**In search of a new paradigm of cooperation and sustainability**

For an aesthetic based on culture and education for transformation

*Imagine a bird in flight. Rivers, forests, mountains, volcanoes, lakes and seas make up a continent built on its rich and diverse nature. In the midst of this immense territory, villages, roads, cities and houses, this bird glimpses paths of a humanity that integrates the traditional and the contemporary, which has profound roots in ancient cultures and a blend that deciphers the world with creativity and emotion, that integrates itself with nature to preserve the self and the other. Let’s hope that our flight with this bird may seed powerful points of alert meeting, art and transformation of this continent-organism, rather than borders.*

**We embrace the Arts of Transformation**

In the first Assembly of Culture and Education for Transformation (CET) held at the end of the World Social Forum (WSF) 2009 in Belém, the Brazilian Network of Arteducators (ABRA), proposed to organize the first World Forum of Culture and Education for Transformation (WFCET). This initiative was embraced as an integral step in the 2010 WSF process towards a Pan-Amazon Social Forum 2010 (Brazil), a World Education Forum in 2010 (Palestine) and the continuing development of a dialogical and inclusive WSF 2011 (Senegal).

The WSF 2009 generated a *Term of Reference for Culture* which significantly related culture to communication. It highlighted the right to information and freedom of expression, and the need to affirm free media as an alternative to market-driven media and as a key dimension in the search for a new paradigm of sustainability.

During the meeting of the Amazonian Network of Points of Culture held in November 2009, a proposal emerged to establish a regional Working Group for Culture and Education for Transformation based on a dialogue between members of the 1st Assembly of CET (in the WSF 2009) for the Points of Culture in the Amazon. Approved, this proposal was placed on the agenda of the meeting of the National Network of Points of Culture, to create a national Working Group of CET, integrated into the work of the National Commission for Points of Culture.  
  
Held in Belém, 17-25 July 2010, as the integrative dimension of the World Congress of **IDEA 2010**: *Live Living Diversity! Embracing the Arts of Transformation,* the first thematic World Forum of Culture and Education for Transformation (FMCET) congregated art-educators, teachers, educators, students, producers, popular educators, Points of Culture and social and cultural movements from Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Uruguay, Peru, Argentina, Bolivia, Guatemala and several countries from the continents of Asia, Oceania, Europe and Africa.

The 2010 WFCET pervaded all the activities of IDEA 2010. It set out to converge ideas and proposals in the area of art education, from the six world roundtables, twelve Special Interest Groups, the international festival of theatre, eleven cultural traditions from the Brazilian Amazon, from the World Feast of Arts of Transformation, from the ‘Kids IDEA’ and ‘Young IDEA’ programmes, and from the final ‘Dialogic Mosaic', to connect them to public actions of education and culture, the processes of social mobilization, and to political education.

ABRA chose the Amazon as the geopolitical and socio-cultural context of IDEA 2010 so that its participants might witness the crisis of civilization and the cultural and environmental disaster that the current competitive paradigm of exploitation is causing. Cultural transformation – the change of habits and lifestyles – is presented as an urgent need to preserve the life of the planet. The Amazon affirms the intrinsic connection between the preservation of biodiversity, and the recognition and appreciation of cultural diversity.

During the 2010 WFCET, representatives of the Points of Culture stimulated debates about the relationship between culture, education and the creative and transformative political potential of social networks, particularly through programs of public policy like ‘Living Culture’ that connect and empower the various actors in the process of collaborative initiatives to redefine the relationship between State and Civil Society.

This charter is the first of several IDEA 2010 publications. Its preparation was collective and aims to record the discussion, questions and recommendations which occurred during the 1st WFCET, and to contribute to mobilizing concrete actions of continental organization around transformative culture and education within the Points of Culture.

IN SEARCH OF AN AESTHETIC OF SUSTAINABLE TRANSFORMATION

We affirm that culture is not economically determined, nor by class struggle, but is the fertile soil where human identity and language, memory and self-esteem, world-view and imagination, geography and genetics, utopias and methodologies meet in their diverse manifestations and without borders. It is the fear and laughter caused by the shift in paradigms, the pain and the pleasure of the practice of daring to make and risk the new, collectively, which creates cultural bridges between ethics, aesthetics and an economy of solidarity.

The inclusion of artistic languages in school and in popular and community education cultivate multiple intelligences, completeness, sensitivity and complexity of being. They create the favourable conditions to educate and cultivate peace in participatory democracy, based on freedom of expression, respect for differences and community celebration. They allow the creation of an educational environment of care, trust and dialogue to cultivate the human rights of children, adolescents and adults to play, talk, experiment and develop, beginning from creative-reflexive expression, while simultaneously developing the cognitive, communicative, corporeal, aesthetic and spiritual dimensions of humanity. There already exists a mature paradigm of education that nurtures and encourages reflexive practice of solidarity, belonging, cooperation and love.

Dialogic communication also cultivates sustainable aesthetic transformation. We can travel at the speed of light, sitting in front of a computer and change our feelings by creating a virtual reality, apparently truer than our sensory organs. But the risks of the seductive logic of efficient techno-science manifest themselves in self-destructive isolation and the compulsive consumption of a homogenized culture, which have contributed to our present unsustainability. The sustainable use of technology in learning, in creative-reflexive expression and in human relationships is the basis of nurturing shared solidarity-based practices, according to the balance between effectiveness and affection, and the valuing of the 'feminine principle' which affirms subjectivity and inclusiveness in search of a new planetary sustainability.

The World Social Forum has sought to transform a politics of resistance into a new political culture of transformation, to create another possible world. However, despite its commitment to an experimental process to create a participatory, open and convergent space, in practice, the WSF is still living an aesthetic of ideological declaration, rather than becoming an aesthetic of dialogic collaboration.

Both the policy of ‘Living Culture’ and the WSF process challenge us to rethink development and politics in terms of education and culture. They challenge us to free the formative and transformative potential of the human languages of music, image, gesture, voice and dance from the marginalizing prejudice of 'Art'. Without them, it will be impossible to create the new methods, territories, behaviours and social relationships based on listening, dialogue, care and intercultural sensitivity. It will be impossible to create a new aesthetics of sustainable transformation that links ethics and economics.

FOR A POLITICAL AND SUSTAINABLE LIVING CULTURE

The ‘Living Culture’ program and its main action, Points of Culture, are part of a national politics in recent Brazilian history that represents a poetic blend of acupuncture and socio-economic political action through social networks. The innovative and creative character of the program is to identify, recognize and strengthen existing educational and artistic-cultural initiatives and community projects,

‘Living Culture’ is implemented from the bottom up, based on needs and actions of civil society organizations that become Points of Culture. Inter-sectoral projects, supported by ‘Living Culture’, integrate culture to other areas such as education, communication, citizenship, digital culture, health, oral history, security, political articulation, social mobilization, children, youth, masters of traditional knowledge, among others. This initiative also goes beyond national borders and Points of Culture are today a proposal for global inspiration [inspiring another possible world?].

The national law ‘Living Culture’ and the draft law for the Latin American Parliament (Parlatino) that proposes the implementation of Points of Culture as a policy for Latin America represent the range and extent of institutionalization of this innovative process of cultural policy. Just as important that these legal frameworks spread and gain density in Brazil, the integration of this initiative is significant within the process of approval and consolidation of the National System of Culture and the range of a minimum level of 1% of the federal public budget for Culture (of 1.5% in the states and 2% in the cities).

In proposing a new relationship between the State and civil society, ‘Living Culture’ wants to contribute to extend the public reach of community actions, inviting cultural organizations to transform a politics of control into a culture of confidence. The shared gestation of ‘Living Culture’ exceeds the dimensions of public state administration and reveals the need to encourage collaborative practices within the organizations, communities and networks of civil society.

‘Living Culture’ identifies challenges to the development of a new political culture, in which participation, citizenship and sustainability are values practiced in a democratic and self-determined form. To avoid past vices, and controlling practices, it is necessary to link ‘living culture’ to the practice of self-management, to the aesthetic transformation of collective production, to the reform of the State and to the practice of solidarity and collaboration of artistic creation.

We identify the cultivation of a new educational paradigm of cooperation and sustainability is a step that needs to be made jointly and at a continental level, by the organizations, movements and networks involved in the arts, culture and education for transformation, sensitizing those who are still practising and living an aesthetic of unsustainability and dependence.

We affirm that without a sustained and appropriate education of the members of the Points of Culture in Brazil and other countries, the search for a culture of dialogue, cooperation and solidarity, capable of generating sustainable communities, will be difficult and even undermined by the individualistic and competitive culture.

Therefore, we emphasize the need to establish a dialogic, broad, democratic and transparent national Working Group on Culture and Education for Transformation, at the heart of the ‘Living Culture’ programme, with the intention of crossing the borders between art-education, pedagogy and aesthetics.

CONTINENTAL BRIDGES OF INTER AND TRANSCULTURALITY

We want to see a living culture that drives the practice of values of cooperation and solidarity, free codes, access to knowledge, to the various languages of art and to public spaces. We want to see the autonomous cultural expressions of the Americas (as the subject of their own determination), assumed as co-creator of its own creative practice. The political sustainability of these initiatives is related to their articulation in social networks and therefore we believe to the establishment of a continental ‘living culture’ in its peculiarities and differences.

We identify that cultural and educational practice are intertwined in the web of ‘living culture’, in the web that weaves and organizes social and economic life. The challenge of creating a political-pedagogical practice that corresponds to the social transformation that we desire is inseparable from the intimate and social praxis of the arts and of transformative cultures. The intangible expression of culture deeply marks us and is manifested in our everyday gestures. Learning should occur through all our senses and cultivate our corresponding intelligences.   
The reintegration of culture and education will enable intercultural and transcultural literacy to mediate and move beyond the differences between generations, knowledges, communities and peoples and create and nourish the basis for sustainable cooperation. Living culture as social consciousness is integrated within popular education. Thus, there is a capacity to create processes through which one becomes aware of the contradictions of reality and opportunities of its transformation.

We affirm that the work of Points of Culture is starting to show the intrinsic connection between technical and political knowledges, scientific and traditional knowledges, avoiding disruptions and dichotomies between wisdom and practice. The practice of sustainable transformation that retroactively feeds culture and education in the Points of Culture is linked to the school and community. If today Points of Culture go to schools, it is increasingly time for schools to integrate themselves into Points of Culture or, better still, turn themselves into Points of Culture and open themselves to their initiatives and methodologies, to root human education in its popular culture and to renew its communities.

The ‘living culture’ of Points of Culture needs to contribute so that schools once again become the main cultural space within the community. We must acknowledge that cultural space is socially constructed, responding to the specific needs of each community, and that cultural experience should be a result of absolutely free social experience, and not institutionalized. This will stimulate the very sustainability of Points of Culture, and guarantee their social roots in local culture. Schools could provide the structure for Points of Culture, to develop their actions and educational methodologies connected to artistic and pedagogical practices.

Furthermore, we must ensure that the teaching of artistic expression occurs transversally across the curriculum in schools. But our dream is to go beyond this: to understand that the arts – our human languages, deepen analytical 'scientific' knowledge, reinvent and connect it to sensory knowledges and brings learning closer to reality, making the student subject of his/her own knowledge and of the culture of which he/she is co-creator.

Although Brazil is considered today to be the locomotive of economic growth in Latin America, we want its national policy on Culture to be recognized as a driving force of a new paradigm of social transformation. Few recognize the risk we face of Brazil developing hegemonic relations of imposed and controlling policies on its neighbouring countries. We therefore affirm that Brazil has to reverse this logic, working proactively to cultivate new cooperative and Latin American socioeconomic relations as a contribution to a paradigm of popular, participatory and inclusive democracy.

Brazil’s responsibility with the rest of Latin America is also connected to the co-responsibility of the world with the Amazon, now that transnational routes of people, goods and services increasingly transcend the geographic division of nations. Northern consumption directly impacts on the environment of the South which is revealing alternative models of development, in action, and revealing challenges to be worked through collaboratively.

We support and promote the enjoyment of manifestations of ‘living culture’ of the American continent, because we all make living culture! To this end we propose the creation of ‘Points of Culture Without Borders’ that promote a culture of peace and stimulate artistic-pedagogic coexistence between different cultures. The concern and care for the multiple expressions that make up the encounter of peoples, cultures, knowledges and themes will help to boost the practice of a ‘Continental Living Culture’.

‘Points of Culture Without Borders’ are points that unite us, spaces that go beyond thematic and geographical division, where our cultures come together and recognize themselves through their differences and similarities. Points without borders build bridges of intercultural expression, reflexive meeting, collective experience and creation from a geographical area, from a field of knowledge, from artistic expressions, from the educational world, among other possible connections.

Today it is possible to visualise the creation of ‘Points of Culture Without Borders’ in Leticia, Corumbá and Foz de Iguaçu, to work for the meeting of peoples, knowledges and cultures through the recognition of equality in difference. We also visualize the creation of ‘Points of Culture Without Borders’ between countries, cities and regions that do not share geographical borders, but histories, cultures, expressions, identities and pedagogical and artistic projects, performing cross-cultural bridges to experiment with a new praxis of collaboration and cultural expression.

We believe that the creation of ‘Points of Culture Without Borders’ integrates conceptual and methodological proposals for Culture and Education for Transformation to provide for the common aesthetic construction between different Points of Culture. The development of a shared narrative occurs through the support of collaborative media and the hybridity of cultures that enchants, permeates, spreads and transforms. ‘Points of Culture Without Borders’ work with culture and education for transformation by connecting different artistic expressions, different territories, the urban and the rural dimensions, the traditional and the modern, oral history and digital recording.

The prospect of building bridges of culture proposes to connect several processes of social mobilization and political articulation, bringing together reflections and proposals in search of a new aesthetic of sustainable transformation and a creative and cooperative praxis. The World Social Forum 2011 will be held in Dakar, Senegal, strengthening cultural ties and African cultural origins. The Pan Amazonian Forum, as part of this process, will take place in Santarém, Pará, Brazil, and reinforce the understanding that culture is linked to communication and popular education, as well as connect the continental dimension of the Amazon, involving nine countries and diverse cultures in its territorial space.

Integrated into this process, the ‘Platform Puente’ (Bridge Platform) to be launched in Medellin in October 2010 is based on the Latin-American utopias and common horizon and the desire of a region for more self-determination and cooperation between voices and citizen expressions. It will be a meeting place of networks to deepen the experiences of shared organization and networking. Platform Puente welcomes representatives from different sectors to participate in a dialogue that expresses and builds a new paradigm of relationship between the public, community and state, valuing diverse experiences, inter-sectorial partnerships and enhancing unity in diversity.

PATHWAYS TO A NEW PARADIGM OF COOPERATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

We affirm seven priorities that emerged during the 1st World Forum of Culture and Education for Transformation, to be transformed into a work plan for ‘formation’ for two years:

**1. Artistic languages as languages of sustainable social transformation**

Care to redefine and democratize the arts as languages of all learning and the collaborative production of knowledges founded in the principles of cooperation and sustainability. Collective elaboration of a practice that cultivates dialogical and ethical perspectives of solidarity, guided by decolonization and inspired by the nurturing of multiple intelligences and enchanting creation of sustainable human communities.

**2. Intimate-dialogic aesthetics**

Care continuously about the scale and architecture of projects, to invent or recover intimate and circular formats for the exchanges of knowledge, with democratic meetings between languages and cultures and the participatory creation of community-based projects in the tissue inter-trans-culturality.  
  
**3. The arts of intercultural and transcultural mediation**

Care continuously to build dialogic bridges between the current paradigm of competition and the emerging paradigm of cooperation, between social classes, generations, genders, races, beings, their roots and antennas. Guarantee artistic and cultural expression that reveals the visceral memory and motivates the experimental imagination, connecting historical and future communities, making viable the unknown.

**4. Collective sustainable production**

Care for transformative praxis based on creative work in cultural production as a collective creation based on dialogue: culture understood as the work of creation and sustainable transformation which builds the paradigm of cooperation. It is the cultural work which keeps the identity of a people, its sovereignty and its history.

**5. Youth leadership**

Care for the ‘formation’ of youth as a creative expression of/and a new paradigm of education based on the artistic languages, technology development and collaborative production, beginning from an ethic of co-responsible solidarity, based on an intergenerational pedagogy of example, and aesthetic of experimental, reflective and cooperative intervention.

**6. Traditional culture and transformative pedagogies**

Care to promote integrative, visceral and reflexive transformation through traditional cultures and popular education, to affirm human values and guiding principles of community life; reflexive solidarity-based practice, the valuing of and respect for diversity of knowledges and cultures, revealing contradictions and cultivating worldviews.

**7. Infant aesthetics**

Care to ensure schools and children's spaces transform themselves into meeting places of playful encounter with knowledge and significant learning of social interaction, which foster holistic development.

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Listen

Read phonetically