

A B S T R A C T S

Recall Fundamental Education

GABRIELA VÁZQUEZ OLIVERA

The reforms undertaken in most Latin American countries since the last decades of the previous century upheld individualism, personal merit, and the imposition of market laws in all spheres of social life, including education. These transformations have currently been expressed, among others, in the deepening of inequality and social exclusion. Given this, it is necessary to recall those conceptions and practices that emerged at crucial moments in the history of our countries that articulated the educational task with well-being and social justice, with reconstruction and development, with the inclusion of marginalized groups and communities, with democracy and the construction of citizenship. Number 52 of *Decisio* is a remembrance of Fundamental Education that contributes to rethinking the role that education should play today and puts on the table vital ideas about aims and nature of the educational task as a whole.

**Fundamental Education:
background and relevance
of education for community
development**

CARLOS ACEVEDO RODRÍGUEZ

In 1945, 51 countries founded the United Nations to promote peace, the peaceful resolution of conflicts between nations and respect for the autonomy of peoples. UNESCO, one of the UN specialized agencies, established the need for a “comprehensive” education that went beyond literacy and promoted peace and progress. Hence the concept of Fundamental Education, whose guiding principles were established between 1947 and 1949. To implement the Fundamental Education in practice, the creation of six centres in five regions was proposed. However, only two was found: one in Pátzcuaro, Mexico and the other in Egypt. Towards the end of the sixties, in Latin America, the idea of “development” was changed to “economic growth”, so the original approach to fundamental education was reduced to a supplementary and minimal one, oriented towards work. Currently, the failure of the neoliberal model in social terms forces us to rethink the principles of fundamental education and also its relevance.

**The Rural Mexican School
as the antecedent
of Fundamental Education**

LETICIA VARGAS SALGUERO

With 35 years of difference, in the first half of the 20th century two very similar educational projects coincided in Mexico: the Mexican Teacher Training College —Escuela Rural Mexicana— (1919) and the Fundamental Education (1951). The Mexican Teacher Training College was characterized by the creation of rural schools, cultural missions, education committees, regional indigenous boarding schools, the local peasant school and, finally, rural teacher training colleges. In both projects, education was a fundamental element of reconstruction and inclusion of marginalized populations; colleges were open to adults, men and women; and there should be places where the residents came to receive not only education but also guidance for solving their problems. The two proposals argued that the work, collaboration and participation of the entire population was the best way to raise the living conditions of the community.

**What do we call the School
of Pátzcuaro?**

JORGE RIVAS DÍAZ

The article asserts that the Educational Center project CREFAL that was formed in Pátzcuaro in the early fifties of the last century constitutes a school of educational thought aimed at renewing the theory of rural education of the time. The ideas developed around this Center broadened towards an approach of Fundamental Education, a new form of public education that emerged within UNESCO, to later become a theory of education for community development.

UNESCO project also consisted of intervening with this new education in Purhepecha communities on the shore of Lake Pátzcuaro as a genuine social laboratory. And to form key cadres that would extend this new Latin American perspective of public education in their respective countries. The teachers, and teacher-students who built CREFAL, had a cultural and spiritual connection that today we can recognize in the legacy of books and theses that this centre preserves.

**“CREFAL as an example”:
Lourenço Filho’s contribution
to Fundamental Education
in Brazil (1947-1951)**

RONY REI DO NASCIMENTO SILVA

This text addresses Lourenço Filho’s two trips to Mexico that were part of an intense exchange of ideas in which, the Inter-American Cultural Council and UNESCO participated notably. In 1947, Filho came to Mexico as a commissioned professional to visit rural schools and cultural missions, and to observe the application of Fundamental Education and study the methods, techniques, and architecture of the teaching sites; he was also to write reports and send the materials and objects pertinent to rural education in Brazil. The article supports the circulation of the concept of Fundamental Education in Brazil, at a time when Mexico was positioned as a successful reference in rural education for all of Latin America. It is proposed that there was a “Brazilian-style” implementation of the Mexican rural education model, which considered the material conditions, political interests and cultural characteristics of Brazil.

**Fundamental education:
a pioneering concept**

JENS BOEL

The original vision of UNESCO was broad, global, and aimed at changing living conditions through education in such essential areas as health education, domestic and professional skills, and knowledge and understanding of the human environment, including economic and social organization, laws, and government. However, over time this broad definition of Fundamental Education led to conflicts and tensions at the UN. One of the problematic aspects was the impact measurement of the model; another was financing diverse experiences of fundamental education. UNESCO’s work in fundamental education was a decisive element in convincing United Nations that education is a fundamental human right and an essential tool for development, which is expressed in the weight it has in the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations.

Traducción: Lilian Alemany Rojas