

Ideas for a Broader Experiment on Non Formal Educational Practices, Diversity and Human Development

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Abstract

Economical inequalities, institutional awkwardness (cultural underdevelopment) and social exclusion as a consequence in one side of our society problems, and fast rate of environmental, ecological, biodiversity degradation and destruction on the other, are at the root of historical social injustice, income inequalities and structural poverty, in Brazil, for centuries. Emancipation in this text should be understood as a set of non-formal educational practices to try a breaking process to better fundamental education to a highway of dignity and human development (The Cacao Garden of Education) as potent tools, to reduce material poverty and selfish individual behavior; and improve societal modes of culture. It is important to invest in public policies and social actions to design and experiment non-traditional, non-conventional and non-formal educational practices because they can play very important roles in state-run schools in opening new doors and windows to enlighten human development. Children and youth should be able to challenge themselves in abstract, critical and creative thinking to find broad modes of transformation in the construction of more sustainable societies. Part, if not all, of talented and non-talented children and youth living inside fragments of local marginalized communities should have opportunities to search for ways to overcome unequal present global and local societies that can only see profits as its paragon of goals and efforts. It is necessary to search for and act over the real main causes of cultural awkwardness rather than to wait for a free market solution. It is time to add feasible and possible non-formal educational practices, with quality in experience and framed in consistent didactic methods starting in kindergarten to junior high school in different unconventional, creative educational programs at lower costs than building prisons, hiring thousands of policemen, judges, attorneys, administrative costs, besides the losses of human families in growing crime rates; they should be a priority for government public and private policies. That, we believe, would reduce the financial and human suffering burden to society that otherwise could be invested in human spiritual and material development through quality of non-formal educational experience and arts.

Keywords: non-formal education; human development; local sustainability; community and local environment.

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1. Introduction

Several problems may be object of a broad philosophical reflection in different current scenarios ranging from institutional to cultural. Simply put, high income inequalities (for example in Brazil 70 % of the population earn until a maximum of one thousand dollars a month); lack of, or distorted ethical values, selfish attitudes, human behavior and conduct; growing urban violence; low attention, little concentration and cognitive development in many children and teenagers in state run educational classrooms, fragile public school structures, misunderstandings in strategic planning and managerial methods; unhealthy nutritional habits; environmental, ecological, deforestation disequilibrium and low peripheral production diversification in agricultural systems for smallholders and poor families. This paper intends to motivate discussions on new possibilities to improve non-formal educational practices (The Cacao Project) to search for some alternative experiments, social actions and projects to improve multidimensional community educational action and local ethical and cultural development. The basic idea is to share and integrate such action into pluralistic non-formal educational methodologies and activities on social cohesion and in cooperative, participatory, transformative and, hopefully creative education to be developed at local rural and urban public schools in periphery marginalized communities. In so doing we hope to empower communities in a direction to multiply initiatives that might help to contribute to abstract thinking and to alter part of social, economical and environmental scenarios everywhere. In order to do so, we have to face complexity, relativism and obscurity in many uncontrolled and unknown variables and settings.

Talented and non-talented poor children and young teenagers, we shall call *children and youth* here, with different family structures need much more attention, respect and care from our societies since they did not choose the social environment where they were born. Ethical principles, basic educational guidance, freedom, discipline and cultural cognitive contents as well as aspects of ontology and school curricula are not to be taught. These children and youth need to be able to question, to search for knowledge by themselves as we challenge them to look for and produce elements of realities to the construction of group autonomy and responsibility. Our efforts are to focus in a direction of multiculturalism, diversity and real human development for an *ethical and*

productive life. Non-formal educational experiments inside state run schools and local communities are to complement traditional curricula and *fight ignorance, violence, reduce almost chronic poverty and growing homicide rate* among young people (aged 15-24), unfortunately still observed in the last decades in Brazil (BRAZIL SUS DATA, Map of Violence, 2011). All these factors reflect some of the problems we mentioned in the beginning of this paper. While we can find the rate of less than one/two homicides for groups of one hundred thousand people in many countries (WORLD BANK, 2012), in Brazil there are from twenty to more than sixty killings per one hundred thousand inhabitants all over the country, among young people; in slums those statistics are extraordinarily higher to say the least (Brazil SUS Data/Ministry of Health and Map of Violence, 2011). Part of talented and non-talented children and youth living inside these fragments of reality are to become potential people in conflict with the law. It is still necessary to search for and act over the real main causes of cultural awkwardness rather than to wait for a free market solution on a long historical process of human development. If we can add feasible and possible consistent non-formal educational practices and didactic methods starting in kindergarten to junior high school in different unconventional, creative educational programs at lower costs than building prisons, hiring thousands of policemen, judges, attorneys, administrative costs, besides the losses of human families, they should be a priority for government public and private policies. That, we believe, would reduce the financial and human suffering burden to society that otherwise could be invested in human development.

2. Theoretical Framework (Methodological References)

I need to drink symbols from philosophy as I need to drink water to clean-up my heart to breathe freedom. If poetry and painting should be applied to discuss aesthetics of judgement in education then science and conventional economics, alone, could not deal with as a method to develop new horizons of abstract, critical and creative thinking in underdeveloped communities and schools. Their environments because of its very nature request from method much more than rational thinking. Children and youth need new non-formal educational practices at school to counterbalance their cognitive spirit-brain-mind realities. Integrating philosophy of experience, values, silence, arts, poetry, painting, vegetable gardens, sculptures, the act of planting native trees, crafts, and the conventional teaching of subjects may be the material for building together a garden of education. Students are to be challenged to face Arnold Berleant's "cooptation of sensibility" in ecological biodiversity degradation. Nutritional habits may be better fixed in spirit-brain-minds when qualities of vegetables are understood from seeds of hope under the soil. Nitrogen, phosphorous and other substances and components in tropical soils are mixed with more than one million forms of life in one gram of soil. Soil ecology as other subjects can be better understood by children and youth in a multidimensional garden of education. Post-normal science as originally presented by Silvio Funtowicz and Jerome Ravetz attempts to find a methodology where facts are uncertain, values in dispute, stakes high and decisions urgent. In this approach post-normal science suggest that there must be an "extended peer community" consisting of all those affected by an issue who are prepared to enter into dialogue on it. These parties bring their realities including local knowledge and social structures. (Funtowicz and Ravetz, 1991). Mainly we are looking for pluralism here as various approaches might be useful to theory and action.

From an idea of Pythagoras calming down a drunk adolescent simply by making the youth listen to a certain melody; showing through dialogues that plays, gardening, paintings, sports, silence in different landscapes, concentration while walking in a forest, discussing forms of objects, life experiences, agricultural production; developing alternative approaches to social reality in Brazil

and in the local community, writing poetry to describe environmental local and global problems; reasoning on contradictions in the beauty characteristics of local rivers and comparing to local human violence against biodiversity; discussing taste and choices in arts; other interdisciplinary work where theory and practice come together; all can contribute to establish theoretical pillars for non-formal educational practices and human development and awareness to a construction of different worlds and sustainability adapted and shaped to realities where we can find children and youth at social and environmental risk; where domestic violence, chronic unemployment, structural poverty, crime leaves no alternative to children and youth, only challenges to find a way to break ignorance and cultural awkwardness. In this case educational systems and activities must be built in interacting and understanding reality as the same process. May be start asking children and youth the definition of arts. Could it be as a dynamic work on developing abstract, creative, critical thinking about what you do not see and at the same time grasping fragments of observed real phenomena experienced in reality?

All we can have is really an understanding of fragments of our social, economical, ecological, institutional reality. Kant brought the idea of the act of judgment as going from theory into practice. Cassirer had defined abstract thinking as a way to imagine things, objects, processes, may be phenomena we cannot see; but we can imagine in our spirit-brain-minds. We can imagine a horse with four heads, a world with less poverty and wars, and that someone could write somewhere it could be better be done through arts. I define arts more than taste as the sum of abstract thinking process with observations of real life pictures of reality. So the artist gets both in his/her symbolic representations of life. If it would be also correct to bring the conception of ideas of ideas in practical experience, rather the perception in Spinoza as method to Cacao we could find a way to testing and experimenting non-formal educational activities. But it seems to me after the Fordham Conference there is a lot more to be learned in Dewey, in Marx and in ecological economics institutionalist views, to work in education not only to interpret reality but to look for transformative actions of (better to say *in*) reality. Or even a pluralistic opened methodological scenario should be looked for as the participant's keynotes and panels were not only valuable as Green's remarks, but paragons of methodology to me. The only way to express my ideas may be should be done through poetry, although I do not have the courage neither the silence of their eyes now after the Conference where besides all nice people talking I had this opportunity to breath freedom in my present dreams of hope in changing reality itself.

In many regions of the world there is also concern for the education of the poor people and young people (TANTON, 2010). It is also pointed (with deep awareness of the problem) by our American neighbors besides Brazilian social reality that:

poverty is a visible and growing problem, even within the ultrawealthy United States of America. However, instead of making just, caring, and ultimately cost-saving national investments in education and creative experiments in economic development that might provide interlinked opportunities for economic, political, and social participation for residents of our poor, racially marginalized, and increasingly violent urban ghettos, we build prisons (GREEN, 1999, p. 171).

Deep radical democracy and transformative interventions are inserted in Green's whole approach as some kind of one fundamental pillar to a

collaborative undertaking of many people in diverse locations and across generations, within which no one has enough time, energy, and gifts to contribute focally to all parts at once,

although the best work in each area is done with an awareness of ongoing work in the other areas (idem, p. 218).

Philosophical questioning and pragmatic approaches must be done pluralistic to struggle against

the risk of becoming another percentage point in discouraging research on the growing contingent of young and underemployed people from public-resourced schools, located in poor neighborhoods ('Half of african-American young are born in poverty', Jesse Jackson, the New York Times, 31/12/96; 71% of 28,000 blacks of Oakland are in special education classes, the overall average is 1.8 on a system whose maximum score is 4, Courtland Milloy, Washington Post, 12/22/96)(BHABHA, 2011, p. 64).

To face global and local realities a real transformation process can only occur on macro and micro levels when individuals are better prepared and educated, and more conscious of their responsibilities to *correct ethical values and to transform individual beliefs when studying, working, or participating in public and private organizations strategic planning and operation*. In this effort a multidimensional construction of a set of non-formal educational methodologies and practices in a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary way are to contribute to the integration of elements that might interfere in people behavior, conducts and social attitudes. The reinforcement of this practical, non-traditional educational structure involves elements of the meaning of life as a social process itself in people participating in intercultural, local, global diversity, as Benincá says

"the human being is carrying capabilities, such as consciousness, which develop in relation to social contexts (...). People, through experience, build sense of things (...) is always a relationship of consciousness to another, ie, with the world (...) constructed in relation to the cultural everyday (...) built through the process of reflection. "(in DALBOSCO, CASAGRANDE and MUHL, 2008, p. 183/184/186).

Education and life go together in Dewey's reconstruction of philosophy (my emphasis) and means organized ability in action (p. 80) where

"The true 'stuff' of experience is recognized to be adaptive courses of action, habits, active functions, connections of doing and undergoing; sensori-motor co-ordinations. Experience carries principles of connection and organization within itself" (p. 91).

The reproduction of human existence historically and ontologically follows the dynamics of cultural developments through collective work in motion where material production property, power and wealth are concentrated in the hands of economical groups of the minority of the population; although this social and economical process involve cultural cumulative knowledge (TOMASELLO, 2003), which requires an interpretation of substantial life itself, both globally and locally. Nowadays, with the global environmental challenge, we cannot move away from an integration of global and local perspectives and actions. Theory and consistent actions are to be pursued to build more ideal, sustainable, pluralistic societies, autonomy and respect in diversity and multiculturalism for the management, global and environmental governance, development of suitable technology and stable human generations (JONAS, 2011).

The conceptual approach herein proposed on non-formal educational practices has a root on ethical values, intergenerational ethical conflict and environmental education where it is possible to discuss actions, alternatives and procedures with the participation of children and the youth on discipline-moralist-practice-changing environmentally inappropriate behavior ('environmental

training'); naive-immobilist - 'contemplation of nature'; activist-sighted-transmission of technical and scientific knowledge about the environment; or in a pluralist, critical-transformative-political process of reflexive appropriation of knowledge, attitudes, values and behaviors that are aimed at building a sustainable society in the social and environmental multidimensional real picture of present social global and local reality (Loureiro, 2005; Saviani, 2005). Environmental problems have been pointed out on a larger scale from 1968 (Report of the Club of Rome); 1972 (the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment); 1977 (Conference Tbilizi); ECO-1992 (Rio de Janeiro) and nowadays climatic panels of discussion on global warming. In the analysis of various thematic subjects Goergen (2010) can be mentioned bringing ways of interpretation of environmental education where,

"environmental education in local/global correlation; environmental education and curriculum; environmental education and culture; (...) Environmental education and economic pragmatism "(...)critical multiculturalism and interface with the philosophy of education". Goergen also discusses a series of transdisciplinary approaches that emphasizes equity, social justice, solidarity, and "the dialogue as the fundamental condition of praxis" (p. 14).

These citations intend to connect and emphasize the need to link polysemous words or different directions to education they might represent to our objectives in Cacao, but much more face global warming and other local and global consequences of mankind intervention in economic production large scale consumption of natural resources. Many authors define non-formal education as a set of practical education for autonomy, a political attitude towards diversity, knowledge, popular mobilization, social movements, negotiations, dialogues and confrontations and are sources of innovation and knowledge-generating interactive and collective actions as resistance to social exclusion processes and struggle for social inclusion and for different worlds (LAFRAYA, 2006; BELLE, 1982; YOUNG, 2011). Non-formal educational practices of Cacao not only have a deep relation to ethical values as connected and linked to environmental problems but mostly to broaden educational productive activities themselves inside the community of poor children and youth letting them choose ways and be responsible for their own choices in not only doing things but continuing doing things. For example it is relatively easy to buy a small farm but difficult to keep working on it facing hurdles, natural obstacles and markets controlled by other powerful political and economical organizations. Cacao may contribute to the development of group cohesion, team work, initiative, individual responsibility, prudence, courage, equilibrium, serenity, when working with tools and different people; and more respect for others. These observations can lead us to a great task or a choice to try to answer five crucial questions as brought by so many philosophers like Green (1999), where the first one is as consistent as the other four in,

"(1) how to shape educational experiences as key tools and aspects of the ongoing growth of individuals, cultures, and societies...(5) how to effectively coordinate and sustain our transformative efforts over the extended time it will take to institutionalize the kinds of progressive changes that will make the deeply democratic community real in our experience" (p. 55).

As a matter of fact Dewey had proposed that,

"Society, as was said, is many associations not a single organization. Society means association; coming together in joint intercourse and action for the better realization of any form of experience which is augmented and confirmed by being shared" (p. 205)... "Society is the

process of associating in such ways that experiences, ideas, emotions, values are transmitted and *made common*" (p. 207, my emphasis).

This is a time to better prepare children and youth to challenge problems of a new world in the next decades although not totally out of Spinoza rational thinking as our objectives must not only be decided listening to our emotion and "hearts". This can be connected to Dewey experimental organization and educational concepts and modes inside vivid life realities. Although a crucial choice designing education and its objectives they must be moved by much less the confrontation between science and arts but much more on the multidimensional assimilation of them. Cacaio follows Anísio Teixeira, Paulo Freire and Darci Ribeiro, probably our greatest educators dreamers and doers of all in Brazil; and also on Dewey's almost perfect idea that:

"Poetry, art, religion are precious things...We are weak today in ideal matters because intelligence is divorced from aspiration...When philosophy shall have co-operated with the course of events and made clear and coherent the meaning of the daily detail, *science and emotion will interpenetrate, practice and imagination will embrace. Poetry and religious feeling will be the unforced flowers of life*" (p. 212/213; my emphasis).

This is a time to interpret a chaotic world and understand levels of environmental degradation and global warming but it is a time mainly to reduce the levels of weird individual conducts and cognitive individual complexities so the former can be achieved practically in a new ethics of development (GOULET, 1999). This is a time to feel new possibilities in ethics of development and make new choices to different non-formal educational experiences for the construction of real peace between neighbors, to repeat words of respect for diversity, multiculturalism and natural wealth we must ethically guarantee for our grandchildren and the future generations development as freedom (SEN, 1999). This is a time to let different educational ideas be tested and multiplied to give more state run schools and poor communities a chance of an alternative multidimensional integrated and probably a more creative education to talented and non-talented children and youth comprehend they can change themselves to substantial life in dignity instead of possible years in cold prison, obscurity or as another number in a chronic economic disease called unemployment. Whatever ideas we can come up to we must do this together as a method not a methodology and working with children and youth there must be a just measure of enthusiasm as a first example.

Like Mother Teresa in Asia, so many people in Europe, China and Russia, and so many other countries and nationalities, Luther King in America, many other people here in Brazil also have dreams that our brothers not only in skin color but in spirit-brain-minds, the grandgrandchildren of our former black slaves from Africa, today living in marginal peripheries of Gurupi, Curimatã, Bom Jesus do Galho, Bom Jardim, Sertões do Quixeramobim, Tijuca, in the amazon region, in the slums of Rio de Janeiro, one day will be able to develop themselves by themselves. That is if one day men of arts and philosophy have the courage and wisdom to get together and give them a hand. May be we should interact more, listen more, share more objectives and differences of opinions in mutual respect to reduce wars and conflicts. We still do not really know if non-formal educational practices on ethical values can contribute to the kind of human development adults need today and will need tomorrow to global governance.

"a new kind of attention, practical rather than contemplative, has been drawn to Spinoza by Arne Naess "14. Interacting with things and understanding things cannot be separated" (in Deleuze, 1988, p. ii).

Should we then ask children and youth critically why can't we be contemplative? Although we learn by doing it does not seem correct to avoid abstraction at all and philosophy has to be opened to all possibilities and choices inside and outside reality. In this line of thought cultural-cognitive and didactic-pedagogic practices models though should not follow the logics of pure traditional Cartesian curricula. Deeper reflection is needed in philosophy of education even separating the previous idea of interaction inside reality phenomenon comprehension because approaches must be plural and broader in nature. There are so many research activities, findings and contributions that are lonely processes of abstract thinking where individuals dedicate themselves in silence and attention inside laboratories.

"If knowing were habitually conceived of as active and operative, after the analogy of experiment guided by hypothesis, or of invention guided by imagination of some possibility, it is not too much to say that the first effect would be to emancipate philosophy from all the epistemological puzzles which now perplex it" (Dewey, p.123).

Questions can be asked to children and youth in the very first day of Cacao activities. (1) How exactly can the Cacao experience in state run schools and in poor communities amplify abstract and creative thinking not only to interpret the world but to contribute to change it? (2) What are exactly the non-formal educational practices in Cacao and how are they structured inside communities and state run schools? (3) Can Cacao really be useful and be improved to challenge children, young teenagers, governments, global institutions and local communities face the present world problems and global warming?

"Locke, argued that what is needed is not just extension, revision, or inclusion of new curricular elements, but transformation of methods of thinking and teaching" (GREEN, p. 127).

For sure many philosophers from different parts of the world shall be able to improve Cacao and other similar projects to turn into reality our dreams and abstract thinkings.

3. Non-Formal Educational Practices – The Cacao Project Basic Structure, Methodologies and Activities

Inserted in this population of poor periphery there are many children, young people and adults with cognitive complexities, family structures with basic material difficulties, and some of them walking or "flying" to a condition of marginalization and conflict with the law. Professor Denis Goulet kindly sent me his book and some articles he published on development ethics. His experiences in education for justice and development ethics did bring me symbols, words of stimulation and basic ideas to Cacao structure; those of his ideas have crystallized in my spirit-brain-mind a focus on education and human development as many other ethical values to be developed than just searching for material objects, money and private profits.

"En sus últimos años, Freud mantenía un opinión de que El auténtico desarrollo humano se expresa em lós individuos y em las sociedades por su capacidad de vivir y de trabajar creativamente...Muchos han assumido falsamente que lãs necesidades más significativas de los seres humanos so sus necesidades materiales...El desarrollo tal como hoy se está llevando a cabo em el mundo, puede haber conducido aL desarrollo econômico, a la mejora del nivel de vida de algunos e incluso a uma reducción beneficiosa Del fatalismo y de La explotación feudal

em lós asuntos humanos. Pero estos beneficios no han llegado a las massas de lós pobres Del mundo para la ascensión plena Del conjunto de La humanidad". (Goulet, 1999, p. 186).

A project of non-formal educational practices to promote and disseminate ethical values, racial integration, environmental education and the assembling of organic gardens and multiple non-formal educational nucleus of human development was carried out in some public schools in its origin within the state run schools and municipal structures with a view to mobilizing some of those schools and communities, located in the periphery of different Brazilian regions in the last few decades with the participation of the author both as in professional and as in volunteer work. In recent years state run schools and communities have been visited by the author and have also accepted some different non-formal educational activities that were developed with little, discontinued support of local mayors in Petrópolis - R.J., the local Court of Justice and some public organizations in the southeast region of Brazil. Here we present and describe some of the educational practices and activities utilized and inserted in Cacaoio suggestions we have gathered from children and youth, in many different opportunities in building methodologies from group experimentation. This a time to organize different educational activities that might be always,

“enriched by decentering the teacher and even the classroom to bring active student-centered, community-based service learning into the educational process” (GREEN, p. 129).

Less as a teacher and more as a privileged participator the author could ask mostly questions to let children and youth develop solutions or find by themselves answers as in life reality processes. Due to size limitations we shall summarize the Cacaoio Project or the Cacaoio Way or The Cacaoio Garden of Education (CGE) in some nucleus of human development that simultaneously group fifteen or twenty children and youth who can participate on the various possibilities of educational methodology reconstruction in a plot of land, at least, two hundred and fifty square meters size, simultaneously and in an integrated way within ninety minutes previously defined activity for each and democratically evaluated practice between participants.

Basic Organization – the use of geometry of a polygon drawn on the ground and out of the classroom in the (CGE) becomes the very first meeting discussion on looking for new ways to go beyond cognition and abstract, creative thinking. At each vertex of the polygon flows a specific symbolic and abstract educational action that is conceived and detailed by the group of participants together. In the center of the polygon symbolizes the collective work a phrase that can be always changed for originality group personality - "cultivating our differences." As the level of problems and priorities agreed with the principals, teachers, students and young people from schools and communities are chosen, specific activities are organized in the first phase of work and then other possibilities are designed and structured as follows:

1. Circles of ethical values where rapid and sequential ethical words and concepts are presented orally by each one and the polysemous meanings discussed in group work in a position of a round circle people standing up; preparation and interpretation of written texts on ethical values previous discussion follows to link them to local political, social, economical and environmental issues; each student should produce at least one quality essay every week on different themes while also getting inspiration in the observation of paintings in the Internet (Goya, Monet, John Constable and others) or pictures of fragments of global and local realities with some help from a graduate local student. Own creative work in arts should be done independently of Internet consultations afterwards. Many

fourteen year old boys and girls could not write even one paragraph with three comprehensive sentences in the first meetings.

2. Design and construction of organic vegetable, herb and flower gardens. Planting at least thirty fruit trees, each one by four (CY) and (CYY) together around the garden for consumption. Organization and shared watering and fertilization responsibility for other needs. Discussions on unhealthy food, chemicals, poisonous products and human nutritional values, natural vitamin and minerals sources. Discussions on soil structure, preservation, math dimensions about larger farming, food production, fertilizer production, conservation of water resources and geographical spaces. Discussions on possibilities in how to market and sell products with the help of graduate students in biology and business administration.
3. Design and construction of a small arboretum a kind of a botanical garden with native trees close to the vegetable garden when possible. Planning planting native trees in local public and private areas to restore destroyed soils along rivers and mountainous regions. Production of herbs and flowers in plastic painted vases using plastic soft drink bottles to be sold in the near market.
4. Carpentry and mechanical work with wood, small motors and electronic equipment. Development of manual work and possible classes in designing with the help from some graduate local student.
5. Solar energy devices with the help of some local engineer graduate student for cheaper hot water for the local kitchen and bath room. Roof designing possibilities done with vegetables and flowers in tropical countries.
6. Planned the production of iron sculptures about symbolic human life production processes of present contexts with bits and pieces of local junkyards engines.
7. Walking around the (CGE) garden silently as an exercise to abstract, creative thinking (SBM) development and rest. As many times silence can be better than one thousand words to find new ideas, objectives or adapt the original ones structured in the beginning and as discussed in the Annex.
8. Cacaoio plays, poems, texts for pedagogical theater and environmental education campaigns involving issues of municipal reality.
9. Meetings with other children and youth from other public schools and universities to organize the celebration of June 5th (the environment day).
10. Organization of brainstorming and seminars in communities to discuss practical community action in life issues and environmental local problems.

Cacaoio Project has been presented here as an experiment still under construction in locations with chronic unemployment, widespread poverty, families with basic needs unmet and living many times on different levels of domestic violence observed in several regions in Brazil (Sapienza, 2005; Scivoletto, 2009, among others) and are so much influenced by a number of external stimuli in the culture of the television violent scenes, films, where predominant attitude toward passivity contradicts with very dynamic sound and image effects, although they inhibit the mobilization of real human development and interests towards education, ethical values and creative thinking, in the dedication of more time for arts, research, local productive actions and local and global culture analysis. It is not strange that conflicts in poor families show children and young teenagers been labeled by their own relatives as "he/she is good for nothing", "he/she is very ignorant," "no one can stand him/her", "leaves everything after", "what will you be when you grow up", "that thing was born to be a nobody ". Some public and private organizations understand that the poor need just jobs in garbage companies, civil construction, restaurants, cleaning floors and bathrooms and

alike, though these are all most dignifying works, poor (CY) and (CYY) should also have opportunities to enforce math, study philosophy, literature, history, physics, other areas and listen to different classical songs and practice arts in general (personal observations in Rondônia and Tocantins, 1977-1997, and in Petrópolis between 1997-2015; CALVENTE, *The Cacao Book*, unfinished; MARCHESI, 2006).

Objectives and methodologies of Cacaoio were also influenced by a multidimensional experiment planned and designed by the author (and with other people), the local Court of Justice, ten public schools, their principals, some teachers and local leaders where the author functioned as a privileged observer as executive director, inside Educandário Princess Isabel Foundation of the Court of Justice, Childhood and Youth, of the District of Petrópolis (Educandário) from the year of 2003 to 2007. It was possible to structure and to put into practice different non-formal educational practices in a volunteer work inside the Educandário, in more local schools and develop daily educational work with more than two hundred children and youth, all of them chosen by the local Judge and the Principals of schools of Serra da Estrela in Petrópolis. The same typology of methodologies, pedagogical-didactic and educational practices also applied in the past years in some other public schools in Brazil was possible to be improved inside the Educandário, to gradually open and consolidate afterwards a fruitful dialogue with children and teenagers, some in conflict with the law and school principals and teachers, and thus stimulate abstract thinking and the production of small essays to amplify their abilities to interpret some questions on ethical values, environmental education, urban organic agriculture and human nutrition. This experience showed that any flourishing discussion depends on learning first how to listen to others and assimilate the idea of another (SBM) in a state of attention, concentration and silence. Observations by the author inside more than twenty public schools in Petrópolis in the last seventeen years, every week, show a chaotic picture where unfortunately we lose more than 36% (thirty-six percent) of the time with parallel discussions, uninteresting conversations, mediocre, useless to the human development, inattention, unwelcome jokes and confusion where it is not easy to create a proper atmosphere for education and creative thinking; nor a team spirit for initiative, determination, learning, meta-cognitive developments and critical knowledge, but in Cacaoio experience, at least somewhat interesting possibilities appeared and it seems that if more comprehensive and possible research controlled observation can be continued it will be a choice on evaluation *of, not in*, method, theory and non-formal educational practices (my emphasis).

4. Conclusions

The school is a fertile field for human development. Family structures are soils to grow ethical values and new seeds of hope. When we cannot find any of them to plant, future is in check. Root structures and watering are the most important aspects of first days growing of the plants in vegetable gardens. With limited financial resources we can structure non-formal educational practices, strengthen concepts, complement curricula and expand exercises for productive abstract thinking on local realities. Our work was conducted in several state run schools and we could always share experiences with principals, teachers, and students in great enthusiasm and mutual respect. The more open doors were those of the periphery, where we feel free and at ease, as opposed to the classical idea that there are problematic students. Children and youth are only souls of flowers that could not yet blossom from obscurity created by heavy traditional conventional economic and social systems, still not prepared to understand that may be four or five decades from now we might need to develop (SBM), human feelings, social cohesion and marginal

communities, much more than normal economics, private productivity and private profits so far. Public education today in Brazil depends of transformative management systems, more consistent policies, much better salaries for school teachers, smaller classes in marginal areas and family support. But if many of the ideal conditions are not found in social, government and individual realities we have to build them some time. What comes first, the egg or the chicken? Not to be discussed here but rather decide on the egg, and start experiments on new democratic, pedagogic and didactics.

Children and teenagers are our very treasures because they are the pillars for societies tomorrow. Cartesian and rational thinking, scientific methods, theoretical discussions and controlled laboratory experiments are social and historical constructions people in philosophy of education can mix with a bit of arts and literature to develop creativity, human brains or better speaking complexes of human spirit-brains-minds. Many children and youth less for their nature and more because of their life experiences in poverty and confused environments must feel concentrated and happy while learning. Like in different life experiences, plants or animals stressed by local environments tend to low productivity. But in this situation we have environmental degradation and financial losses. Children and teenagers when not having good education the losses are for a lifetime. The Cacao Garden of Education is one more possibility and choice from our inner intuition and “rational” and organized thinking that may help in a concrete form the development of abilities, abstract and creative thinking, to find more practical actions to face global warming, environmental local problems, as well as bringing to our public schools a complement to reinforce traditional curricula in math, geography, sciences, biology, language, literature, text and essay production, arts, but also to connect, make them interdependent on studying and changing for the good local and global realities.

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