

# INTRODUCTION

## Weaving public education that transforms the world

The peoples of the Americas and the world are living through complex times. The devastating effects of the pandemic, which is shaking economies globally, and the war in Europe, which has renewed the offensive against human rights, are intersecting.

Public education faces important challenges - the effects of virtual and remote education, the inequalities that have deepened during this period, the precariousness of working conditions and the greater control that corporations exert over curricular content.

However, the struggles to defend teachers' labor rights, to provide free education and to create alternative projects for an emancipatory education, remain current and renewed. Just over two years since the pandemic began, it is necessary to recognize what the current moment represents for our struggles and what public schools require to face all these challenges.

Therefore, as the Initiative for Democratic Education in the Americas (IDEA Network), we convened to build a collective reflection within a regional dialogue. The starting point was a look at public education during the pandemic - working conditions and struggles as well as an approach to experiences across the continent that promote alternative education projects and emancipatory pedagogies that seek to build a world with social justice. All of the above happened in 2021 during the continental campaign "Against educational inequality, a transformative education", promoted by IDEA. This campaign concluded with a continental forum as a meeting point for different voices of our America, in the context of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Paulo Freire, one of the greatest thinkers of the Americas.

The reader will find a series of reflections that revolve around three themes:

- 1) Regional trends in educational policies in times of pandemic and the dispute over curricular content;
- 2) Working conditions, technologies and the teachers movement and
- 3) Reflections on Paulo Freire a hundred years later; the influence of his thought on pedagogical practices.

On regional trends in educational policies, we find the article "Educational policies in times of pandemic, dispute for public schools", by Roberto Leher (Brazil). In a mapping of the actions of international organizations, Andrée Gacoin (Canada) presents "International educational policies: regional trends and the dispute for public education". From the ESTRADO Network, Dalila Andrade shares an analysis on "Pandemic, technology and the right to education".

In "Working conditions during the pandemic and the return to public school", we share the work of Gary Fenn from Ontario, Canada, Jackson Potter from Chicago, United States and Roberto Herrera, who focuses on higher education in Ecuador.

The third theme embodies one of the central issues that we have been working on since 2020 which is to place transformative pedagogy into the debate in the context of the pandemic and in the context of the 100th anniversary of Paulo Freire's birth. In this section of reflections, we hear from specialists, experts and connoisseurs of Freire, as well as living experiences of alternative education. From Argentina, Lidia Rodríguez shares "Weaving public education that transforms the world", Lucía Álvarez invites us to think about "Paulo Freire: a new education to build a new world" and Edgardo Salazar recounts "The Influence of Paulo Freire, for a new alternative in public education".

We believe that there is no reflection without action. The contributions in this issue by section XXII of the CNTE of Oaxaca, Mexico, and Ricardo Gabriel of the Instituto Maya Mam K'ulb'il Nab'il, Guatemala, reflect the construction and implementation of alternative and emancipatory education projects, which show that the path is one of struggle and transformation of education.

Finally, the Network wishes to dedicate this issue to the life and work of Paulo Freire, the great teacher, and to all those who, through their praxis, transform public education, as well as to the experiences that emanate from popular action and from the cosmovision of the native peoples.