."

Geovana de Carvalho Teles, 13 years old, seventh-year student at Desembargador Amorim Lima Primary School, in São Paulo (São Paulo)

"To me, changemaker schools are those that understand and change education, that approach learning with their arms wide open. The kind of learning that happens through exchanges. When teachers exchange, when students exchange. They're the schools that are worried about educating people to look at the world, to experience the world and want to change it."

Marina Cartum, 14 years old, ninth-year student at Colégio Equipe, in São Paulo (São Paulo)

"The school helps change people's daily lives for the better, so the students can make a difference on the world outside. We learn to respect the elderly, to help people more, to give advice, to not be a bad influence on people.

I learned that I have to know how to listen first, not be arrogant, respect the teachers, transform and change my life for the better. I am the most important person, I'm the one that has to change my life."

Glender Leonardo da Silva Santos, 15 years old, ninth-year student at EM Paulo Freire, in Belo Horizonte (Minas Gerais)

"I think my friends [at other schools] study in a very repetitive manner. They stay inside the classroom, doing exercises, and when someone doesn't understand something, they get angry. It's tiring and it gets boring. Our way, of studying what we like, is better. That's why it's so transformative, it changes the way we think about education."

José Pedro Rebello, 15 years old, eighth-year student at Escola Vila Verde, in Alto Paraíso de Goiás (Goiás)





CHAPTER 3
CHANGED AND
CHANGEMAKING
SCHOOLS



In addition to being a young nation, Brazil has lived through long periods of slavery (over three centuries) and social exclusion, which, among other problems, resulted in grave educational setbacks, both in terms of access and quality. There are still many structural challenges to be overcome, such as the high dropout rate and the age-grade distortion, among many others.

However, the past three decades have been especially important for the development and discussion of the right to education in the country. The post-military dictatorship period was marked by the signing of the 1988 Federal Constitution, which proposed advances in various aspects of education (albeit not all of them implemented), and in favor of expanding the population's access to schools. To this local context we can add the global context of the development of technologies and systems of information and communication. That is, we live our lives in a frenetic rhythm that has a direct impact on schools and, moreover, creates the expectation that they must "innovate" and adapt to the new desires and social configurations of the day.



"What happens is that once a school is treated as a place to keep your children off the streets, or to offer a bureaucratic curriculum to train them in the rudimentary skills needed to join the workforce, it loses its potential," warns Helena Singer, former special counsel to the Department of Education for the 'Innovation and Creativity in Primary Education' initiative in 2015, and a member of the Changemaker Schools co-lead community.

And this potential, as the sociologist explains, comes from a unique characteristic shared by every school in the country: it is the most widely present structure around Brazil, in which a large number of people - youngsters, children, teenagers and adults - spend their days throughout the year. "It's totally different from a health post, a hospital, a social assistance center. It's unique. Because there are children and teenagers, it has a proximity to the families in some way. In addition to all of this, it has an interdisciplinary staff and the mission to produce knowledge and educate the new generations. It is, by definition, the structure with the greatest potential for social change. It is the only structure capable of doing this," adds Helena.

And it is exactly this notion, of schools as a powerful locus for educating changemaking youngsters, on which the program places its bets and seeks to promote. A change that goes beyond pedagogic innovation and spills over into public life, into concrete actions reflected in society. These are schools that are, day by day, becoming spaces for the intense production of new knowledge, relationships, lessons, and laboratories for practices and achievements that can inspire and point the way to greater change.

This chapter has been created to bring these powerful experiences to light. Here we present the trails braved by an extremely diverse group, including public, private and community schools; rural and urban; Preschools, Primary Schools, Technical Schools, High Schools, and Adult Education Schools; across 12 cities and with a variety of approaches. Each with their own, unique story and rich trajectories that would demand individual publications to be told in full.

However, when we read and listen to their experiences we find commonalities, challenges faced by every school that led to different paths, created new challenges, in a brave and continuous movement of trying to change yourself and be a Changemaker.

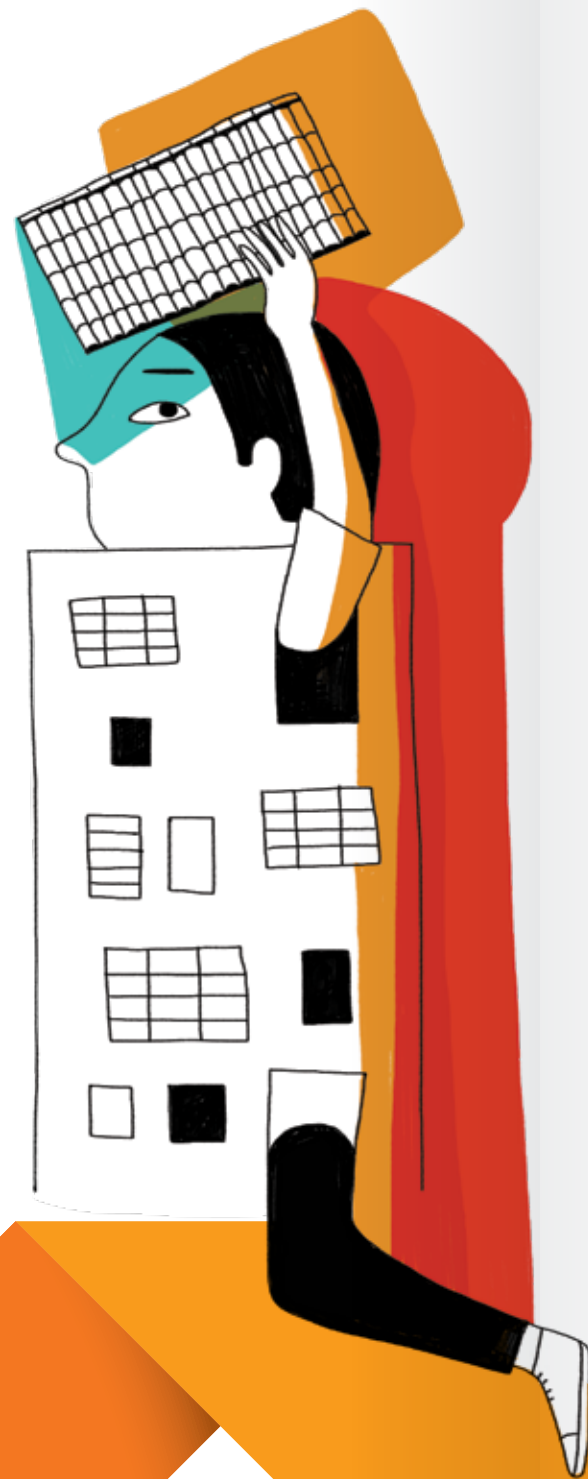
And since here we can only fit a broad overview - with multiple paths and directions - we hope it also helps whet our readers' appetite to learn more about these schools, visit them, connect with their communication channels, and dive into their exciting trajectories.

INTENT, COURAGE AND MOVEMENT

These Changemaker schools were created in a variety of contexts: among community and social mobilization movements, through initiatives by leaders or social entrepreneurs, through social diversity, through the desire and intervention of educators, and in a diversity of philosophical fields. However, we find a common original trait when we examine their experiences: the clear intention to work on educating changemaker individuals with the critical and creative capacity to intervene in the world. And to do this they needed daring, courage, and a willingness to make mistakes.

As we will see throughout this chapter, these trajectories are not linear, and their stories get tangled, straighten up, rearrange themselves and are filled with daunting challenges.

Placing yourself, in a critical manner, inside the movement, in history's frenetic flow, reinvent yourself and looking at the student, their family and community as the center for developing a political-pedagogical project is a path common to all of these schools.



And it is this view of the student and of the questions raised during a school's daily routine that create the motivating tension behind transformation, according to David José de Andrade Silva, a teacher at the **Instituto Federal do Paraná (IFPR)'s Jacarezinho campus**. "I think people have to be uncomfortable. Change only comes when people stop to think, break out of their daily, automated routine, and feel uncomfortable about something. People have to feel."

The 'discomfort' at the **Jacarezinho IFPR** began in 2013, with a proposal for curricular changes coming from the perception that some problems in High School education were structural, especially in relation to the drop-out rate.

"One of the main goals of this ongoing curricular change was the possibility of having the student and their family think more about their education, getting out of the comfort zone they were in at their previous school, where they accepted the set curriculum and would not reflect on the student's education. The new curriculum causes discomfort because its intention is to cause a paradigm shift. To do this, we have made deep curricular changes, seeking to empower the student to develop their own educational plan. We believe that this decision process leads the student to reflect on their own education, making them take the lead in their learning process. There is no simple choice, but rather a set of decisions that involve the student's life story and their expectations for the future, which are built and rebuilt as they spend more and more time in the institution. This way the students start to see themselves as being capable of promoting changes and making positive interventions in society," explains the teacher Gustavo Villani Serra.

The change described by the teacher is related to the content for the High School curriculum, which is no longer organized by subjects but rather by Curricular Units (CU), in which the students can pick and choose what they want to study. There are an average of 180 CUs, and this number grows every semester. The students must fulfill the same number of hours (810 hours) for the requirements in Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Social Sciences and Languages, regardless of what they study within each one.

There is no separation by year, the students choose their curricular trajectory and, since most of the CUs do not have any prerequisites, the groups are of mixed age. Once the Curricular Unit's syllabus and work plan - methodology, form of evaluation, suggestion of previous knowledge, etc. - are presented, the student can check if they think it is viable for them to do at that moment, or if it would be better to do another year, or not do it at all.

The students at the **Jacarezinho campus** are also involved in research projects and after school activities, and in many of these initiatives the students receive a scholarship from the school to do it. “The campus is very busy in the afternoon. It buzzes with excitement because of the projects too. It’s very interesting. This draws the students closer to the teacher, because the educator doesn’t stay just for class and then leave. The teacher stays on campus the whole day. This proximity is great. It’s a bonus, a huge improvement in quality for us to have this possibility,” says the teacher Gustavo Villani Serra.

Some examples of the kind of projects the students do are a book about the military dictatorship, written based on interviews with people in the city who lived through that period, and the development of a computer program to map urban problems. Some of the after school projects come out of the CUs themselves. One of them, that started in 2014, began in the Human Rights and Education CU and brings in civil society actors, such as members of the judiciary, to talk about the Children and Adolescent’s Statute and, at a later date, continues with actions in the community.

“The idea is to show the student that, even if they choose to study only Arts and Physical Education, for example, within Languages, we will help them think: is this really what I want? Is there more to life than this? What is my life project? Do you think you will only do what you like during your life? We want to awaken these questions and responsibilities in the students. They must have this understanding. But we give them the freedom of choice and follow closely,” explains the teacher David José de Andrade Silva.

However, as the school’s principal, Rodolfo Fiorucci, emphasizes, constantly rethinking your curriculum while keeping a clear goal and the intention of working collectively with change in mind can be challenging, difficult, and requires persistence.

“Each school has its own reality, and it’s very hard to transfer our reality to another institution. But the first step for another school that wants to do something similar is for the group to get together, not just the management, but the teaching staff, principals, parents, community, mayor’s office, department of education, etc., that is, everyone. It’s really hard work, promoting, persuading, convincing, bringing this into the school and thinking about your existing structure, the teachers you have, what you can start doing to bring about some kind of change. This collective participation, in thinking about the mechanisms of change for that school, is essential.”

In the southern outskirts of the city of São Paulo, in Capão Redondo, a neighborhood considered to be one of the most violent in the city, the **Centro Integrado de Educação de Jovens e Adultos (Integrated Center for Youth and Adult Education - Cieja) Campo Limpo** is a welcoming space, with its doors permanently open to the community. Its project, along with its main leader, the principal Eda Luiz, has received recognition through books, awards and studies. To Eda, the starting point for a school to become a Changemaker is to have a clear view of human beings, society, and the school, and everyone must know and talk about this view before they start building around it: methodology, planning, how time and spaces are organized, etc. “You have to recognize the student as a worker, a member of a family, the changemaker of a story. To ignore this would be to deny their learning potential.”

This was the starting point of her work when she arrived at the school. The team thought that it would be essential to approach the community and listen to them, in order to get to know their constituency. At that time, there was a high drop out rate, in addition to problems with gang turf wars in neighboring areas, which created very violent surroundings. Inspired by the idea of popular education, and through many assemblies, every issue related to their attempt to improve the education offered to the community’s youngsters and adults was decided on collectively.



This process still reverberates to this day. A project with no end, that doesn't stagnate by copying methods. "Cieja is about movement. It looks at applied movement. We never repeat anything, every year is different. Everyone who works at Cieja knows this. We look at evaluations, study together, research, and define what that year will be like. We can't make a two, three-year plan. We take risks, without worrying too much about mistakes. We know mistakes can also be constructive. If we make a mistake, we humbly try to redo and start all over. But always trying, you know, rather than settling. The key is that we are always moving," says Eda.

The first thing the community asked of **Cieja** was to do away with school desks, regarded as a symbol of discipline. They came up with the idea of hexagonal tables, and for this they had to find a different methodology. Eda says that they looked into the National Educational Guidelines and Bases Law (LDB) to see what it said about length and formats for classes, etc. and noticed the law granted autonomy in the organization of the political-pedagogical project.

They also noticed that many students would give up school because they had only 2h15m available for school. Their social-economic status meant they could only afford one bus ticket, a situation common to most users of the Bilhete Único, São Paulo's public transport ticketing system that allows for multiple trips while paying just once. "This is the amount of time the youngster or adult has to fit school into their routine," says Eda.

In addition to this, the school decided to make their hours more flexible - students can attend during the morning, afternoon or evening, considering that many people work alternating shifts. This allowed many students to come back to school. To do this, each student has a "personal passport" that shows their school itinerary during the hours they have for study. The school's space was also important in defining another idea for organizing their teachers' work: considering the school's small, limited space, they decided to break down their walls and leave an open area, combining different fields of study in an integrated fashion. Thus was born the double teaching team by field of study system.

At **Colégio Viver**, founded in 1977 in Cotia, in São Paulo's metropolitan region, the principals Maria Amélia Marcondes Cupertino and Anna Maria Pereira de Castro also emphasize the notion that settling for less and inflexibility do not combine with change. The school makes this clear in its Political-Pedagogic Project: "Respect towards the students and teachers as individuals is not an empty phrase. Overall, it means letting go of rigid

plans, readymade formulas, strict requirements for the pace of learning, and expanding the list of themes that are adequate for teaching."

"Sometimes you need a leader to shake things up and keep you from becoming comfortable. Change must be justified and come with everyone's participation. Opinions must be equally valued. Here, no two days are the same. We are constantly learning, and this encourages us to keep going. You only learn by doing, discussing, evaluating, changing," explain the two principals.

In the city of Teresópolis, in the interior of the state of Rio de Janeiro, the **Professora Aclimea de Oliveira Nascimento Municipal School**, the city's only full-time school, faces the constant challenge of change, since there are not many local references for this kind of work. The staff began experimenting with the implementation of the project, with a plan for the school to operate in a truly integrated fashion during the eight-hour day. The school started out with the literacy program, serving only the first through third grades of Primary School. Due to the high demand, the program was expanded and today serves up to the fifth year. According to the principal, Luciana, there is constant experimentation.

"The school is not the same as when it was founded, and our society is not the same as it was in 2009. It is constantly changing. Because of this, we never come with something ready, from the top down. We experiment. We do something one way, and then we evaluate it and adapt it. The school's routine doesn't let us lose sight of its essence: to think about the student, and that every action is done in their interest," she adds.

In other places, the mobilization and development of the educational values of these school projects were created, and are being created, in close relation to social and political movements.

In the city of Pentecostes, located in the arid interior of the state of Ceará, the **Alan Pinho Tabosa Professional Education State School** was founded in 2011 with the Universidade Federal do Ceará (UFC) as co-administrator, is based on the principles of “cooperative learning.” This is a set of teaching and learning techniques in which the students work in small groups and help each other, discussing solutions, problems, and aiding the comprehension of the content along with the teacher’s help.



In order to understand the school’s history, we must look back at the movement started by the Programa de Educação em Células Cooperativas (Education in Cooperative Cells Program – PRECE), which started out as an informal educational experiment and gained momentum as a social movement in the early 1990s. Elton Luz, the school’s principal - and PRECE graduate -, describes how at the beginning everything was one big “collective dream” that gathered youngsters with no educational experience to manage a school outside any of the public education standards in Brazil. Today’s results show their audacity paid off.

In 1994, seven youngsters living in Cipó, a rural district of Pentecostes, started studying and hanging out in an old flourmill, with the help of the community and the teacher Manoel Andrade. Very strong bonds - between the students, as well as the community - were forged, until one day one of the students came in first place in the admissions test for the pedagogy course at Universidade Federal do Ceará (UFC) in 1996. As they gained visibility, other youngsters started seeking out this place to help them prepare for the entrance exams. And thus their way of studying, in which one student helps the other, where cooperation is key, picked up steam. This is how the first iteration of the Projeto Educacional Coração de Estudante (Student’s Heart Educational Project – PRECE) came about.

In 2002, over 40 students from the town went to the rural zone to seek out PRECE. The following year they created a new center, Pentecoste’s Escola Popular Cooperativa (Cooperative Popular School – EPC), in the heart of the town. Soon after, the group developed its Cell Incubator project, which led to the creation of EPCs in other rural communities in Pentecostes and in the municipalities of Umirim, Apuiarés and Paramoti.

UFC has established a partnership with PRECE and created the Cooperative Cells Education Program, giving the group a new scope. In order to work in formal education settings, they had to systematize and name the method they used. The practice started in Cipó was similar to cooperative learning, a theory developed by David and Roger Johnson. The meeting of the methodology developed by the Johnsons with the experiments carried out in the countryside of Ceará led to the creation of Cooperative Learning. Inspired by the Cipó group’s story, UFC created the Cooperative Learning in Creative Cells Program. In 2016, the university created the Cooperation in Public Schools Support Program, in partnership with the state of Ceará’s Secretary of Education, in which university students are trained in how to propose support projects for the state’s public schools and exchange their knowledge with primary education students.

Meanwhile, in Ibimirim and Glória do Goitá, in the interior of the state of Pernambuco, the **Serviço de Tecnologia Alternativa (Alternative Technology Service - SERTA)** was officially founded in 1989, but its roots date back to movements connected to Liberation Theology and the ministries of the 1970s. Since its creation, it has been deeply connected to the principles of popular education and community mobilization.

According to Germano de Barros, a former student and the school's current principal, "SERTA is an organization that, for 27 years, has drawn a lot from popular education, from the experiences of social movements, from the experience of Liberation Theology. It was born in part out of the progressive church movement. And one of the biggest differences in our process is that we developed our own methodology, coming from the knowledge, experiences, and experimentation with the farmers, social movements, organizations and, also, with the government, be it at the municipal, state or federal level, who started to believe in these ideas and joined them. Another aspect we deal with a lot during this paradigm shift is the students' voice. They are not the objects of the curriculum - they are its protagonists, they are its subject. Everything the students do is valued by the school."

Still during the military dictatorship, in 1968, **Colégio Equipe**, in São Paulo, was founded as an entrance exam prep course, organized by teachers from another prep course that existed inside the student government of the Universidade de São Paulo's (USP) School of Philosophy. At the beginning, the institution worked as a cooperative and, once it became a school, continued basing its educational process on the critical and participatory thinking of its teachers and students.

This vision is evident in the words of Marcos and Ivone Cartum, parents of Marina Cartum, a Primary Education student: "We chose the school because of its focus on the pleasure of knowledge; its emphasis on critical thinking; the value it places on connecting and integrating the subjects; the way it encourages coexistence based on respect and the importance of differences; its awareness of the role of the individual in building and changing reality," they explain.

As history has unfolded at the end of the 20th Century and the beginning of the 21st, new understandings, perceptions and concerns, such as those presented by Agenda 21, have raised issues, such as environmentalism, that until now were seldom discussed, and revived philosophies with a deeper and more integral view of the human being. These factors have also guided the development of educational projects.

The pre-school Amiguinhos do Verde was founded in 1984, in Porto Alegre (Rio Grande do Sul), and would later expand its services into Primary Education and become **Amigos do Verde**. Its main goal was to develop a teaching balanced between the cognitive and emotional fields. It stood out at the time for its environmental interest, its eco-centric vision - when few people were talking about environmentalism - tied to a natural nutrition with an educational component.

"You have to want to be a Changemaker School in order to have one. No one will show you the way. You have to find your own way," says Silvia Lignon Carneiro, founder and principal at the school.

The path that created this mission, developed by the staff themselves, "is to create the opportunity for the person's integral learning and development, through research projects and experiences such as self-(eco) awareness, agroecology, arts and nutrition. Through an eco-systemic perspective, the school believes in the interdependence of the acts involved in the education of the social and planetary being, welcoming diversity, respecting each person's inherent individuality and worth."

This path often brings to mind the cliché of an "alternative education" but, as Marcia da Silva Viegas, mother of one of the students at the school, explains, it is more than this. "It's not an alternative school. It's an alternative to traditional schools. It does everything you could conceive for a child in school age. Everything they talk about is palpable," she says.

Escola Vila was created as a Pre-School in 1981 out of the restlessness of a mother and educator in Fortaleza, and expanded into a Primary School in the 1990s. According to Fátima Limaverde, Escola Vila's goal is to "prepare citizens for today's challenges and be able to deal with all of the social, political and ideological issues we are facing. An ethical, fair citizen connected to human values. A student that joins an intellectual and

ethical education. We are a school that makes possible the coexistence and blossoming of abilities, prioritizes mutual respect, self-awareness and a commitment to the Earth. And we bring in the problems that are happening in the city, the country, and the world into the classroom, so the students can feel capable of thinking of solutions and putting their thoughts into practice.”

Since its creation, **Escola Vila** has worked with a curriculum structured around three pillars: Caring for the Self, Caring for the Social, and Caring for the Environment. This practice is clearly reflected in the understanding of Henrique de Castro, father of a fifth-year student at the school and of another former student, now 21 years old.



“I feel like this way the school awakens individuals for social change. The **Vila** school has this concern and plays this role. Once the students wake up to this, the school helps them understand that they are unique beings, but are also part of a community. I have noticed that the children become more sensitive to social and human issues. Everything in the child’s life is affected by the activities the school organizes: visiting orphanages, the garden, body class. They become more conscientious and aware of themselves. They become increasingly independent, but also open themselves to listening to others and becoming interested in the issues around them,” explains Henrique.

Meanwhile, in Serra Grande, in the state of Bahia’s zona da mata, since 2001 the **Escola Rural Dendê da Serra** has based its work on the Waldorf pedagogy, which takes into consideration the child’s progressive physical and spiritual development. The school offers its students a series of practical and artistic activities that engage different developmental aspects in a variety of skills, such as gardening, ecological agriculture, music, painting, theater, manual work and art.

According to this methodology, direct contact with natural materials, such as wood, awakens and renews the child or youngster’s relationship with nature, giving them sensitivity and respect towards their environmental context. This perspective is especially valuable considering the Environmental Protection Area the school is in. During the educational process the students are introduced to natural resource management, learning how to recognize dead trees in the forest that can be used for creating various objects. In each curricular year at the school, the students make various utensils rooted in the local traditions that are used every day.

Just as wood is used to create a connection with nature, music is also used pedagogically. Students learn to turn their instinctive motor skills into meaningful and harmonious gestures, learn to interact with other students, with the teacher, and their audience. The act of listening creates a social conscience. Music is taught through a carefully selected repertoire, adequate to the different age groups and related to the subjects being covered in class by the teachers.

Next up, **Escola Vila Verde**, in Alto Paraíso, in the state of Goiás, is an example of a mix of influences and inspirations. The school was founded six years ago. It began as an autonomous initiative by parents, but didn’t take root. It was passed on to a new owner and, since 2014, is managed by Instituto Caminho do Meio, a non-profit organization created under the inspiration and guidance of Lama Padma Samten.



In addition to Instituto Caminho do Meio, the school has other supporting partners, like the Centro de Vivências Crescer and UnB (University of Brasília). The partnership with UnB brings with it the possibility of offering the school as an experimental space for students, with a Sharing Economy approach.

Serving children between 3 and 6 in its urban unit, and between 7 and 14 in its unit next to the Chapada dos Veadeiros National Park, the school's goal is to offer an environmental, sustainable, and integrated education, focusing on each child's intellectual, emotional, social, physical, artistic, creative and spiritual potential, covering the school subjects in a contextualized manner.

In Primary Education, for example, besides playing, guided activities like capoeira, dance, painting, circle games and cooking make up the weekly routine and are used to develop different skills .

"Art instruction - the presence of music, theater - is very important. The fact that the children are, from early on, developing their autonomy, making their own decisions, is very positive. **Vila Verde** is a commitment," explains Cristina Chu, mother of two students at the school.

Vila Verde follows some Buddhist principles that guide its ideas and establish a link between the cognitive and emotional capacities. Among them are five concepts: the Mirror, Equality, Discernment, Causality and Liberation. The Mirror, for example, points to the need to recognize the other, including their differences, within their context, without judgment; while Liberation emphasizes the need to recognize all the possibilities in the other. Keep a free and creative mindset in the face of any situation. Always keep an open and innovative outlook. Look at the other with freedom. All of these emphasize the importance of having a genuine interest in the other, encouraging their virtues, being happy with the other's happiness, achievements and growth.



Another important front for social mobilization and discussion in the past decades in Brazil is related to the demands that arise from participatory processes, such as municipal councils and budgets, as well as the struggles and debates around the chaotic growth of cities, and for social rights and against racism, sexism, and other issues. These actions inspire and guide the intentions of many educational projects.

A public school created in the 1950s, the **Desembargador Amorim Lima Municipal School**, in the neighborhood of Vila Gomes, located in São Paulo's western area, experienced a drastic transformation at the end of the 1990s, when the principal Ana Elisa Siqueira, now at the helm of the school for 21 years, started leading a deep and radical process of opening areas of participation for the community in the school and prioritizing the student's autonomy in the learning process. Open-air classes, multi-grade classrooms, and a political-pedagogical project organized into flexible lines of study and inspired by *Escola da Ponte* in Portugal, are some of its trademarks. To open up, discuss and turn the school into a true community center have been **Amorim Lima's** guiding principles.

"The school was completely gray and covered by bars and fences. At first, I and another worker painted it during vacation to change the mood when the children arrived. The children's shirts were also gray, and we changed that, since it was also symbolic. When I took down the schoolyard's fence, one girl said to me, 'It's great that you took down the fence, since we are neither crazy nor crooks to be kept behind bars.' This shows how much symbolism is present in a public school," says Ana Elisa, Amorim Lima's principal.

Two other schools also came up in the 1990s, this time in Belo Horizonte (Minas Gerais), in the middle of urban struggles for housing and access to rights.

The **Anne Frank Municipal School** is located in Conjunto Confisco, in the Pampulha neighborhood, on the border between the cities of Belo Horizonte and Contagem. At the time of the school's founding, the Conjunto Confisco community was an illegal occupation connected to a church, that had mobilized to address the housing issues of socially vulnerable families. The fact that the neighborhood is located on the border between two cities imposed a number of limitations on its residents. To those outside the borders of Belo Horizonte, access to public services was restricted, and they did not know who to turn to for support in addressing problems related to the incredibly precarious sanitation and living conditions, for example, and not to mention the problems of violence and drug trafficking. Within this context, various community associations were formed, but it was more common for them to compete with each other than actually organize to solve their problems.

The school arose as the only space that offered full care to the residents of that region, regardless of the municipality their addresses fell under. Sensibly, its directors soon noticed the complexity of the situation and, considering the pressing needs, allowed the school to play a role beyond its protocol. In fact, as Andrea Cristina Ferreira de Almeida, the pedagogic coordinator, explains, "the school was the only public space available in the area. In addition to classes, it would hold mass, evangelical services, funerals, parties, weddings, and many meetings of the representatives of the neighborhood associations."

The school's activities as a catalyst for the relationships and potential of that place started to take shape in 1994, when the school mediated the over 20 neighborhood associations into uniting to think up solutions for the "big hole," a crater that existed in a vacant lot in front of the school that threatened several houses. With the support of the

Anne Frank school staff, the leaders submitted a project to the Mayor's office for turning the "big hole" into a park, with equipment and space for the community's leisure and gatherings. The project would be carried out through a participatory budget managed by the leaders involved. And so it was that, in 1996, the Parque do Confisco came to be, an intervention in the public space that improved the life of the community and represented the start of the important and permanent formation of an awareness of the school's changemaking role in the community.

"The hole almost swallowed my house. With the school's help, we got organized and went after a participatory budget. We held many meetings inside the Anne Frank school, joining the community leaders with the school's leadership. The school helped a lot. There was a lot of mobilizing, and today we have a great square, which became a park, the prettiest part of the neighborhood. I don't know of any neighborhood as new as ours that has a park this nice and a school this organized. In the school, I learned that there is power in union and that all of us, together, can accomplish a lot more. Here, I educated my children and myself. Not to mention that the community has always tried, within the school, to organize in order to improve our lives here," says Maria das Graças Silva Ferreira, 52 years old, a community leader and student in the Anne Frank School's Adult Education Program.

Meanwhile, the **Paulo Freire Municipal School**, located in the Ribeiro de Abreu neighborhood, opened its doors in 2001, after almost two decades of community mobilization for its construction. This low-income neighborhood had severe infrastructure demands, and the need for a primary school was an old one. With the creation of the Orçamento Participativo (Participatory Budget - OP) by the city of Belo Horizonte, in the beginning of the 1990s, the community saw their opportunity to fight for their needs and wishes. There were several stages until the school opened, from the purchase of the lot to its construction.

A school with a strong web of relations within the community was born out of this mobilization, and today it works with a variety of partners and has community accommodation as one of its guiding principles.

"It is essential that you find a safety network - a school does not educate on its own. We take everything into account: public services, the sanitation company, local churches and many others. We try to create a bond with the school community," says Maria do Socorro, the principal at the Paulo Freire School.

Sérgio Soares, a community leader who has lived in the area for 22 years and is the coordinator of the Escola Aberta (Open School) project at the **Paulo Freire School**, is the best representative of the school community's influence in the Ribeiro de Abreu neighborhood.

"The **Paulo Freire School** is the heart of the community and the neighborhood's main reference point. I saw the school's creation and, today, I coordinate the Escola Aberta project, which allows the area's only school to keep its doors open to the community on Saturdays and Sundays, offering workshops for people of all ages - computers, dance, soccer, volleyball, art, games, and other things. In addition to this, the school's management gives us total freedom to use the space for community meetings, debates about housing and other social activities," explains Sérgio.

The community leader is also a representative of the state government's Fica Vivo project, which focuses on preventing homicides among youth, and president of the Unidos do Onça Samba School, created by the



Paulo Freire School's first principal. "The samba school isn't active right now, but we are trying to get it going again for Carnival. But, even inactive, it shows the influence of the Paulo Freire school."

Finally, we turn our attention to the Itapagipe Peninsula, in the city of Salvador (Bahia), where the **Luiza Mahin Community School**, founded in 1990, is located. A school community created by educators, parents, students and staff who chose as their banner resistance against racism and the promotion of their racial identity as an emancipating principle. The school was established by the Conjunto Santa Luzia Residents Association, as a response to the lack of openings for these stages of education in the region.



Its founders, all black women who live in the community, decided on their own to turn their needs into potential. They built the school with their bare hands - and the help of other people in the neighborhood - and founded the school with the recognition of the appropriate legal entities. The founders, now about 60 years old, are still alive today and still act as the Association's coordinators.

"We try to bring value to an area that was created through land reclamation by our ancestors, with a lot of sweat, with great difficulty to create a flat terrain. Since we are in the periphery of the city, the news tends to show only the bad side of things. So, from when the children are three years old, we try to show them the responsibility they have, that if today they don't have to cross bridges, if they have a school, a health post, this was all the work of a past generation, and many of them passed away before they could enjoy these things. In our pedagogical project, we include the community's story. We invite people to the school and take the children to the community," explains Sônia Dias Ribeiro, the school's pedagogic coordinator. The pedagogic staff shows their confidence when they explain the project.

"What most amazed me about the school was its methodology and the value they place on the teacher. I came from a traditional school and used to teach in a private school. As an Afro-Brazilian, I spent my whole life hearing a distorted history of my origins. Only at the school did I come to learn, thoroughly, the story of our ancestors, of enslaved people. At Luiza Mahin, I felt appreciated for what I am and what I do," says Valmira Ribeiro dos Santos, a second-grade teacher at the school.

Their stories and places of origin tell us a lot about these schools and the challenges they face, and they required different pedagogical solutions, reversals of logic, and the development of multiple paths for their continuity.



PLANNING AND PRACTICE

During our research and interviews, it became clear how much practice is coherent with concept and discourse, leading to intensely motivating and real impacts, especially because these schools are geared for changemaking, and not necessarily for methodological innovations.

The sociologist Helena Singer reinforces this viewpoint. “If what stands out most about these schools are their values, I think that means they have a consistent Political Pedagogical Project (PPP). It means they apply it to their daily routine, in organizing their day, their syllabus, their methodologies. Every school must have one but, in most cases, they put it away. The PPP states what their values are, what the community believes in, what they want for their students, what they want for the world. But these things end up completely separate. This pretty idea starts to drift away from their daily life, when they have to respond to bureaucratic demands, to always doing things the same way, to dismantling each teacher’s plan. But this separation doesn’t happen in the Changemaker Schools. Their biggest strength is that what is written in their PPP is constantly reflected in the school’s routine. Maybe their PPP is not that different

compared to other schools, since they always say they educate for human rights, citizenship, they want to raise active, critical citizens, etc. The difference is in what these Changemakers do. What they do is think: what is the best methodology I can create to educate a critical, active, engaged, changemaking citizen? The methodology arises from the answer, and not the opposite, and they are linked.”

The journalist Anna Penido, an Ashoka social entrepreneur and a member of the Changemaker Schools Program activating community, also reminds us that form cannot supplant intention and concept.

“The schools that want to tick off the list, guarantee their performance, adopt trendy practices, they may look like they are on a disruptive path, but they are not. And that is often the case. A school can adopt a number of tools and methodologies but, since their intention and concepts are dated, they end up just mimicking. You trade the chalkboard for a digital one, trade expository classes for projects, or the entire project is done by the teachers. When you look closely, these innovations are very superficial. And that is not what Changemaker Schools do.”

SERTA has taken this seriously and, when they developed their methodology - called Peads -, they discussed and organized its founding concepts. Peads stands for Proposta Educacional de Apoio ao Desenvolvimento Sustentável, or Educational Proposal in Support of Sustainable Development, and is based on two books by its founder, Abdalaziz de Moura, another Ashoka social entrepreneur.

Even as a rural school initially focused on the education of family farmers, they did not shy away from opening its students’ eyes to the cultural, political and social issues that their methodology could cover. In order to develop their methodology, they established parameters, the concepts that would serve as the basis for its development: the concept of art and education in development; people’s self-awareness as the meaning given to existence in the world; an understanding of history being built by people and institutions in constant transformation; the ways in which people

position themselves in relation to nature; an understanding of the field; an understanding of science and philosophy; understanding of knowledge; of the syllabus; of teaching and learning; and of development.

As Moura and Germano explain, with this methodology **SERTA** assumes a responsibility with people's reality, their routine, their lives, their needs. At the school, the student's lives, their work, family, strengths and vulnerabilities are a part of the curriculum. They are studied as part of the class. The students are evaluated not only by what they learn, but also by what they do, achieve, realize in their personal, community, professional and political lives.

“Knowledge is conceived as a call to action, an encouragement and provocation to action, that is, to delve into reality and understand, identify where it needs to be changed, what needs to be done to achieve this change,” says Germano, the principal at SERTA.

Transdisciplinarity, learning through projects, seasons, rhythms, portfolios, rotation, curricular units, a diversity of languages, life projects - there are a variety of concepts that permeate the practices of these 15 schools.

Considering this common foundation, we can see - beyond the connection between theory and practice - that there is a deep respect for the interests, quirks and stories of the students and communities in the planning of their teaching processes. Not to mention that there is a lot of affection and respect in these processes, that is, a deep and humane investment in relationships.

This is so true that one school's statement can almost be “co-signed” by all the others. “We seek a methodology that gives autonomy to the students, awakens a desire to learn, encourages criticality, and strengthens teamwork and empathy, being together and helping each other. The student becomes the center of action, directly involved in the entire process of knowledge creation,” states Luciana Pires, principal at the **Professora Alcimea de Oliveira Nascimento Municipal School** in Teresópolis (Rio de Janeiro).

The challenges and problems these schools decided to address, and which led to their pedagogical choices, also have a synergy: a distancing from the community; little space for collaborative and creative learning; strict curricula; unmotivated educators; conflicts among differences; and so many other common sense issues. And it is in fact possible to forge new paths, even if this is not easy. The Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional (National Education Guidelines and Bases Law - LDB), which governs Brazilian education, guarantees the school's pedagogic autonomy.

As Eda Luiz, principal at Cieja Campo Limpo in São Paulo, explains, what matters is to not be afraid to do something different. “The LDB says that the development of the PPP should be strong and collective. Where does it say that a class should be 45 or 50 minutes long, and have 50 students in each classroom? Nowhere. But people accept it in a way, maybe in fear of taking risks, of making the children walk around the school, of giving more freedom. Fear is what holds them back. Someone will see an open gate and people coming and going, and say, ‘Aren't you scared?’ And I say, ‘I am more scared of a closed school than an open one, because the closed one holds back too much, keeps violence and conflicts repressed. This one doesn't. The energy flows: comes, goes, enters.”

Rodolfo Fiorucci, principal at IFPR Jacarezinho, reminds us that, often times, the conditions for bringing change are precarious.

“Why did we manage to take on this mission at IFPR? Because here we have the time to think about education. It's not idle time, but time to do things besides being inside a classroom giving lectures. Much of a schools' inertia is because the educators do not have time for anything else. They live on automatic pilot. And, within this context, it's hard to stop and think about what they want from education. It's structural, it involves an endless number of things in the country. Maybe change in education has never happened on a significant scale because these are local, one-off actions. There is no government project that actually aims for change.”

From the educator's perspective, this can also be difficult. “The methodology we adopted challenges preconceived notions and work structures. Many professionals don't adapt, since it's hard to challenge our certainties. To take part in a project like this, it's important for the teacher to be

open and engage in a collective construction. It's a daily exercise," says Luciana Pires, principal at **Aclimea**.

On the other hand, when the project takes shape, there is an appreciation for the educator's role and their involvement. "**Equipe** allows us to take risks, offer new ideas or methods. I have always had a lot of freedom and, at the same time, a lot of support and assistance. I have never felt abandoned, threatened, if I wasn't getting along with a group or planned something I couldn't do (...), and this is essential to creating an environment in which the teacher can feel safe and welcome. Teachers who feel safe and welcome are better teachers, since they can transmit this safety and acceptance to the students, they can make mistakes and develop their courses as they wish. This is essential and, from there, the teacher's ideas gain space and traction. Maybe this is what makes a great school, having teachers who really believe in what they teach and are the authors of their own courses. There is room for this here," says Luana Almeida, a teacher for the sixth and seventh grades at **Colégio Equipe** in São Paulo.



To the students in the third-year of high school, **Colégio Equipe** offers classes like Thematic Courses and Monography. Thematic courses are workshops offered by teachers that expand on a subject covered in the school curriculum or on themes that were not discussed in class. Meanwhile, Monography is an individual research project developed by each student, on a theme they are interested in, under the guidance of a teacher.

The students can also take part in the other activities offered by the school to all students, like the Monitoring program, in which students help those younger than them in the learning process, reviewing their own knowledge. And, finally, in Elective Activities, students can choose to take part in sports or dance, or in social projects through the Instituto Equipe Cultura e Cidadania.

Considering this context of distinct settings and a variety of obstacles, we highlight some pedagogical paths that lead to viable solutions to common problems. Far from serving as guidelines, these are reflections that can broaden and diversify the debate around education.

Organizing the development of lessons by projects, units of knowledge, or in a transdisciplinary fashion is a method chosen by some of the schools. Mandatory subjects - Portuguese, Mathematics, Geography, History, etc. - are connected by thematic projects, often times defined in collaboration with the students, even the younger ones.

At **Aclimea Nascimento**, one of the schools that adopted this practice, it's the students, with the support of the teachers, who define the theme to be researched for the class project. They offer various suggestions and, together, choose the one that will serve as the central theme (it can be anything from the movie Star Wars, to foods of the world, to dinosaurs or the Olympics). Various methodologies can be used to make the choice, such as an open vote, secret vote or show of hands. From the selected theme, the teacher begins the research phase with the students. The questions, or interests, the students have about the subject are raised and, from there, they formulate hypotheses, or what they want to learn. The children do research at home, ask their family, talk among themselves. This process is registered on a mural, inside or outside the classroom, where the information collected is organized. This is

how their knowledge is collected, organized and publicized. It is always on display in the school, and it is presented in interclass presentations and in the final presentation. These presentations become important moments in which children of different ages share knowledge and learn together with the adults.

The first grade students at the **Aclimea** school chat with the principal about what they are studying in their project:

Principal: What are you researching?

Students: Greek mythology.

Principal: Why did you want to study this theme?

Several students raise their hands and start saying that everything began with Medusa, who had snakes on her head, who has a son named Pegasus, etc.

Principal: How can you learn to read and write if you're researching about Medusa?

Students: It's easy, very easy... we do research and study.

The class teacher, Vivia Ferreira Teixeira, describes her own shock when she learned this methodology. "I got really scared when they started talking about what they wanted to study, what they wanted to learn about. I thought: I won't be able to teach how to read and write this way. But, over time, I realized that through the things they want to learn, know more about, things flow and happen. And it's much more fun for the child to read things they want to learn about, to do research. They tell me what they would like to learn, and it offers great results. They learned to read and write very quickly."

The parents also recognize and appreciate this way of teaching: "This year, the theme of their project was cartoons. They started watching their favorite cartoons in a new way. Now, their perspective is always one of research: why were these characters created? Why are they like this? They are very critical, they question everything: Why? It's a very critical education. They don't study for the sake of studying, or watch for the sake of watching. There's always a reason behind it. It's very cool," says Claudia Maria Canto Macario Emerick, mother of the triplets Pedro, Miguel and Luisa, nine-year-old students in the fourth grade.

Colégio Viver, in Cotia (São Paulo), has also worked through projects since 1998, either with overarching interdisciplinary themes, or with a project for each student. It holds an assembly with the students in which they collectively set the rules and decide on how the spaces will be used and on the pedagogic proposals. "The projects used to be done outside

class time, but now they are done during the school day. This change made the teachers lose some of their control. And the biggest challenge to a teacher is losing control," says principal Maria Amélia.

Since 2013, Projeto Pessoal, or Personal Project, seeks to value what each **Colégio Viver** student has to offer. It's a moment for the child or teenager to invest in their dreams, in what most brings meaning to their lives, deciding freely what they want for themselves in the short, medium or long term. The choice of theme is completely free, so the student can dedicate themselves to what they really wish, want, like, are interested in and/or makes sense for their learning process.

During this, a tutor-teacher is selected to help guide them during their studies, academic difficulties and life projects. The choice of tutor normally comes down to affinity and depends on the teacher having the available hours. This educator follows the student's personal development and process of self-discovery, overlooks their project, establishes a relationship with their classroom teacher, and works as a link to the family.



"I think it's great that the children create their own projects, it makes them want to go to school. That they can learn according to their own interests is very smart for this generation," says Cristina Chu, mother of students at **Escola Vila Verde**, in Alto Paraíso de Goiás. During Primary School there, thematic projects are developed through the students' own proposals, in which they work on more in than one subject.

The curricular content of the Department of Education's National Curricular Guidelines is covered in the projects. If it is not, they cover it during specific classes.

"The biggest challenge is convincing the teacher that they don't need to know everything. Sometimes they get nervous when they don't know anything about the chosen theme," explains Fernando Leão, the school's principal.

There's a tool at **Vila Verde** called GEI (Grupos de Estudo por Interesse - Study Groups by Interest). The groups meet weekly, every Friday, and any person in the school can suggest a theme and share it with the entire school community. The GEI have become a rich space for the intergenerational construction of knowledge, activities and attitudes, with a strong participation by the community. Some themes that have already come up: kite making, medicinal herbs, and others. If there's demand, the group keeps on meeting.

"We don't follow the linearity of book chapters. All of this because of the projects, but everyone is clear on the content and whether we are going to study more quickly or more intensively," adds the principal.

Sandra Mara de Oliveira Vicente, principal at the **Anne Frank Municipal School**, also defends and encourages the project methodology, even if it presents a challenge to the already tight municipal system curriculum. The school strives to create a routine that mixes classes and required evaluations with more open and constructive activities that can lead the student to think and, above all, set off on building their knowledge from their place in the world.

"I began incorporating the use of different discourses into my pedagogy when I realized I shouldn't be just a History teacher and that, rather than becoming specialized, I should add to my toolbox - after all, life is not compartmentalized," says Moacir Fagundes de Freitas, a third year teacher at the **Anne Frank Municipal School**.



Meanwhile, at the Adult Education program at **Cieja Campo Limpo**, the students study the same area of knowledge for one month: one month for Languages, one month for Social Studies, etc. During this month of immersion, they can work all the content that would be needed for an entire semester. In the first week of each cycle (module), a new situation-problem is proposed, based on the group's environment. This situation-problem is normally provocative and has an ethical bent. Based on the question, they raise hypotheses, discuss and analyze and, at the end, create a concept. In the last week, the students have to present a product of the concept they learned. It can be a song, a play, an essay, etc. The productions can be individual or made as a group. To finish the subject, the students also do two activities: a lab diary, an instrument the student uses to write down their relationship with the subject matter, what is happening with the content, and the 'class extras,' which are activities outside of school that the students participate in, such as going to the movies, the theatre, museums, etc.

The project methodology is also used at **Escola Vila**, in Fortaleza and, in the first year of Primary School, they organize the content of different subjects into proposals for transdisciplinary activities. "In an activity in

the garden, for example, the main goal would be to identify the different types of insects present in the space. For this, the students would use content from Mathematics (calculations, graphs, expressions, etc.), Language (grammar, types of texts, etc.), Science (characteristics of the insects, the food chain, ecology, etc.) and Social Studies (geographical regions of the habitats of the insects being studied, popular knowledge about these animals, possible myths and legends related to the insects, etc.) as instruments,” describes Patricia Limaverde Nascimento in her dissertation about **Escola Vila**.

At the start of the school year at **Desembargador Amorim Lima State School**, in São Paulo, each student is given a kit with the textbooks for their year and the guide they should follow. These guides are produced

by the school, and they organize the content and suggest exercises. The road maps are organized by theme, and not by subject. In addition, they all have an interdisciplinary aspect and encourage the students to study from a variety of sources - books, the internet, interviews with the community. These guides are created based on textbooks listed by the city and the Department of Education's Curricular Guidelines and Orientations. This way, today's biggest issues are studied while connecting various areas of knowledge to the mandatory curriculum. Every guide must be completed, but the speed and path each student takes through the material will be unique. The rhythm and methods of each student are respected. At the end of each guide, everyone must complete an overview and do exercises on the content studied, creating an archive of the projects, which they call their portfolio.



When a visitor walks around the **Amorim Lima School**, they will be surprised by the totally unconventional way the classes are split up. You don't see a teacher writing on a blackboard in front of rows of students sitting in desks. Students of different ages interact in the space, arranged like big halls, monitored by leading teachers from various subjects and with different levels of experience.

Each student has their own guide, but they are organized into groups so they can help each other with the problems they run into. The feeling is one of a great knowledge exchange – a collaborative culture that integrates students, teachers and staff.

In addition to the changes to the classroom, Brazilian culture workshops were added to the curriculum. Popular forms like music, dance and theater now share room in the syllabus with Portuguese, Math, Geography and History.

“We wanted all of these forms of expression to be understood as areas of knowledge,” says principal Ana Elisa.

And how do the Changemaker Schools handle the challenge of managing so many different timescales - individual, collective, institutional, social - in teaching and learning?

At **Dendê da Serra**, in Bahia, the answer revolves around their perspective on the human being and development. "The human body works in a rhythmic fashion, especially the vital areas, the heart, breathing. We notice that rhythm is a primary element in the human being, that we can't manage without it. So this rhythm permeates all of life, especially small children, but it's very important to older children too. That's why we use rhythm in different ways for Preschool and Primary Education. In the first case, with children between zero and seven, it is established through repetition, which gives a sense of security. And, from seven to fourteen, what the Waldorf pedagogy calls the second septennial, we change the rhythm of the activities, respecting the cognitive, emotional and biological changes of this phase," explains principal Silvia Reichmann.

The school also follows the "cycle" model, one of the pillars of Waldorf pedagogy. During each "cycle" there is a focus on a specific area of knowledge. The particularities and rhythms of each child or youngster are also permeated by the issue of affection and their emotional abilities.

Escola Vila, in Fortaleza, teaches how to care for yourself and the planet. The school developed its didactic material, the *Coleção Cuidando do Planeta Terra* (Caring for Planet Earth Collection), bringing within it a transdisciplinary approach up to the fifth grade. The material follows a class structure over six volumes for each grade, that covers the six basic themes for the projects: The Social Being, The Being During the Discovery of their Values and Roots, The Being in Nature, The Being in Tradition, Guardians of the Planet, and Building a Better World. The curriculum includes daily activities with music, theater, crafts, fine arts, and body expression.

"In Body Class, the students come into contact with different massage and meditation techniques, do yoga, tai-chi and bio-dance. They use the body as a tool of expression and exploration of the world. The weekly Body Classes are alternated with Physical Education, which, in addition to sports, also develops social conscience by organizing tournaments with public schools in the city's outskirts," explains Patricia Limaverde Nascimento.

The **Amigos do Verde** school uses harmonizing activities, like meditation and respiration, to make space for emotional issues.

"To be aware that children learn through affection does not mean to diminish the presence and importance of the content taught each year. It is, definitely, the understanding that what they learn will only be meaningful if experience and interest become allies in this process," says Silvia Lignon Carneiro, founder and principal at Amigos do Verde.



Corporeality and its relationship to emotional development also influence the work at the **Luiza Mahin Community School**, in Salvador.

"As a civilizational value to Afro-Brazilians, corporeality involves biological, emotional and social-cognitive aspects that inspire the feelings, values and behaviors that make us more human. In this sense, the pedagogical practice in our educational processes must be permeated by the body - not an empty and lifeless body, but one full of love for itself and others. Corporeality should be strengthened in order to encourage meaningful and positive experiences for the children, boosting their self-esteem and the belief that they are able and important," explains the pedagogic coordinator Sônia Dias Ribeiro.

And this proposal spills over into other forms of action. The classrooms are organized in circles to encourage dialogue, and the art and education workshops try to diversify the ways of learning - in addition to being elective, so the children can exercise their choosing power, according to their interests or skills.

The issue of race is present everywhere in the school. Their goal is to awaken racial pride through cultural promotion and historical recollection. At the same time, they implement a program for social awareness: the place I live in, my role in society, the rights and duties of every citizen.

All the educational material is created by the school's own educational staff. The yearly textbooks, which guide their studies, cover the formal content (concepts in Mathematics and Portuguese) through themes related to cultural and folk traditions, for example.

However, it's common for the school to feel pressure from the parents to give greater attention to the formal content rather than the knowledge related to their culture and their ethnic and racial identities.



"Our biggest source of tension is related to our methodology, but we already know how to deal with it. Each year, when we receive new students, we revisit the struggle to make the parents understand our ideas, which are different from more conventional schools. We created this project and truly believe in it. It's a methodology that considers the other, respects them, tries to build things together. It respects ethnic and religious diversity," explains Sônia Dias Ribeiro.

It is also in these moments of conflict that an important tool is used for its resolution. "We always try to deal with these problems through empathy. Putting yourself in the place of the parents, too. Most of them didn't have this kind of education, so we have to have this conversation with them too. And it all happens in the pedagogical meetings, which have an educational aspect. The conflict happens through dialogue," adds the pedagogic coordinator.

The accounts given by these schools display a common concept among these changemaker institutions: integral education. This is the belief that the cognitive, emotional, corporeal, social and cultural dimensions must all be included in the education of children and youngsters, and that a variety of social actors (students, educators, families and the local community) have a part in this process. In our country, the concept of integral education is part of the operational language of goal 06 of the National Education Plan – in an understanding that goes beyond full time education - and its commitment is reiterated in the National Common Curricular Base. The National Education Plan is valid for 10 years and, as this publication is written, many of its goals are far from being met.

The students' life stories and knowledge also serve as raw educational material for most of these projects. What kind of family knowledge and experiences do these students bring with them to school? What wisdom do they carry, what are their interests and feelings? What fears do they have? What are their dreams and life projects?

These are reflections that led the schools to organize structured listening processes.

At the **Alan Pinho Tabosa School**, the families, and the community in general, take part in the welcoming activities on the first day of school. The teachers, staff and older students welcome the new students and their families for a workshop in which they share their life stories. The students are not organized into rows of desks, they work in cells, which are groups formed by three students - one from each grade - and the group changes every week. A chart in the classroom shows who the youngster will be with in the upcoming weeks. The practice of organizing cells seeks to maximize interaction and form heterogeneous groups. And the number three also has a meaning.

According to principal Elton Luz, the choice behind this number is that it encourages interaction, allows for debate and hinders distraction, since the groups are small. And if a student is absent, the teacher can rearrange the groups, depending on the class. In these cells, each person tells their life story and their story ties in with concepts like: social skills, positive interdependence, experience and conflict, verbal and nonverbal communication, and empathy.

The first week of class at **SERTA** is also dedicated to sharing life stories.

"We don't start by talking about classes, but about what the students know," explains principal Germano Barros.

"All our intentions are geared towards creating an inclusive and participatory methodology. We have to balance everything. Our student body is very diverse: from middle class students from Recife's metropolitan region, to professionals who purchased a small plot of land and want to turn it into an agroecological farm, to the children of farmers who live in the countryside. And through these individual stories and expertise, we try to



use and encourage this diversity, which is deeply enriching. Their different realities can help the students and the school itself, even during classes. We have one student who works as a technician at INCRA (the National Institute for Land Reform). She knows everything about land reform, so she is the one who teaches the content about land legalization in the public policies class. She goes there and presents and discusses the topic. On the other hand, we have students who have never seen a lettuce plant, who like permaculture, but come from Recife's metropolitan area and have no contact with the rural world, but they want to learn about nature. So a farmer's son that was born and raised in the countryside explains to them how a cow is milked, how to plant, how to harvest, how to plow the land," says Germano.

The students' place of origin and their life path also serve as an entrance point at **Cieja Campo Limpo** in São Paulo.

When a student enrolls at **Cieja**, their first step is to undergo an internal evaluation by the school staff to determine which module they will enter. In the words of principal Eda Luiz, this is the moment to find out what the student “knows and doesn’t know,” taking what they have learned outside of school into account. “This also removes the presumption that the student only learns inside of school and ignores what they acquire outside. The school systematizes, but it’s not the only provider of knowledge.”

Eda goes on to add, “A student can enroll in November, for example, and show you that they just needed a little polishing and they are ready to move ahead, but you are denying them that right if you only allow them to enroll in February or August. Where is it written that it has to be this way? You are denying them entry. That’s why there are so many students outside of school.



Being an active player in their educational trajectory is a crucial element in the development of critical, participative and change-making individuals. With this in mind, the Changemaker Schools have developed a variety of methods and channels for the students’ participation. There are countless stories and examples.

In Alto Paraíso de Goiás, the **Vila Verde school** organizes weekly assemblies, where they discuss initiatives by the staff and their daily routine. It is a space that belongs to the students, in which the teachers have increasingly played the role of listener. Since the students are all gathered together, the older ones are encouraged to clear up any questions from the younger ones. But the main point is that anyone can propose a project.

Principal Fernando Leão explains that they do not work in an authoritarian or top-down manner; but also not through consensus, which could lead to a “game of persuasion” or “political maneuvering;” nor do they want winners and losers. “The model works through dreams. Anyone (students, supporting staff or teachers) can present a personal project. This person is then automatically responsible for the project. If others are interested, the project comes to fruition. It’s an organic process that creates a supply of dreams. Many of them don’t come true at first, but are picked up again at a later point,” he explains.

At the **Anne Frank School**, in Belo Horizonte, the dialogue among various agents from the school environment - educators, students, managers, even local residents who don’t study or have children in the school - is fundamentally important for the school to reach many of its goals. The school has a staff of over 200, including teachers, aides, secretaries, cooks, monitors, groundkeepers, cleaning crew, library and treasury assistants. Each group attends a continuous education program in order to deepen their understanding of the importance of their contribution to the development of the school’s projects.

The Work Groups ensure the entire pedagogical team’s participation and contribution, while it opens the school to projects suggested by the teachers. These groups are organized by theme and created by the teachers according to their interest in the chosen object of study. The flexibility in accommodating classes along with activities that make use of other methodologies, or even different spaces in the school, helps motivate the educators to present proposals that, are often embraced by the school’s management and incorporated into the annual program.

As for the students, they meet in tri-monthly assemblies to discuss the school's daily life. The meetings began mainly to debate disciplinary issues, but the range of questions expanded. Today they discuss the school's routine, like how recess is organized, and many of the suggestions offered are tested and absorbed by the school.

Interaction with the family plays a significant role in Changemaker Schools. Each school, within its means, has looked for ways to include parents and caretakers in the educational process, in management, and even in curricular decisions. This doesn't mean this process is fast or easy. Once again, listening, respect, and testing out a variety of proposals have served as the starting point.

A family's involvement can take place through many channels at **Amigos do Verde**. There is the family-school evaluation process, in which questionnaires are sent to the family in order to receive feedback on various aspects of the school. In addition, parents know what projects are being conducted and have free access to the school – appointments are not necessary. There is no appointment book, since contact happens directly, either through phone calls or meetings in person.

"The parents play a significant role. Rather than the school planning an activity for Mother's or Father's Day, it makes room for each mother or father to suggest one, which can be related to the class project or not," describes Marcia da Silva Viegas, mother of Violeta, a Primary School student at the school.

This integration with the parents begins with an invitation for them to contribute to the Pedagogical Project and class projects. Parents can set up a time to share their knowledge and expertise on a theme the group is studying. In addition to this, they see the students' day-to-day experiences in the classroom.

"The self(eco)awareness practices are a trademark of the school and, over the years, besides being a part of the curriculum, they have been incorporated by the professionals working in the space, as well as the children and their families. During class, we used tools like the feelings dice; cards with thoughts on different emotions; and the talking stick, an object with indigenous roots that

values speaking and strengthens sensitive listening. These moments also happen during the parent-teacher meetings and the Saturday lectures, so the families can have the same experience their sons and daughters are having," says principal Silvia.

She goes on to explain that the activities that integrate the classrooms with the community are held in a variety of spaces, offering a variety of experiences – such as using public transit, and visiting retirement homes, schools of different social-economic settings in the city, and indigenous and quilombola (descendants of slaves) communities.

"These proposals are reflected in the harmony of the school community, which encourages empathy as well as finding your interior self."

Henrique de Castro, the father of a fifth-grade student at **Escola Vila**, says that the school's attitude has always been one of being very open and receptive. "They are also very sincere and honest. Based on this understanding and respect, our relationship is very good. I am always given attention, I am always heard."

He goes on to explain how the school managed to adapt to the expansion of the concept of the family.

"A friend's son lost his mother and the school noticed they needed to change something: they cancelled Mother's Day and Father's Day and instituted Family Day instead. The kid's anguish was over, as well as that of the children with two fathers, two mothers, or no parents at all. This became a day for sharing, when children come to school with their aunts and uncles, grandparents, those who have a special meaning in their lives. And, later on, activities were created for these people to share their knowledge and skills. Some were DJs, others knew how to make sushi, others could teach meditation techniques..."

At the **Amorim Lima** school, sharing knowledge is something you always see. There are a lot of former students with children at **Amorim**, and parents of former students who never left and continue to participate in the school's board. There is a group of mothers coordinating the library, fathers who hold a bazaar once a month, another team that coordinates communication. The parents' meeting takes place once a month, and the school staff don't know the talking points and only go if they are invited. At the day of the meeting everyone participates and everyone debates.

These changes in the conception of the human being, of education and of methodologies during these schools' trajectories also imposed changes in their evaluation processes. It's impossible to propose a disruptive path and evaluate students only through standardized tests. There are a variety of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that the Changemaker Schools have created, but what they have in common are evaluations that are more process-oriented rather than periodical, done through the student's perspective of their integral development, self-evaluation exercises with the students, and taking into consideration issues that go beyond what is taught in school.

Escola Dendê da Serra has what they call a class teacher, who follows a class of students for several years, allowing for a more profound and long-term perspective of the child's development.



Principal Silvia Reichmann explains that the school tries to establish a qualitative evaluation, rather than quantitative, and wide-ranging rather than numeric. "We are always watching the students. A great advantage to having a class teacher is that we can evaluate their development, their progress. Sometimes you will see two students with similar performances, but one used to be much weaker and just took a great leap forward, while the other is excellent, full of potential, but is going through, let's say, a lazy phase. So we evaluate a lot in relation to how they have progressed, where they were and how they have changed. This progress can be cognitive, it can be in content, in participation, effort, activities, attendance, seriousness, in social relations. For example, a shy, introverted student who opened up a bit, managed to cooperate more with their classmates. A student who used to be more self-centered and started sharing, showing interest in helping colleagues, in teaching something," she adds.

At the **Dendê** school, progress in relationships and in cooperation are seen as great pedagogical advances. The same is true for insisting on not leaving a task halfway and finishing a craft project. "All of these aspects influence our evaluation, which, in addition to being so broad, makes these considerations. How was the student before and where is he now, whether it represents a great, medium or small step forward, or even a regression. With time, in the sixth, eighth grade, we start using tests as well, to get them familiarized before they go to another school, but it's not our focus," concludes Silvia.

Coming from a school with a habit of regular testing can often make a student uncomfortable with these new methods.

Eda Luiz, at **Cieja Campo Limpo**, shares the same ideas as the Dendê school, and explains that sometimes the students themselves don't understand the process and ask, "Will I pass this year? What grade will I go on to? Where's the test? Then we have to say: 'every day is an evaluation of you, or of your colleague, of everything you are learning. The diary (the student's daily register of their learning process) is also for this: what did I learn, what do I need to know better, what do I need to research, and how do I apply this in my life.'"

The **Amigos do Verde** school has developed an evaluation system composed of cooperative interviews, individual descriptive reports, group descriptive reports for specialized classes, activity reports, and self-evaluations.

There is also a Participatory Class Council (for Elementary School), in which every student participates.

“We don’t want to have control over the project’s outcome. We enjoy the thrill of learning. Control does not create change,” says principal Silvia Lignon.

The **Aclimea Nascimento school** has also made an effort to understand and adapt in order to find the best way of conducting evaluations. The school went through many tests and experiments to find their process. First they decided not to have a test and created just an out-of-class evaluation, done under pedagogic orientation. However, the school began to feel pressure from parts of the community. Parents started asking, “They’re not going to have exams? Their cousins have them.”

“Even though we don’t believe in the way in which these external evaluations are conducted, in this ranking system that ends up being created, we are subject to it and will be evaluated. Especially since we are the only full time school, the department of education itself wonders: ‘how viable is this school for the city? How much return are we getting for the investment?’ We also had these doubts. Our first standardized test was in 2015, when we started teaching up to the fifth grade, and our score was 6.3. Considering that we don’t focus on this, the result was great. The problem is that these evaluations end up boiling the school’s work down to an indicator, and that’s not the work we do - we go much deeper,” explains principal Luciana Pires.

Considering this context, the school included exams, but the evaluation is done through a set of instruments. “Changing our practices doesn’t mean abandoning what used to be done, but finding new ways, new possibilities,” she adds.



THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM: OUTSIDERS AND INSIDERS, INFLUENCING THE WHOLE

One issue that haunts the Changemaker Schools, especially the public ones, is how to deal with the system and its rules and rigidity. The stories told here describe solutions, loopholes, detours and attitudes that often lead to changes imposed by the system. A path that can be arduous and contradictory.

But processes like these, combined with the strengthening of spaces to debate ideas, can slowly change the educational system. Public policy is shaped over time by social pressures, by organizing and empowering civil society. The demand for daycare, full-time education, better pay scales for teachers and the implementation of the National Educational Plan, allied with autonomous and changemaking projects, play an important guiding role in the fight for rights and the implementation of new social and educational models.

The journalist and Ashoka entrepreneur Anna Penido is aware of this issue. “In order to work differently, schools often have to isolate themselves from the system because this system, somehow, will make you do more of the same, it will stifle you, or make demands that are incompatible with a more unique proposal. In order to do everything they want to do, the schools shield themselves, protect themselves, almost create a bubble around themselves, so the system doesn’t destroy the seeds they are sowing. They have to cut it off, step away, even make themselves a bit invisible. There’s a dichotomy in this. I have to protect myself in order for me to do something disruptive but if I am isolated from the system, I can’t change it.”

According to Anna, the ideal would be if the public education system had an area or program dedicated to supporting schools that want to serve as laboratories for innovation. “In every big organization that makes a significant contribution, there is an area for Research and Development, that is, an area that is already thinking about the next step, the upcoming trends, and prepares services and ideas based on what is coming. We don’t have this in education. It is one of the most conservative fields, and it does not invest in innovation,” she concludes.

But how does this work in practice? It doesn’t sound simple, but it’s possible. From subverting the didactic materials sent by public agencies to rearranging the classroom furniture, mobilizing the community, rethinking the curriculum and evaluation indexes, like the Ideb (Primary Education Development Index) - everything involves construction, daring and celebration. What is clear is the constant fight by the staff to show the significance of their project and the importance of working in this way.

Because they are a full time school, the **Aclimea school** faced some practical issues, like how to keep a teacher in school for the entire day. Even though the school day lasts eight hours, a teacher normally works four. Some teachers teach in two schools, while others work overtime. Today, 80% of the staff works full time, with a period at the end of the day set aside for collective planning. “There are no specific functions and no jobs set aside for them. It’s been our struggle,” explains the teacher Márcia Ferioli.

In addition to this, the school chose to use more than just the didactic materials distributed by the Department of Education, organizing

the use of these materials according to the pedagogic proposal for each unit, giving priority to some, adapting others, or using new ones. Guided by the teachers, each student has their own individual documentation instrument, called a portfolio, which corresponds to their notebook and textbook. Since it is personal, the student has much more freedom when filling it out. The school has not abandoned the Department’s curricular guidelines, but they no longer guide the teaching process. What drives the entire teaching process is the project. The students bring their interests and the teacher acts as mediators.

“We got the department’s approval to work in this way by showing results. We have bi-monthly seminars and invite the department’s staff. When they see the children doing, talking, reading, empowered and confident, interpreting, showing mastery, they say, ‘wow, it really works!’” says Márcia Ferioli.

In São Paulo, the **Cieja Campo Limpo** and **Desembargador Amorim Lima State School** also managed groundbreaking work within the system. **Cieja** experienced many moments of tension with the Department of Education. Principal Eda Luiz has countless stories to tell.

“When we asked the Municipal Department of Education for the hexagonal tables because our students wanted to organize the classrooms differently, they said it was impossible and that desks were what the department had to offer. I said, ‘I won’t accept that.’ After that, every day we would take pictures of the students writing on their knees, on a piece of wood, on cardboard, and send it to them. When they saw that I was ‘resisting,’ they gave me the hexagonal tables. So today, whoever wants to organize things this way can do it. Very often the system comes up with excuses not to change. After all, if you start using the hexagonal table, you have to think about your methodology, because you can’t have a simple expository class, focused on the blackboard, since some students will have their back to it. They know it takes more effort,” says Cieja’s principal.

“I believe the entire changemaking process begins with discussing our reality. Reality is essential for us to start dreaming. In order to think about change, you have to understand your reality. It was so important when parents, for example, appropriated Brazilian educational laws for themselves, all of this became research material for them. When we started

thinking about Escola da Ponte, we realized there was a different reality, we realized we could dream. I also believe that the community's participation is crucial. There's an element of persuasion in a public school that is very important," considers Ana Elisa, principal at **Desembargador Amorim Lima State School**.

However, to the **Amorim Lima school**, meeting the demands of Brazil's public education policy and showing results can be a challenge when they have to follow metrics designed for more traditional educational models. Ana Elisa explains that it is very hard to align themselves with the field's current evaluation practices, but the school stands by its pedagogical proposal. She says that their evaluation is continuous, conducted through the systematization of practices records and the supervision by tutors – every week, students have fill out completion forms for each guide.

The school also does qualitative evaluations (satisfactory; unsatisfactory, for example), but the city of São Paulo uses a system of numerical grades, which makes it harder for the students to self-evaluate, to respect their own pace. For the moment, the school is using these concepts and is still negotiating ways to loosen them with the city. The principal explains that, even with the challenges they face evaluating their students within the parameters established by Brazilian education, the results have shown



the efficacy of their project. A good indicator is the number of students from the school who go on to federal universities and well-respected technical schools.

On the other side of the country, the **Alan Pinho Tabosa State School** is looking for mechanisms to help them keep their 'cooperative learning' methodology while still answering to demands by society and the public education system.

The school applies many strategies to help their students perform well on the ENEM, the national High School Exam. Principal Elton Luz explains that this is necessary, since the State Department of Education monitors schools based on their ENEM scores and on the Spaece (the Ceará State's Permanent Educational Evaluation System), a large-scale evaluation in the state. One of their strategies is to strengthen Portuguese teaching - especially reading comprehension, one of the keys to getting a good score. The students have weekly essay writing classes and, starting in the second week of class, have activities that encourage reading, like the Solidary Letters project. During its implementation, the students help each other learn and receive volunteer help from outside revisers, who are partners in the project.

The project is currently led and coordinated by one of the Portuguese teachers and the school's students, along with students from the Universidade Federal do Ceará (UFC), and in partnership with an online network of essay revisers.

These schools' experiences make clear the constant need for negotiation between teaching institutions, public authorities and social demands. At **SERTA**, this process had a deep impact on the curricular development.

"We spent almost three and a half years negotiating with the State, presenting course plans, syllabi, subjects, and the State would send it back, claiming it didn't fit with the formal structure, so we kept redoing it. Later, when we went to negotiate the course's financing and the Secretary of Education saw the methodology, they said they wouldn't finance us through Pronatec, which in 2011/2012 was the Federal Government's professional technical program, because Pronatec was a ready-made system that would eliminate what made us special, which was the methodology. So in order to have freedom over our curriculum they decided to finance us out the state of Pernambuco's own budget, because it would give them

more freedom and we would have autonomy over the management of the school," recalls principal Germano Barros.

The educator adds that it was during this process, over several years, that they managed to find a balance between formal and informal education. "During our trajectory, we have appropriated and reinforced the values, concepts, philosophical aspects and commitment in popular education. However, we have also incorporated the structural elements of formal education. The research, information, management tools, we found a balance. We like to say that, in a way, we gave up a little so we don't have to lose a lot," explains Germano.

Over the past several years, Brazil has experienced a significant combination of political changes and instability. It's no surprise that, in this time of crisis, threats and controversies stalk education and cause heated debates.

One of the issues at hand relates to the changes to Secondary Education presented by the federal government through Executive Measures and voted in the National Congress. Considering the high dropout rate, the Secondary Education reform sanctioned in February of 2017 includes, among many measures, curricular changes, especially a loosening of the curricular program, allowing students to choose the areas of study they want to delve into.

IFPR Jacarezinho's experiences offer important considerations for this moment in time. "We thought that we could solve the dropout problem with **IFPR's** new proposal, but it didn't really happen. Looking back, we realized that it was obvious that it wouldn't change, because it was the same teachers and the same demands. And this doesn't change. It's not enough for the students to like what they are going to study. Personally, I believe that dropping out is a consequence of High School's lack of identity. Why do students go to High School? To take entrance exams? What will the students that don't want to go to college do in High School? What will it have to offer? And this happens in trade schools too, like ours. In fact, many of them drop out because they don't want to work with what they chose to study in Technical School. And some leave because they don't want to spend four years studying, they think it's a waste of

time, they want to go to college right away," considers teacher Gustavo Villanin Serra.

The institute was invited to present the **IFPR Jacarezinho** high school model to the Senate Committee during a debate in Brasília. The goal of the talk was to discuss the possible changes to be made to the Executive Measure. "We presented our method, which offers autonomy and flexibility, and always has a lesson plan. But we made it clear that it's only possible at the Institute because, up until now, we have had the adequate structure for it. At the Institute, we have hours not just for teaching but also for training and research. Teachers need time to be able to work in the way we are organized. However, the majority of teachers in the country work an exorbitant number of hours in the classroom. We experience this working method on a daily basis and know it is working, but we know that our reality is different from other schools. We have a physical structure that supports this methodology, with labs, for example, we have teachers who dedicate themselves, etc. We know that it would be impossible to apply our methodology to the majority of public schools. The issue is that the congressmen themselves think that our structure is not a reality, but a utopia. Instead of using it as an example that can be multiplied, it is seen as a pipe dream," says principal Rodolfo Fiorucci.

In regards to the reforms sanctioned in 2017, Rodolfo remembers that it's not enough to talk about changes to the curriculum, as the new law does. There must also be changes to the career path for teachers and technicians, to the design of physical structures, and many other aspects.





THE SCHOOL, A WEB OF WEBS

We revisit this idea to talk about the importance of the school as a web, and the enormous potential that flows from it when it connects to other webs, when it deepens its relationships and influence in their territory. The school can accelerate development and change in a territory, while the territory can contribute to the construction of a more diverse and changemaking school.

These relationships demand investment, work, and can lead to conflicts. But the Changemaker Schools show us that conflict leads to innovation. They do not shy away from challenges and deal with them by encouraging dialogue and offering a participatory space.

This theme touches on countless issues: socioeconomic diversity, the inclusion of people with disabilities, interacting with people of different ethnicities, cultures, religions and genders. Everything demands projects, strategies, empathy and the safeguarding of rights. And everything leads to doubts. The school community, starting with the parents and students, are constantly raising questions.

The principal of **Colégio Viver** in São Paulo, Maria Amélia Cupertino, says that they must face their discomfort. “We refuse to exclude people. Because of this we are looked up to and serve as a reference for inclusion. We have students with ADHD, autism, dyslexia, in addition to various cases where the learning difficulty has not been diagnosed. It’s not exactly a ‘rosy’ world, but we must broaden the concept of ‘fair’ and exercise empathy. Children here will spend time with a variety of people, and sometimes they will influence their conservative parents.”

This issue is given a lot of attention at the **Desembargador Amorim Lima State School**. Today it has 30 children with disabilities - more are in the process of enrollment - and the way in which the teachers and students approach this relationship stands out. In addition to a dedicated teacher to help with each student’s specific needs, they are assisted by what’s called a “group of five.” This group is responsible for helping the student with issues like mobility, learning, socializing, as well as organizing trips around the city using public transportation.

The issue is also a concern at the **Aclimea de Oliveira Nascimento school**. Students with disabilities or learning support needs are given personal assistance, in order to ensure they receive proper materials and have access to the rights guaranteed by law, such as a personal reader, someone to help in class, etc.

“We try to have the families with us as much as possible. A lot of the time they don’t see the need for a specialist. We help make this contact and try to know what goes on with the child outside of school. This gives us guidance even for the reports we make for the specialists. We bring the family’s perspective, as well as the specialist’s, to the case study meetings. Everyone who cares for the child offers their view. The idea is to find the student’s potential, see what they are best at for the work plan. These plans are developed in teams, and the teachers know they can count on the school administration. If they have any difficulties in the classroom, we are there to support them,” explains principal Luciana Pires.

Bringing the disabled student’s family into the school’s daily life is an approach also taken at **Cieja**, but one that came very naturally, rather than being planned out. As the school started its activities, the mothers of disabled students soon noticed Cieja could be a welcoming space for their children. Even during class hours, the mothers would stay in the school until the end of the day, since they didn’t have a school bus. During this time, they would talk about their family’s daily experiences while knitting, crocheting, or even doing their nails.

Billy Silva, a teacher specialized in education for people with disabilities, took advantage of these casual encounters to learn more about his students' lives and their relationships with their families. In 2008, together with the administration, he started holding weekly meetings to discuss, with the parents and children, the possibilities of improving their service inside and outside Cieja. This is how the Therapeutic Café was born. Today, these meetings can be attended by over 100 people. The issues vary, from public policies and services to learning processes, or the difficulties faced by students in their daily lives. At each meeting, which last about two hours, the group chooses an issue for debate and gives a multimedia presentation or invites a speaker. The initiative ends up mobilizing the entire community, since the parents bring up the problems that affect their children's and, by extension, the community's lives, such as the demand for disabled people's social rights.

Other activities are held in addition to the meeting, like the Café Recital, when parents and children perform music, read essays, poetry, etc., for the other participants; and the Therapeutic Cine Café, with screenings of films that deal with inclusion. Another initiative is the "Move It Project - Special Parties - dance your troubles away," that organizes parties every two months with a variety of themes, such as "A Meeting of Generations," for both disabled and non-disabled students.



No Changemaker School exists in isolation, just as no change happens without building partnerships and networks. All 15 of these schools have organized initiatives and developed relationships with the community, the neighborhood, and the city, and this has a strong influence on social change and the development of changemaking individuals.

The experiences of the **Paulo Freire Municipal School**, even when facing huge difficulties in their surroundings, show that it is possible to establish a network that reconnects the school to the community, the health system, public services, and the families. The Ribeiro de Abreu neighborhood where the school is located is, according to principal Maria do Socorro, "Belo Horizonte's end."

"I think the biggest difference here today is the relationship with the community, in terms of participating in the organization of local initiatives, gathering public services, discussing, either at the school, the health center, or the social services center, in inviting partners in the community, residents. We have a routine of walking around the community, talking to and getting know the day care centers, the social organizations."

According to Maria do Socorro, everyone participates - coordinators, the school monitors, inclusion monitors, some of the teachers.

"One of the main issues today is religion and the intolerance among religious groups that our children see at home and in the neighborhood. Near the school is the Quilombo das Mangueiras, who we have a relationship with. We visit them and they also come to visit us to give talks. After one of these talks, one student said to me, 'I've studied in many schools, but never had the courage to say I practiced Candomblé.' An essential aspect of education is the ability to reveal your position on any issue and see the other with respect," believes the principal.

And everything starts from the perspective of seeing the other, and having affection as a fundamental pillar of their work.

The neighborhood is crossed by the Ribeirão da Onça creek, an affluent of the Rio das Velhas watershed, and the Onça sewage treatment plant was built next to it. Since the start of its operations, the school has maintained an important project with the community and the students hold actions in defense of the neighborhood's environment and in partnership

with Copasa, the local water utility. According to Maria do Socorro, this project is emblematic because it mobilizes both the school community and the neighborhood.

"We visit at least every 15 days, to see what the water is like. And the children take part in this process, because they have to feel like they belong to and are also responsible for the environment. There's no point in going after they've studied, that's not how it works. And there are also the trees we planted, the care for the garden, the yard."

The principal also reminds us that the community is very poor and vulnerable. "But I always tell people, at every meeting, every assembly, I say: you don't know how powerful this community is."

This power is also celebrated in marches, in the days for embracing the creek, and in the local Carnaval block.

Luciana Pires, principal at **Aclimea Nascimento**, also emphasizes the school's communal aspect. "Schools are too isolated from society, and it shouldn't be like that. The school is society. The school is the community; it is by the community and for the community. What is a school for if it doesn't perform this function? Democracy must be open to this. The school's relationship must be with the community."

And this culture of the closed off, isolated school is so strong that, according to Luciana, the community itself finds it strange when they are called to participate. "People say: But what am I supposed to say? What do I need to bring? We explain that it's just a talk. The students also prepare, ask questions, they say what they want to learn about before the talk. And sometimes we try to rearrange our resources - someone will pick up the volunteers, we offer a snack, a token of appreciation. We organize as much as possible to make everyone feel welcome, for the school to be more of a space for the community."

And this culture of dialogue, of building networks, can and should spread through the city and inspire other partners.

At the **Anne Frank School**, the administration is proud to say that every speaker is heard, every word is taken into consideration, every partner is considered. "Today the school has a safety network composed of a multidisciplinary group involving representatives from different entities and leaders, both official and from the community, that meet regularly to devise actions and measures to be taken in the area," explains principal Sandra Mara.

located in an upper middle class neighborhood in São Paulo and serving a wealthier demographic, **Colégio Equipe** has also found ways of organizing its work with and for the good of the city. The creation of the Instituto Equipe de Cultura e Cidadania, or the Equipe Culture and Citizenship Institute, in 2006, came as a response to demands made by the students for more concrete actions - beyond simply hearing about or seeing, they wanted to be able to take action in relation to conditions of vulnerability. Through the Instituto, the students, starting in the eighth grade, conceive, develop or take part in social projects that promote contact and understanding with people in contexts quite different from theirs.

The school monitors and supports this interaction, as the teacher Luana Almeida explains.

"In addition to teaching critical thinking, it is also up to the school to nurture their students with some form of strength and belief in humanity, so they are able and willing to fight the problems they see, so they believe that the fight and struggle are worth it. We have noticed that the students who distance themselves from this search for new ways of political, social, or artistic struggle and construction end up sadder. And those that get involved in social work, with causes and movements, seem more hardened to face the challenges of existence. How can we live without ideals, without hope in mankind?"

And stronger and happier students make for more changemaking citizens. The same goes for educators, administrators and the entire school community. And, for this, there must be a will to fight.

As Moacir Fagundes de Freitas, a third grade teacher at the **Anne Frank Municipal School** says:

"Our school is not, nor will it ever be, lukewarm; it will always be hot or cold. Obviously, I will always fight for it to be hot, dynamic, alive, pulsating, kaleidoscopic, plural, inclusive and changemaking."

CHAPTER 4 ACTIONS THAT SPILLOVER





2009 was a watershed year in the life of young Anderson Veridiano Agostinho, now 35 years old and a resident of Capão Redondo, a neighborhood in São Paulo's southern outskirts. Back then, he and a friend were developing an informal project on film, soccer and reading for the neighborhood's children. That year he met Eda Luiz, the principal at **Cieja Campo Limpo** (São Paulo), during a presentation of the project to the community, and the empathy between the two was so great that Buiu's - as Anderson is known - project took on a new direction.

"Our project was good, it had good results, but we had no methodology. We did everything out of love. When I met Ms. Eda and she invited me to attend **Cieja**, I saw that their educational process was very good. I started attending the school to learn more and be able to apply my project. I noticed many cool things happening there every day, the relationship the teachers had with the students, how they opened themselves up to the neighborhood. So we created our whole methodology based on **Cieja's**. Today, for example, we have presentations and training for educators. Everything is conducted in groups. This is the most valuable part: people can offer ideas and actually be heard," remembers Buiu.

The young man's project grew and is now a sports and culture association, called **Viela**, located in the Jardim Ibirapuera neighborhood. In addition to activities with cinema and soccer, the organization also offers English classes. But their plan is to offer training in new areas that the community might need. Today, **Cieja** and **Viela** are partners in a series of activities and initiatives that seek to promote positive change in the area.

Buiu also shares his life story with the students at **Cieja**, in addition to holding workshops there. He believes this exchange is essential. "I leave all my baggage at their disposal for when they need it. **Cieja** always cared for our needs and we want to give back. Seeing how Ms. Eda believes in young people, that it's possible to do good things, and how happy she is with what she gets done, makes us believe and want to do something, too. She fills us with hope, and we want to make a difference. We are trying to change people's lives through education," he says excitedly.

Buiu's story is unique, coming from a specific setting in a school in São Paulo, but it could easily have come from any of the states where the Program's 15 participating schools are located. This is because what these schools do every day shows that the act of educating performed by them goes much deeper, flows outwards and takes over new spaces. What

they experience, reflect, and discuss turns into real action, reverberating beyond the school walls.

“These are schools that make a difference, since they have a cultural capital earned from the communities in which they are inserted. That is, the results are not just aimed at their students, with impacts on the attendance rate, for example. Their actions spillover into the community,” explains Macé Evaristo, currently of the Minas Gerais State Department of Education, reiterating the importance of these institutions to their communities.

The educator recalls an example when, during her time as Municipal Secretary of Education for the city of Belo Horizonte, the schools in Contagem (a neighboring city) that served the same population as the Anne Frank Municipal School had to close due to threats from local organized crime gangs, but **Anne Frank** functioned normally because of the great relationship they had established with the community.

“This makes a huge difference in safeguarding the right to education in these communities. These schools don’t act only in educational policy, but also in security, in the children’s right to come and go in that territory, in the region’s environmental issues. These are schools that contribute to the exercise of many rights,” says Macaé.

And, she concludes, “in Brazil, we have a lot of statistics on the mortality rate for young people. But we never talk about the impact that certain institutions, like schools, can have in reducing this rate. What would happen to these communities if the schools weren’t there? What would the teen pregnancy, infant mortality, or illiteracy rates look like? These are quality of life indicators, that relate to the reduction of the social vulnerability of these communities, that don’t receive much attention but are certainly influenced by the school’s work. It’s also time to think of other indicators that look beyond those exclusive to education, like proficiency, the age-grade distortion, etc. and consider the other impacts that these schools have on their communities. Often times, we don’t know what they are, but the community notices. It’s a fact,” argues the Secretary.

And what makes them spillover into their territories and cities, emphasizes the secretary, are not elaborate formulas or complex methodologies. What they have, above all, is a school community with a concept of education focused on the belief that every student is a changemaker, and

that they must offer, promote, and create the conditions and experiences necessary for their integral development.

Macaé Evaristo remembers that there is an intense discussion today about “traditional versus innovative schools,” but we must transcend this dichotomy. “This shouldn’t be the debate. What we should be discussing is to what degree schools are organizing themselves and considering the right to knowledge through the centrality of the individual, including their differences, be it from their origins, gender, race, etc., and how the school dialogues with the area’s project. What stands out about the Changemaker Schools is that, to them, knowledge is a value. It’s not a sterile, decontextualized, meaningless knowledge. They want this knowledge to transform the lives of these children and their communities, their territories. We have to remember that the school should be a place for full development, because we must increasingly prepare for an uncertain world. That’s where the need to invest in the human being comes from, so they can develop the skills needed to deal with uncertainty.”

To Anna Penido, a journalist and Ashoka social entrepreneur, in order for schools to assume this role, they must have a clear idea of what kind of student they want to educate, and what kind of society they want to help build through the transformative force of these students.

“The schools must ask themselves: I am in this community, these are the types of students I have, these are the families. Who are they? What do they need to develop and interact with the world in a democratic, compassionate and egalitarian way? The school must consider its political-pedagogical project through a sincere understanding of its community, its families and its students. From this starting point, what comes later serves this purpose. What we notice today in these more transformational schools is that they are connected to a concept of change-making education: ‘I want to change this human being, so I must change myself and be a changemaker,’” she believes.

In order to do this, schools have invested in a simple but powerful element: dialogue. A dialogue between different areas, based on creating and organizing networks in their territory. After all, if the idea is to think of the human being as someone with the potential to act, and consider all of their facets, that is, their integral development, it means the family, the community and all of society must be engaged and participate.

From this perspective, as Anna Penido explains, the school must serve as a point of connection, bringing in all of these people and institutions as agents with a shared responsibility for change. That's when change happens, since the attention shifts from the territory's needs to its potential, which is then used to help new generations.

"When a school tells a family, 'You do have a role here, you have a place where you can contribute,' they not only offer a contribution, but also start to reposition themselves, even in what they consider to be their mission outside the school. The family thinks, 'If the school is in some way validating my capacity to contribute to my child's education, then I can do this.' The school is a hub of education and cultural development for the whole community. And this happens naturally and organically, because if it changes one generation's culture, it changes an entire community's culture. If it changes those 70, 100 or 1,000 students, it changes their families, and these families change their surroundings," considers Anna.

And this change is real and present in the statements of many of the parents of the students that are part of the Changemaker Schools Program. Henrique Dias, father of a fifth-year student at **Escola Vila**, in Fortaleza (Ceará), explains that the family dynamic has changed a lot, since before many things would stay only within the realm of ideas, "We would talk about environmentalism, recycling, visiting orphanages, human rights, but wouldn't actually do anything. With the school, we've started recycling, visiting orphanages, learning about the Children and Adolescent's Statute."

Valmira Ribeiro dos Santos, a teacher at the **Luiza Mahin Community School** in Salvador (Bahia), recalls an emblematic case at the school. "We started off changing the little things. We worked on issues of race and the children's tolerance, their respect for diversity, for each other. On the issue of gender, early on I heard one boy say, 'My father says that washing clothes is something only women do,' and this same boy, at the end of the project, said, 'We talked about this so much at home that today everyone helps my mom cook and wash clothes.' This is the kind of change we want. This changes children, and the children can change their home, their family."

As Eveline Cardoso, Municipal Secretary of Education in Teresópolis (Rio de Janeiro), recalls, the possibility for the students to spend their days in a school that recognizes the other, values this exchange, favors participation and listening, that teaches how to respect the limits of your own autonomy, tends to have a positive reflection inside the school, the community and the town. These aspects are indispensable to understanding the importance of cultivating empathy in education.



MEANINGFUL LEARNING

Helena Singer, a sociologist and member of the Changemaker Schools' activating community, adds that one of the main advantages of these institutions is how they are capable of showing how the school should organize itself to, first, make the students want to be there, and then for them to want to complete their studies.

"Furthermore, the time these youngsters spend there is not just for learning the rudimentary skills necessary to enter the workforce, it's also a productive time. Their learning happens through productive actions that are reflected in their territory, their community, and the society they are in. That is, those youngsters are already bringing about change," adds Helena. Statements like this show that education is not just a projection of the society we want, it is the space and time in which children and young people can develop culture, new knowledge, and ways of living and sharing. It is change in the present, in the now.

And, in fact, these schools are helping their students change their own lives. Clarisse Martins, an adult education student at **Cieja Campo Limpo** in São Paulo (São Paulo) tells, with great enthusiasm, that after she enrolled in the school in September of 2015, her life took on a new meaning. "My life has been changed by the school. I changed the way I communicate, the way I interact with others. I feel better. And I discovered this, the Clarice that existed inside of me, through education. I didn't know who I was. At **Cieja**, I felt capable of developing the things that, until then, due to various issues in my life, I still had not had the chance of developing. I am very happy that I found this new phase in my life, and I feel like I have the capacity to improve even more, learn even more. I have a lot willpower, the courage to stay and study. I don't intend to stop. And this is happening because of the way the school works with us: with affection, with respect, without any prejudice towards our age. It draws us in, shows us our own potential. I am very happy to have come here. In reality, it's **Cieja** that came into my life."

At the **Alan Pinho Tabosa State Trade School**, in Pentecoste (Ceará), the results can influence even the student's subsequent education. That's because approximately 60% of the students that concluded High School there go on to attend university - while the state of Ceará's public schools have an average rate of 35% to 40% of students going into higher education. If we consider the national context, the school's impact is even more significant. Enrollment in higher education is Goal 12 of the National Education Plan, and by 2024 it aims to "raise the gross rate of higher education enrollment to 50% and the net rate to 33% of the population between 18 and 24 years old."

In São Paulo, Ana Elisa Siqueira, principal at **Desembargador Amorim Lima State High School**, explains that, despite facing daily challenges, the results prove their project's efficacy. A good indicator is their students's enrollment in federal universities and respected technical schools, as well as the number of prizes they have won at Mathematics, Physics and Portuguese Language Olympiads.

As Helena Singer explains, this happens because the learning process, even for curricular content, starts through the student's own reality. "A child will learn Portuguese or Mathematics if you pay attention to where they are living, who they live with, the conditions in which they live, the relationships they create. Everything is integrated. And it's because schools are not having a dialogue with all of this that students are not learning, as the country's indicators today show," she claims.

In some cases, such as with Luana Almeida, a Portuguese teacher at **Colégio Equipe** (São Paulo), the meaningful learning experience she had as a student at Colégio Equipe is reflected in her own work as an educator today. "When I was a student, there was great joy in being at school, and can I still feel that at Equipe. A good friend of mine associates school with prison, she sees it as a place of oppression, of rigidity, where there is no room for individuality or uniqueness, a place of fear and authoritarianism. This has to do with the school experience she had. I don't see it that way. I think something about my school experience made me believe in the school as a place for pluralism, of great fascination and love for knowledge, of friendship and collectivity," she adds.

THE CAPACITY FOR ACTION

“When a school is a changemaker, these children will become agents of change, and this attitude of wanting to change their school, their surroundings, of feeling like co-participants, like active agents in change, it is contagious and can change an entire culture.” Anna Penido’s statement sums up the concrete evidence that can be found in these schools: their student’s capacity for action.

And there are endless examples. At **Escola Vila**, in Fortaleza (Ceará), besides organizing petitions, debates are regularly held between parents and students and mayoral and gubernatorial candidates. One of them was even submitted to the United Nations, in defense of indigenous people, and another to the President, in defense of the Amazon and in favor of Disarmament.

Fernando Leão, principal at **Escola Vila Verde** in Alto Paraíso de Goiás (Goiás), explains how, at his school, during the final years of primary education a teacher must always ask ‘what for’ are they learning, that is, the whole project must result in benefits for all of society. And it has worked so far. In one of the projects, students noticed the high rate of forest fires in Chapada dos Veadeiros. From there, they made a video about how people can act to prevent forest fires., and a local television station liked it and aired it for free.

Another example is a pamphlet created by one of students about how to prevent diseases



caused by parasites. The local family health initiative used it as didactic material with the city’s family health agents.

This capacity to act that the schools awaken in many children and teenagers is a reflection of these institution’s own work in their territories over the years. At **Luiza Mahin**, for example, one of the highlights are the visits organized by the school. With the sponsorship project Visão Mundial, the school regularly visits the home of 5 thousand children and teenagers in the community, talking about issues such as public health, the environment, and others.

“You notice how the students that leave this school, generally speaking, prove to be highly inquisitive and strong leaders. It’s not a coincidence that it’s normal to find former students working with local movements and networks in defense of the community, and always in a leadership role,” emphasizes Sônia Dias Ribeiro, the school’s pedagogic coordinator.

The same can be seen in Belo Horizonte (Minas Gerais), where the local community has always worked with the **Anne Frank Municipal School** to organize improvements for the area. “Here I learned that there is power in union and that all of us, essentially together, can get a lot more done,” explains Maria das Graças Silva Ferreira, a community leader and student at the school’s Adult Education program.

At **Escola Amigos do Verde** in Porto Alegre (Rio Grande do Sul), their actions can have an impact even on the construction going on around the school. According to a project drafted by the mayor’s office, a number of trees in the area were going to be cut down. The school community intervened, hoping to find an alternative solution, defending that they be replanted at another location. For this, they organized public hearings at the school, involving the school community, public authorities and the media. “When the state government approved the extinction of the Porto Alegre Zoobotanical Foundation, the students took the city bus and participated in political protests,” explains Márcia da Silva Viegas, mother of the student Violeta Viegas Flach.

The idea of concerning yourself with and promoting improvements in your school, neighborhood, or even city brings with it, in many places, the student’s desire and ethical commitment to return and offer the same opportunity to others. At the **Alan Pinho Tabosa school**, this culture brought many young people back to the arid badlands - in contrast to

what normally happens in rural areas, where it is common to see adults migrating to urban centers in search of better professional opportunities and quality of life.

According to the principal Elton Luz, “In the 1980s, the youngsters would leave the countryside to fill up Fortaleza’s outskirts in search of precarious jobs. Today, they have broadened their perspective and can see new opportunities.” The sense of belonging, of being part of a group that can offer an important contribution to public education and the community, is a lot stronger.

“Social change is important because it brings people together in a movement for the common good. I can only change society on a collective level. One thing we emphasize here is, ‘If you are good at what you do, you should go back to your hometown and help change it.’ We should never forget our roots. What I learn here, I use here to change the environment I am in. We try to create projects that can change and improve people’s lives,” explains the student Jordânia de Souza.

And it was this feeling, coming from all the support he received during his education, that made Romeu Conceição Pinto, 22 years old and a former student at **Escola Rural Dendê da Serra**, in Serra Grande (Bahia), decide to return to the school and offer capoeira and percussion workshops to the students, and he now works as a school monitor.

“I used to think **Dendê** was great when I was a kid. It was a lot of fun. But, back then, I didn’t have the awareness I have today. Now I see how the school looked at me, looked at us, the care they have for the children. Honestly, this turn in my life has been very good. Today I can be a partner to the kids with what I learned while I was here. It’s what I enjoy most in life. I think the children chose me. I’m living through a very important moment,” he emphasizes.

EXPANDING THEIR REACH

What is needed, then, for these changemaking educational experiences to take over new spaces and promote change in other corners of the country?

One path that seems promising is to infect those who, as it happens, experience education up close every day: the teachers. This is the bet the Municipal Department of Education in the city of Teresópolis, in the state of Rio de Janeiro, has made. The city has started to transition the teachers from the **Aclimea school** so they can take over functions in other schools or in the department itself, in order to share their experience with others. In the opinion of Secretary Eveline Cardoso, **Aclimea** has become a great environment for training the teachers.

“There they have to deal with a more demanding setting, especially since the school is full-time. In addition to the conventional aspect, which is the methodology for projects, there are also workshops that take place after classes, and the teachers get involved. In other words, they have to change their practices. Through this process, we hope to spread this vision to other schools in the system. Our biggest concern is that the school doesn’t become an island, that this doesn’t end up restricted only to this space, to this group of teachers and social group. We want this force to spread throughout the city,” explains Eveline.

In other municipalities, the “function” of training teachers has been taken over by the schools on their own initiative, as is the case with **Amigos do Verde** (Rio Grande do Sul) and **Escola Vila** (Ceará). For example, for the past five years, Silvia Lignon Carneiro, principal and founder of Amigos do Verde, has conducted a training project with the city’s public schools, where she shares her experience with other educators and school managers.

In the view of one of the teachers from the Porto Alegre Municipal Department of Education that participated in the training with Amigos do Verde over the past few years, ‘without self-awareness, a connection with the planet and being in sync with nature, it’s impossible to do environmental education, because you’re not just talking about producing less garbage and reusing it, but consuming less so you don’t generate it, being conscious of what you buy and use. It means having a different kind of relationship with everyone. It means understanding that educa-

tion happens not just through didactic techniques, but also much more through the relationship and respect between teacher and student. It means being aware of what I am, being conscious of my acts, in relationship to everything and especially to the school, in my planning.'

Meanwhile, **Escola Vila** decided to open the VILA Transdisciplinary College. According to the principal, Fátima Limaverde, the aim of this project is to educate teachers who share the idea of offering the student "a deeper individual care, recognizing the other as legitimate in their potential and difficulties, to be able to see each student in the way they need to be seen."

"The work becomes different, and much harder too. First, because the person must free themselves from the traditional paradigms that exist in most schools in our society. Then, they must reconsider their professional stance, since only through questioning their own actions can they understand how to change them. To do this, they must look beyond the class subjects, they must be aware of the world around them, and only then can they help the students develop the awareness that we are responsible for the world and everything that happens in it," say Sergio Neo, a teacher at Escola da Vila (Ceará).

In the case of **Escola Rural Dendê da Serra**, the idea was to establish a partnership with the Universidade Estadual Santa Cruz's (EUSC) Playing and Learning in Childhood Education Extension Project. For the second consecutive year, the two schools have organized a Teacher Training Course on the Waldorf Pedagogy Perspective. The course's objective is to sensitize the participants to the importance of considering the integral human being when elaborating a school's educational practices. During the training, they also share methodologies that deal with Think, Feel, Act, focusing on Childhood Education and the first three years of Primary Education.

To Helena Singer, these experiences show that, considering its potential, turning Changemaker Schools into training centers for teachers should be a public policy priority. During initial training, municipal or state departments of education could establish partnerships with pedagogy universities or graduation courses in the region, in order for students to conduct their internships in these schools. When it comes to continuing education, these schools could serve as sites for professional internships, so



the teachers could gain experience. “This close contact is essential for the teachers to understand what it’s like to educate in a new way. It’s hard to break from the classroom structure, from subjects, from the 50-minute classes, if you don’t know or have never seen any other practices,” explains Helena.

The sociologist’s recommendation is worth following. When educators gain this experience, the changes are palpable, according to the schools. After all, once you have changed the concept of education, you can no longer keep doing what you used to do.

To these educators, these changes only truly happen because the schools allow the educator to have the freedom to invent, be it with a project, a different class, or by “exploring their full creative capacity,” in the words of David José de Andrade Silva, a teacher at the Jacarezinho campus of the **Instituto Federal do Paraná (IFPR)**.

“When you have freedom to do this, it’s like heaven to an educator. Because you’re following your wishes while working for education, using creativity, freedom, respect. There’s a proximity and a concern for the opinion of others while, in other schools, people normally keep a certain distance. They say: ‘Don’t get involved, it’s not your business.’ Actually, you have to get involved because it is your business, it’s part of your life. To not get involved, to me, is the same as not living,” explains Sueli Paula de Oliveira, a teacher at Cieja Campo Limpo (São Paulo).

CHANGING PUBLIC POLICY

In order to promote significant changes in the system and make sure the investment on a changemaking education for students, communities and territories goes beyond the school grounds, it is necessary to influence public policies. It is through public policies that these experiences have the opportunity to scale up and influence more and more schools.

Macaé Evaristo recalls that many of today’s legislative victories in education are the result of movements by schools that decided to take

risks, organize, and saw that a different kind of education was possible. “It was by analyzing various experiences, such as the ones I followed in Belo Horizonte, that the Programa Escola Plural (Plural Schools Program) was developed, and many of its elements were incorporated into the Guidelines and Bases Law (Lei de Diretrizes e Bases - LDB). Even the **Paulo Freire Municipal School** was born out of the context of Escola Plural and, today, is developing new programs now. It has enthusiastically joined the Integrated School Program,” Macaé explains.

To the Minas Gerais State Secretary of Education, changemaker schools have a defining feature: they not only incorporate the best aspects of current public policies, implementing new projects without giving up their ideals, but they also create initiatives that serve as references and influence the development of new educational policies.

And this has happened in many places around the country, not just Belo Horizonte. In São Paulo, **Cieja Campo Limpo’s** way of working had an impact on the city’s public policies. With their “open school” proposal, the mayor’s office instituted a decree lifting the previous limit on schools’ operating hours to the working hours of the city’s department of education. Every achievement, recalls principal Eda Luiz, happened gradually and after a lot of persistence.

The **Serviço de Tecnologia Alternativa (Alternative Technology Service - SERTA)**, located in Ibimirim and Glória do Goitá, in the state of Pernambuco, also focuses on influencing public policies, both in education and in youth and rural development. “From the start of our project, we always asked ourselves how these actions could turn into public policies. Because we understood that we were doing a public service in a public institution, with private resources, since for a long time SERTA was financed by private companies and international organizations. So, we already believed that we were developing references for public policies,” explains Germano de Barros Ferreira, president of SERTA.

And this is what has in fact happened. The school’s work has influenced many youth, technical assistance and education policies. Today, the state of Pernambuco has 28 schools that make up the state’s professional education policy. **SERTA’s** technical school is one of these 28, the only one financed by public funds, but managed by **SERTA** itself. “What we are saying now is that these policies need to belong to the State, not the government. Because the positive results of these policies for professional education have already been proven. Our experience has been recognized by the state government, the federal government, and many other sys-

tems. Now, our challenge is to make this experience a permanent policy for the State. And, in order to do this, we have held a series of talks with the state government, the federal government, with members of Congress, with municipal governments, in order to get our experiment out of the unsustainable situation it is in today,” explains Germano.

What many schools are already doing is spreading their influence through new networks, like the one organized by **Colégio Viver** in Cotia (São Paulo). The school staff are part of RNPI (Rede Nacional Primeira Infância – National Early Childhood Network), AERO (Alternative Education Resource Organization) and Rede Nacional de Educação Democrática – National Democratic Education Network. The school also participates in the organization of CONANE (Conferência Nacional de Alternativas para uma Nova Educação – National Conference on Alternatives for a New Education). In the past year, they have taken part in the Debate on Higher Learning. Although the school does not teach up to this level, the principal believes their participation is important. “One of our former students led the occupation movement in the public schools. Our goal is to educate people who will participate. Since we exercise this in the classroom, our students start to see themselves as someone with a voice and who can and is able to participate,” says Maria Amélia Cupertino, Colégio Viver’s principal.

Meanwhile, **SERTA** has joined the Rede de Fortalecimento Institucional (Institutional Strengthening Network), whose goal is to promote, on a national level, joint defense and cooperative actions for Brazilian rural youth. It also participates in Rede Layc (Latin America and Caribbean Network for Food Safety and Sustainable Development) and CAIS (Centros de Aprendizaje e Intercambio de Saberes en América Latina), two initiatives by Latin American groups focusing on food safety and strengthening family agriculture.

To Helena Singer, public authorities have a lot to learn from these schools’ experiences, such as how to strengthen social technologies and suggest innovations for public policies. At the first opportunity, the government could, in the sociologist’s opinion, help the schools systematize their practices. “They invent so many things: how do you develop curricula through the reality of the students and the territory? What methodologies do they use to always take the students’ interest into consideration? How do you develop an evaluation that follows how the student is learning and gives feedback to the family and the students? There are so many tools they develop. But, where are they? It is crucial that this gets systematized and disseminated,” she recommends.

On an educational policy level, one suggestion would be to see these schools as a space to think, reflect and implement new indicators that can in fact measure the quality of education, going beyond the Ideb (Basic Education Development Index), which is restricted to passing grades and the average scores on standardized tests applied by Inep (Anísio Teixeira National Institute for Educational Studies and Research), such as Portuguese and Mathematics exams.

This is because, as Macaé Evaristo explains, the bet these schools are making is that, in order to appropriate more of Mathematics and Portuguese, they must guarantee their students more movement around the territory and the city, broaden their worldview, and offer access to new forms of knowledge, such as music, arts, philosophy, etc. In addition to this, teamwork, fostering empathy in relationships, the use of creativity as a tool for problem solving, and changemaking are essential requirements for the education of children and youngsters.

And influencing public policies, as Anna Penido warns, should not necessarily come with the intent of standardizing or universalizing practices. Rather, it should be so these practices do not remain in isolation, but instead inspire and bring change through to the opportunity to scale up, and that other schools can recognize and take ownership of what they believe is relevant and connected to their own educational goals.



A CALL TO SOCIETY

We began this book by emphasizing that the discussion and debate around education is never simple, since we are dealing with a complex, overarching issue that is experienced constantly. However, we have also seen, throughout this publication, how much can be done from the perspective of an education that considers everyone a potential changemaker.

And this must necessarily include a shared responsibility. It is impossible to promote significant changes for the society we want for the 21st Century without education - no one argues about this -, but it is also impossible to promote this change if education continues to be a subject of interest only to educators.

In the opinion of the many experts we spoke to in this book, our society at large must claim this agenda as its own, and take part not only in the challenge of finding solutions, but also in building a real, concrete, and meaningful plan for Brazilian education. "The Changemaker Schools' ideas show that, if the country invested the time and resources needed to scale them up, we could have an impact now, and not just when these students graduate," believes Helena Singer.

In order for this to happen, engagement must be broad and diverse. Media influencers, for example, are essential in spreading this debate, presenting the vision of a changemaking education to new spaces and audiences, encouraging, creating and promoting opportunities to connect a diversity of initiatives.

By taking on this cause as someone who truly believes in changing education, which goes beyond simply treating education as a talking point, the communicator gives new shape to the proposal, becoming a great influencer in favor of this changemaking idea.

Giving visibility to these schools is another relevant aspect. "This serves a double function. On one hand, it widens these schools' area of influence. You can have a school in the countryside of the state of Paraíba that is wracking their brains because their children won't learn. Then they see the practices of **Cieja Campo Limpo**, for example, and start to sit the children in a circle, and it works. It's that simple. When a school's staff

are searching for new ways of working, it helps a lot if they have access to a variety of references. So, publicizing these experiences is very important. Furthermore, to the schools themselves, internally, it gives them the strength to respond to the system. It's important for these schools to have political capital," explains the sociologist.

In Anna Penido's opinion, another movement necessary to bring the issue of education into new spaces is to show the impacts of changemaking education in helping solve the world's biggest problems.



“Everyone always says, ‘We can’t solve this without education.’ But we need to radicalize this discourse a little bit. We must connect with contemporary movements that are working for a more inclusive and solidary world and say, ‘If we don’t adopt this kind of education, we won’t solve the environmental issue you want to solve.’ And this needs to happen even among those who discuss economic development. We need to say, ‘If we don’t deal with these issues, this youngster will not have leadership, they will not be able to solve problems, they will not work in a team, things that are essential to the workforce.’ We have to create a discourse of empathy, create these connections. There’s nothing wrong in telling a businessman that a certain type of education will improve their workforce. It helps them understand that, in order to educate a human being, they must develop integrally. They can’t just receive technical training. This is a change in the concept of education. And the more this movement converges, the sharper its message will be,” concludes the journalist.

Finally, Macaé Evaristo believes that, in order to promote the idea that education should be for everyone, we must further the concept of the school as a public space and, therefore, as a center for generating shared experiences and social participation.

And this participation can start at home, take over the streets, and even spread through new technologies. The model or form is irrelevant, what matters is everyone’s right to a changemaking education. Each person, from their reality, their knowledge and skills, can find a way of contributing towards what these students most want: “My dream is that every school can be like **Viver, Dendê** and other Changemakers. Everything starts with education. This way, we can start to think more about those around us,” says Bruno Proença, a student at **Colégio Viver**.

So, after the intense debated presented in the pages of this publication, we invite you, our reader, to help change the conversation about education. Who has the courage and audacity to take charge of this change?



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EVERYONE A CHANGEMAKER

Shifting the conversation

about education

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(All photos were taken in São Paulo, in May of 2017,
at the schools: Cieja Campo Limpo, Colégio Equipe,
Colégio Viver and EMEF Amorim Lima)

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SPECIAL THANKS

To Instituto Jama for their support for this publication.

To all those who participated or are still participating in the Changemaker Schools Program Brazil, from its beginning until now.

To Alana's Education and Childhood Culture and Ashoka's teams.

Changemaker Schools would like to thank all educators, public administrators, parents and students, Ashoka social entrepreneurs, and many other professionals who took part in this publication for their collaboration, inspiration, reflection, and shared stories.

Abdalaziz de Moura, Adriana Viana Souza, Adrielle de Jesus Lima, Ana Elisa Siqueira, Ana Lúcia Villela, Anamaria Schindler, Anderson Verdiano Agostinho, Andrea Cristina Ferreira de Almeida, Andreza Tangerino Mineto, Anna Maria Pereira de Castro, Anna Penido, Belisa Barga, Bill Drayton, Billy Silva, Bruno Proença, Carolina Hikari Ivahashi, Carolina Pasquali, Cauê Damaceno, Clarisse Martins, Claudia Maria Canto Macario Emerick, Cristina Chu, Davi Scheid, David José de Andrade Silva, Diego Elias Santana Duarte, Eda Luiz, Ednaldo Firmiano, Égila Passos, Elis Cassettari, Elton Luz, Érika Pisaneschi, Eveline Cardoso, Fabiola Francisca da Silva, Fátima Limaverde, Fernando Leão, Flávio Bassi, Francisco Miguel da Silva, Gabriella Monnerat, Geovana de Carvalho, Germano de Barros Ferreira, Gisele Lima Gomes, Glender Leonardo da Silva Santos, Graça Marillo Totaro, Gustavo Villani Serra, Helena Singer, Henrique de Castro, Iraci Helena do Nascimento, Ivone e Marcos Cartum, Jardel de Santana Silva, Jordânia de Souza, José Pedro Rebello, Karoline da Silva Oliveira, Kauame Ribeiro Guimarães, Laura Leal, Laura Toledo, Luana Almeida, Lúcia Helena Araujo Batista, Luciana Fevorini, Luciana Pires, Luiza Esteves, Macaé Evaristo, Manoel Andrade Neto, Marcia Cristina Tayt-Sohn Ferioli, Márcia da Silva Viegas, Marcos Nisti, Margarida Paulino de Cerqueira Pinto, Maria Amélia Marcondes Cupertino, Maria Clara Sampaio Pereira, Maria das Graças Silva Ferreira, Maria do Socorro Lages Figueiredo, Maria Helena Masquetti, Marina Cartum, Mary Gordon, Moacir Fagundes de Freitas, Morena Limaverde, Myrian Vallone, Natacha Costa, Raianny Helena Fiúza França, Rayne Figini, Rodolfo Fiorucci, Romeu Conceição Pinto, Rosane de Magalhães Lopes Corgosinho, Sandra Mara de Oliveira Vicente, Sergio Neo, Sérgio Soares, Severina Eliane do Nascimento, Silmara Alves dos Santos, Silvia Lignon Carneiro, Sílvia Reichmann, Sônia Dias Ribeiro, Sueli Paula de Oliveira, Taís Regina de Mello, Valmira Ribeiro dos Santos, Vilmara Nunes, Vivia Ferreira Teixeira e Wellington Nogueira.

Dados Internacionais de Catalogação na Publicação (CIP)
(Câmara Brasileira do Livro, SP, Brasil)

Everyone a changemaker [livro eletrônico] :
shifting the conversation about education /
[concept Ana Claudia Arruda Leite, Antonio
Lovato, Flavio Bassi e Raquel Franzim ;
organization Antonio Lovato e Raquel Franzim ;
English translation Paulo Padilha]. -- São Paulo :
Instituto Alana : Ashoka Brasil, 2017.
PDF

Título original: O ser e o agir transformador:
para mudar a conversa sobre educação
ISBN 978-85-99848-11-1 (Instituto Alana)

1. Ação social 2. Comunidade e escola
3. Educação - Brasil 4. Pedagogia 5. Política
educacional 6. Programa Escolas Transformadoras
I. Leite, Ana Claudia Arruda. II. Lovato, Antonio.
III. Bassi, Flavio. IV. Franzim, Raquel.

17-10452

CDD-370.115

Índices para catálogo sistemático:

1. Escolas transformadas e transformadoras :
Educação 370.115



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