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교육학석사학위논문

**Implications of Freirean Philosophy to
International Education Development**

In the Case of “Yo Sí Puedo”

프레이리 교육철학의

국제교육개발협력으로의 함의:

“Yo Sí Puedo (나는 할 수 있다)” 사례를 중심으로

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협동과정 글로벌교육협력전공

이 창 하

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ABSTRACT

Implications of Freirean Philosophy to International Education Development In the Case of “Yo Sí Puedo”

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The critiques that international education development and its endorsed programs in the Third World have received during the past couple decades can be summarized into a top-down, mechanical and prescriptive aid, without much emphasis on the issue of quality. As an alternative approach, education philosophy by Paulo Freire was suggested promoting bottom-up, participatory and culture-sensitive international aid. The characteristics of Freirean education philosophy were also evident in the international literacy program called “Yo Sí Puedo (YSP, Yes I Can),” the learning method of literacy designed by the school of Cuban educators in IPLAC (Instituto Pedagógico Latinoamericano y Caribeño) in 2000.

This paper recognizes YSP as an emblem of Freirean education philosophy and further makes an analysis in order to induce a fruitful implication to future policymaking

in the field of education ODA. The purpose of this paper is to identify and indicate its features which the conventional practices are deprived of and have overlooked in terms of realizing what is called an 'education' aid.

First, Freire espoused an alternative concept of aid architecture and coined it an 'authentic help' which operates upon the spirit of solidarity. A practice based on this ethos also takes place within YSP as a part of South-South Cooperation (SSC) evident in Cuban overseas assistance. Cubans express solidarity by celebrating partnership with the participating country with a full respect for its national sovereignty and self-determination being freed from any financial leverage that usually draws donor and recipient into the market arrangement of globalization.

In terms of theoretical concepts implemented in YSP, Freire's term of 'conscientization' was instilled and has framed its educational purpose. Under the name of literacy education, Cuban educators concentrate on transformation of an individual and her/his surrounding society. This was embodied into activities of YSP conforming to Freire's concept of critical pedagogy such as 'dialogic and problem-posing education,' 'thematic investigation,' and 'culture circle.' These are especially highlighted at the opening stage of the class. Each YSP class starts off with participants discussing an idea or line whose meaning arouses debate or reflection. For example, a class could begin with a phrase 'Open the gate,' a message being so familiar but enlightening that literacy opens a new world and you've embarked on a new journey.

To sum up, YSP with the characteristics of Freirean education philosophy can be considered as an international project of 'experience sharing.' That is, the priority lies within the self-determined development of the participating country. Cubans are well

aware that there is no such thing as an absolute, master-key-like policy to economic and social development and neither does a country with better economic situation have the right to impose or inculcate with certain way of development nor practice such power to the less developed countries. Thus the educators of YSP participate at the development of a country in search for its endogenous way of growth and confine their input to strictly an experience sharing.

Additionally, YSP as an experience sharing not only lets Cubans exhibit different purpose of aid but also allows them to come up with a signature content originated from their self-determined development that no other countries can imitate nor perform a better aid. YSP is highlighted in Cuba since education or literacy education played a pivotal role in terms of achieving its social progress and transformation.

From the educational perspective, YSP is operated on the basis of Freirean education philosophy. It is digressing from the current practices of international organizations that often disregard and consider less about theories and philosophies of education. All in all, educators of YSP jump into the international development arena with an in-depth knowledge and quality skill of what they can do best and attribute to the world. They certainly are inspiring in terms of enriching diverse cultures and eliciting different dialogues in the ever-standardizing aid community.

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keywords: Freirean Education Philosophy, Alternative Approach to International Education Development, The Literacy Program of “Yo Sí Puedo,” Overseas Assistance in Cuba

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Backgrounds and Statement of the Problem

There has been an ongoing debate whether current international development arena is successful in terms of conducting effective aid. The evidences such as the inception of five evaluation criteria of OECD DAC (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Development Assistance Committee) in 1991 or the Paris Declaration on Aid effectiveness in 2005 clearly demonstrates a collective will towards promoting better aid. No exception is applied to the education sector. The assiduous effort in foreign aid to education seems to wither on the vine by focusing on the numerical achievements of enrolment rate and insufficiently on quality; on the processes and outcomes that are directly related to what goes on in the classroom, what the students learn and so on (Riddell, 2012, p. 2).

The critiques that international education development and its endorsed programs in the Third World have received during the past couple decades can be summarized into a top-down, mechanical and prescriptive aid; without much emphasis on the issue of quality. Thus the search of alternative approach or the exploration of other extremes on the continuum was strongly suggested. At the other end of continuum however, situated education philosophy by Paulo Freire¹ promoting bottom-up,

¹ Paulo Reglus Neves Freire who as a community organizer in the 1960s in the poverty-stricken Northeast of Brazil had extended what had begun as a community organizing technique to a

participatory and culture-sensitive international aid. Freirean education philosophy was considered alternative in terms of emphasizing the relationship of teacher and students in class, critical role of education in the Third World, and the process, method, and contents of learning; all of which transcend from the limited perspective of education aid that in most case only guarantees the initial access of basic education.

The characteristics of Freirean education philosophy were also evident in the international literacy program called “Yo Sí Puedo (YSP, Yes I Can),” the learning method of literacy designed by the school of Cuban educators in IPLAC (Instituto Pedagógico Latinoamericano y Caribeño, Pedagogical Institute of Latin America and Caribbean) in 2000. It has been affirmed by the scholars in and out of the program (Canfux Gutiérrez, 2007, p. 87; Holzman, 1988, p. 183; Steele, 2008, p. 33) that YSP championed and embodied Freire’s critical pedagogy. The program has also been strongly influenced by Cuba’s nation-wide literacy campaign in 1961. Utilizing its excellence in literacy education, the basic concept is to use broadcast media and video as an inclusive approach to literacy teaching for all. Up until 2011 with the average cost of USD 33 per learner, this literacy program had benefited more than 5 million people from 28 different countries (UNESCO, 2006a, p. 228; Canfux et al., 2011, p. 11).

method for adult literacy education (Holzman, 1988, p. 181; McLaren, 2000, pp. 141-142). Not only was Freire actively engaged with the illiteracy and poverty issues in his birth country of Brazil, he became international educator through his brief exile in Bolivia, five-year-dedication to agrarian reform movement in Chile and education reforms of former Portuguese colonies in Africa (McLaren, 2000, pp. 143-147).

1.2 Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

This paper recognizes YSP as an emblem of Freirean education philosophy and further makes an analysis in order to induce a fruitful implication to future policymaking in the field of education ODA. By delving into the unique characteristics of Freirean education philosophy succinctly presented in the literacy program of YSP, this paper intends to identify and indicate the features which our conventional practices are deprived of and have overlooked in terms of realizing what we call an ‘education’ aid. This paper aims to approach the program in two-folds: interior and exterior-wise, namely, YSP as an aid program focusing on its delivery manner and practice and the other approach of investigating its content and its theoretical concept.

First of all, before in-depth studies on Freirean education philosophy and YSP are made, the paper sets the scene by providing an overall background study answering question such as: ‘What are the current challenges of international education development and what can be suggested as an alternative approach from the education philosophy of Paulo Freire?’ The former question sets the scene by providing an overview of the challenges often discussed in the field of international education development and later juxtaposed with the characteristics of Freirean education philosophy – as an answer to the latter question – provides the rationale for the need of an alternative approach.

Then it is time to focus more on the education philosophy. The paper allocates a vast volume of examining Freire’s critical pedagogy in two-folds; Freire’s perception of international aid in the Third World and his alternative suggestion and the thematic

concepts of education he promoted and emphasized under the umbrella of critical pedagogy. Later the framework of two pillars - Freire's international development aid and his educational concept of 'Conscientization,' 'Dialogue and Thematic Investigation,' 'Problem-Posing Education,' and 'Culture Circle' - serves to analyze the respective parts of YSP.

Before analyzing YSP through the framework constructed with the education philosophy of Paulo Freire, the paper carries on by looking at the program of YSP itself; its brief history and achievements, strengths to success not only as a literacy program but also as a part of international aid. First, the interest lies in offering a big picture of the relationship between the society and education on the island of Cuba; mainly dealing with how it's been built up through the drastic social transition experienced in the times of The National Literacy Campaign in 1961 and how it has affected their domestic understanding of education which later framed and pursued its expansion towards the field of international development aid. Also it investigates the rationale behind Cuba's large proportion on education aid in overseas assistance.

Then it discusses the methodology and the content by each stage of YSP and highlights its theoretical concept which the program has affirmed to have adopted the great portion from Freirean education philosophy, interchangeably used as Freire's critical pedagogy (Canfux Gutiérrez, 2007, p. 87; Holzman, 1988, p. 183; Steele, 2008, p. 33). Here the author plans to deepen the research by investigating the implemented features of critical pedagogy that contributed to enhance the effectiveness of the program. The effort has been put in order to answer the question of 'how are the characteristics of Freirean education philosophy incorporated and embodied into the

Cuban literacy program of “Yo Sí Puedo”?’ However, the paper doesn’t overlook the primary purpose; the goal of sharing what this alternative practice implies to the field of education ODA. Here it also talks about the limit and challenges that YSP inevitably and regrettably confronts.

The paper concludes with the discussions on YSP’s implications to education ODA. The purpose of this section is to answer the question of what kinds of lessons can be learned from the alternative aid practices of YSP. The implications are reflected mainly by detecting and indicating what’s been evident in YSP but does not exist within the practices of conventional aid but still quintessential in promoting and conducting a quality aid. This enables us to lucidly point out what had been missing in our practices and what can be offered or proposed as an alternative. Then it goes back delving into the educational aspect, not just limiting the conversation to dichotomous division of Northern and Southern practices, but rather underlines the theoretical background that YSP is founded upon contending that at the end it’s an ‘education’ aid that they have embarked upon.

The main research questions of this paper are:

- 1) What are the current challenges of international education development and what can be suggested as an alternative approach from the education philosophy of Paulo Freire?
- 2) What are the characteristics of Freirean education philosophy and how are they incorporated and embodied into the Cuban literacy program of “Yo Sí Puedo”?

- 3) What are the characteristics of “Yo Sí Puedo” and Cuban education aid in general and what is the rationale behind Cuba’s large proportion on education in overseas assistance?
- 4) What can be shared from the literacy program of “Yo Sí Puedo” and what implication does it give to the current practices of international education development?

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study is considered to have a significant value since it touches upon the topics that have never been discussed before. In hopes of contributing to the relevant field of studies, it offers quite an audacious analysis in many ways.

First and foremost, amidst the international aid community thirsty for a groundbreaking aid practice that could alarm and inspire others, Cuban literacy program offers an alternative modality that is worth a further study. Mentioned in previous pages, the effort to enhance and concentrate on the aid effectiveness has been rife and it occurs similarly in the field of international education aid. In this vein, the program of “Yo Sí Puedo (YSP)” sometimes reaching up to 90% of the effectiveness rate - in the case of Ecuador (UNESCO, 2006a, p. 5; UNESCO, 2006b, p. 228) – arouses and deserves a well-paid attention. However it must also be addressed that the program is not obsessed with its numerical outcomes and not foolhardily forcing the audience to accept it as a panacea to all the education aid practices but still it is worth conducting an analysis finding out the critical factors that gear to its success.

Second, though there have been wide variety literatures dealing with YSP itself

or as a part of South-South Cooperation (SSC) and Cuban international aid (Boughton, 2008; Boughton, 2009; Boughton et al., 2013; Canavire, 2011; Hickling-Hudson, 2004; Hickling-Hudson, 2009; Hickling-Hudson et al., 2006; Lind et al., 2006; Preston et al., 2012; Real, 2008; Steele, 2008; UNESCO, 2006a; and etc.), not much has been discussed on YSP based on an education philosophy, specifically Freire's critical pedagogy which is known to have paved its theoretical foundation (Canfux Gutiérrez, 2007, p. 87; Holzman, 1988, p. 183; Steele, 2008, p. 33). The paper analyzes the characteristics of YSP through the lenses of Freirean education philosophy captured in his theoretical themes such as 'Conscientization,' 'Dialogue and Thematic Investigation,' 'Problem-Posing Education,' and 'Culture Circle.' Here YSP is explored in the manner strictly analyzed as a program promoting education in the Third World but adapted and applied in different settings, unlike the current practices - regardless of the characteristic of the aid program – are measured in one-size-fits-all evaluative tool, that is, the five evaluation criteria of OECD DAC (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Development Assistance Committee) - 'Relevance,' 'Effectiveness,' 'Efficiency,' 'Impact,' and 'Sustainability.'

1.4 Methodology

Mentioned previously in the beginning of the chapter, the purpose of this study is to find out the characteristics of Freirean education philosophy embodied and practiced through the international literacy program of "Yo Sí Puedo (YSP)" and share this alternative approach to international education development by drawing diverse

implications and conversations. In the process of analyzing YSP through the lenses of Freirean education philosophy, the author has constructed the framework based on the core theoretical concepts that Paulo Freire developed and elaborated throughout his wide variety of volumes ranging from *Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1972)* and *Pedagogy in Progress: the Letters to Guinea-Bissau (1978)* to *The Politics of Education: Culture, Power and Liberation (1985)*.

The framework for the analysis is mainly consisted of two angles of Freire's approach to international development first targeting his idea towards the aid architecture and later his education philosophy, the thematic concepts that he considers paramount in the educational interaction between educators and learners namely 'Conscientization,' 'Dialogue and Thematic Investigation,' 'Problem-Posing Education,' and 'Culture Circle.' Discussions in Chapter 4 as the outcome of analysis with the Freirean framework refer much to the interviews and documents retrieved during the author's visit to IPLAC (Instituto Pedagógico Latinoamericano y Caribeño, Pedagogical Institute of Latin America and Caribbean, the founders of YSP) from the 2nd till the 15th of December in 2012. More about the analytical framework and the outcome will be discussed in the pages of Chapter 2 and Chapter 4.

This study is consisted of five chapters. Chapter 1 provides the reader with a basic understanding and the broad overview of the study, including the background and the statement of the problem, purpose and the importance of study, and not to forget the introduction of methodology or the analytical framework implemented in this study. The purpose of Chapter 2 is to review the literature on the current challenges of international

education development in regards to its aid architecture and the issue of quality to further provide information and juxtapose with the education philosophy of Paulo Freire suggested as an alternative approach in this paper. The latter part of this chapter focuses on building up a analytical framework based on Freirean education philosophy ranging from his vision on international development aid and thematic concepts he had espoused within critical pedagogy movement such as ‘Conscientization,’ ‘Dialogue and Thematic Investigation,’ ‘Problem-Posing Education,’ and ‘Culture Circle.’

Chapter 3 goes deeper into the international literacy program of YSP. It starts with the background of how the concept of education is perceived among Cubans and in their society. It embarks on a brief historical flashback of their educational accomplishment of “The National Literacy Campaign” in 1961. Additionally, the chapter carries on investigating how this domestically constructed understanding of education had influenced on creating a unique aid modality in the field of international assistance, namely the “South-South Cooperation (SSC)” represented in their world-renowned literacy program of “Yo Sí Puedo (YSP).” The methodology and the content of the program are also covered in this section. Chapter 4 presents the reader with the findings of the analysis implementing the Freirean framework constructed in the previous chapter. It considers YSP as a practice of Freirean education philosophy but also recognizes some challenges lying ahead. In Chapter 5, the paper concludes with the discussions on YSP’s implications to education ODA. It also summarizes the study and presents concluding remarks.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter sets the scene by providing an overview of the challenges in the field of international education development approaching in two different angles. First, it touches upon the aid architecture dealing with issues of relationship, ideology, and of course, the stage of actual execution. Also the lack of quality in education aid is commonly brought up as a downside of zealous achievement in international education agenda manifested by large international organizations such as the World Bank or UNESCO. Later, an alternative approach to International Education Development is investigated and discussed mainly within the education philosophy of Paulo Freire. As an international educationalist profound and robust both in his self-constructed theory and practices in the Third World, Freire suggests an alternative and critical approach that is liberated from unified and unidirectional policies applied in international education development arena.

2.1 Overview of the Challenges in International Education Development

During the stretch of the years from 1995 to 2012, total amount of foreign aid to education increased more than fourfold from US\$2.9bn to US\$12.25bn². Similarly,

² OECD/DAC International Aid Statistics, Creditor Reporting System

within the same period, investment on basic education showed an exponential growth almost by 640 percent in hopes of achieving universal enrolment, one of the Millennium Development Goals promoted by United Nations worldwide. With all the aid money invested heavily on basic education or the sector-wide in general, there have been noticeable improvements and tangible achievements in education spheres of the developing world. More children inclusive of girls attended elementary schools attributing to better gender parity and at the same time, less students dropped out of school securing more seats for them to stay in school and complete their intended studies (UNESCO, 2011).

Even so however, foreign aid to education and its aid programs endorsed in the Third World were subject to critiques mainly discussed in, but not limited to, two distinct parts; their top-down, mechanical and prescriptive aid modality and the issue of quality which has been sacrificed as an inevitable trade-off to better access to education. It has been widely condemned by the scholars that current aid practices came full circle to the old days of modernization with North Atlantic nations set and imposed as an ultimate goal of development. However, it must be questioned whether these wealthy bloc of “developed” countries are in fact developed and whether their arbitrarily genre of progress is desirable, and most of all applicable and sustainable to the nature of the recipient countries (Servaes, 2001, p. 15).

More questions arise in terms of the content of foreign aid to education. It could be said that the communital effort to ‘Education For All,’ which has long been activated and currently under a process in the developing world, has yet discovered the potential

<http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?datasetcode=CRS1> (accessed 28 June 2014)

of improving learning achievements and addressing what goes on in the classroom. That is to point out that the impact of foreign aid to education or a direct causal connection between the foreign aid and the outcome cannot be reduced to merely counting the number of pupils enrolled in primary school and measuring the progress towards universal enrolment (Riddell, 2012, p. 5). Instead, what is rather needed is a significant advance from the narrowed down ‘Education For All’ to ‘Learning For All,’ which requires more integrated and comprehensive approach to education in the developing world and of course, to its practice endorsed as a foreign aid. More about these two aspects of challenges and their respective alternatives will be discussed in the following section. The section begins with more structural feature of current foreign aid dealing with its architecture and the dominant paradigm.

2.1.1 Challenges of the Current International Development Paradigm

Escobar (1997) in his article of *The Making and Unmaking of the Third World Through Development* pungently criticized that “Development was and continues to be a top-down, ethnocentric and technocratic approach, which treated people and cultures as abstract concepts, statistical figures to be moved up and down in the charts of ‘progress (p. 91, emphasis original).” In this description, development is first of all backed by the theory of modernization espoused by the wealthy bloc of the West arbitrarily organizing and forcefully ranking and rearranging the nations into those in the center and others in

the periphery. They do this by demarcating the world into the First, Second, and Third exclusively based on their capacity and potentials of the economy, approaching and understanding the development as an economic evolutionism.

Hence, underdevelopment is simply defined in terms of observable quantitative differences, between so-called poor and rich countries on the one hand, and traditional and modern societies on the other (Servaes, 2001, p. 14). With this unilinear and evolutionary thinking of development in mind, contextual and cultural aspect of the society is frequently overlooked and it gives strong rationale to the wealthy nations to design and violently impose the type of economic development they went through. It operates based on the image that Third World is a regretful past or the present form of societies full of unqualified or abnormalities and the First World is portrayed and suggested as the abundant future, were they to successfully imitate and follow what has been given on the development agenda.

This euro or ethnocentric, economy-oriented, center-periphery perspectives on development had settled in as the fundamental understanding to the current practices in international aid and the following demonstrates their characteristics (Servaes, 2001, p. 17):

1. Derived from a worldview of dominance over one's environment, the Western concept of progress is overwhelmingly oriented to persuasion. Akin to the modernization paradigm in both theory and ideology, the approach to development is unidirectional, from the informed to the uninformed, the knowledgeable to the ignorant, haves to have-nots, and from the donor to the recipient.

2. Congruent with the modernization philosophy, it is believed that there lies a

direct causal relationship between their underdevelopment and the people residing in the society thus earning a rationale to fully assign them the responsibility for the problem.

3. Research of the development aid, like the modernization theory, suffers from an overemphasis on quantitative criteria to the exclusion of social and cultural factors.

But because the isolation and the separation of different groups of worlds became even more ambiguous with income gaps not only widening between the First - and the Third World but also in domestic level between the haves and the have-nots; Third World was evident within the First World and the vice versa applied, a wealthy First World in the impoverished Third World. All in all, this demarcation was never geographical but political and ideological (Roberts, 2000, p. 7) meaning that development was nothing different from the simple power dynamics of the oppression and domestication that takes place in any given society.

In order to redress dependent and subservient aspect of the development, a need for alternative approach appeared transcending from the narrow emphasis on economic factors but embracing a multiplicity of contextual approach such as cultural, social, political, ethnic, and ecological issues. Going against the previously held top-down, prescriptive approach to aid, it bases on the bottom-up, self-development of local communities. Thus the new concept of aid values and calls for cultural identity and relies on democratization and participation at all levels - international, national, local, and individual. It operates upon strategies and ideas, not inclusive of, but largely emanating from the traditional "receivers." Paulo Freire (1982) refers to this as the right of all people to individually and collectively speak their word (Servaes, 2001, p. 18):

“This is not the privilege of some few men, but the right of every man. Consequently, no one can say a true word alone - nor can he say it for another, in a prescriptive act which robs others of their words (p. 76).”

This participatory, rights-based, receiver-oriented approach to international aid addresses power and it is redistributed in a sense that the new concept encourages the environment that welcomes diverse opinions from the locals and intends a program that is relevant, self-developed, and sustainable. And it is built upon and goes through a distinct designing stage – paramount and utmost necessary to all development programs - that involves reciprocal collaboration based upon social trust constructed before jumping into the actual processes of implementation. Here social trust is consisted of strong motivation and commitment from the both parties which serve as critical factors that bring about appropriate policies and planning for developing a country within its cultural and environmental framework (Servaes, 2000, p. 19).

2.1.2 Issues of Quality in International Education Development

Education For All (EFA) is an international campaign to better education with a history of more than two decades, first affirmed its worldwide commitment to education in Thailand, 1990. The campaign accrued more attention after a reaffirmation in Senegal and till now it is effective in terms of providing better access to education in

the developing world specifically focused on the level of basic education. In realizing and assessing EFA, enrolment matters. It is interested in investing on all sorts of inputs (number of schools available, trained teachers, facilities required in schooling, and etc.) that guarantee more schooling opportunities for the children; just about everything that increases their arrivals and their secured seats in the classroom, EFA's willing to commit.

As a consequence, the easily quantifiable measures implemented in EFA or to simply put, its enrolment rate oriented practice had obscured the big picture of education which base not only on the access but also on the quality. This initiative to provide better education to all children kept its words only in terms of providing equal access to education and consequently their strong attachment to the numerical outcomes has gradually reduced EFA as a mere 'Access For All' or 'Schooling For All' campaigns in the developing world.

Access to education is child's right. So is quality. However, till now EFA has been wrapped around with achieving a noticeable progress in the worldwide enrolment rate that what actually happens in the classroom has been less concerned. As much as the initial access to schooling is important, actual learning taking place within a child should also be emphasized in a paramount importance. Just think about what makes difference if children were kept in an overly crowded classroom with unqualified teachers who don't pay attention to their children and don't strive for the quality education or the better future of their pupils? What happens if the cold brick wall and the overall environment of the classroom don't inspire learning but simply serve to lock them with no educational interaction? And what does education do and what changes

does education make when children are treated as mere receivers of information that is irrelevant to their lives and consisted of disconnected bits of information that is only to be recalled on demand?

Now a significant shift from the quantity to quality, hardware to software, and schooling to learning is in order within the field of foreign aid to education. As a foreign aid to 'education,' it should highlight more on the educational aspect rather than aid which is highly mechanical and economics-based. Concept becomes clearer when thinking of reforming and improving a national education system how it involves just about everything on learning. Foreign aid to education is no different, only adding a crossing of international boundaries. This implies quite an alternative approach to current aid; it must focus on the learning process, content, and methods, those learning rooted in curiosity, concept development, systematic analysis, structured comparison, problem solving, creative insight, and etc. (Samoff, 2012, p. 109). There is no trade-off between equity and quality. Both should be valued and guaranteed on equal terms.

2.2 Freirean Education Philosophy as an Alternative Approach to International Education Development

In the previous section of the chapter, the discussion was focused on the critiques that international education development and the endorsed program in the

Third World have received, mainly in two distinct parts: their top-down, mechanical and prescriptive aid modality and the issue of quality which has been sacrificed as a trade-off to better access to education. From this section and henceforth we will investigate in depth Freirean education philosophy presented and suggested as an alternative approach. Here, the term alternative is applied not to imply that current prescriptive and quantitative practice of international education development could all of sudden be redressed and improved by taking the alternative route but it is employed as an effort to explore the other extreme on a continuum. This is to say that alternative approach here - in this case signifying Freirean approach to international education development - is not intended to serve as panacea to all the criticized practices but studying its stance that outstands from the common norm surely adds more value by diversifying the channels and enriching conversation within the field of international education development.

Situated at the other end of a continuum, Freirean education philosophy is clearly alternative promoting bottom-up, participatory and culture-sensitive aid architecture. Moreover, it rather stresses on the relationship of teacher and students in class, critical role of education in the Third World, and the process, method, and contents of learning transcending from the limited perspective of education aid that in most case guarantees only the initial access to education. In this chapter of literature review, it aims to provide fundamental understanding of Freire's critical pedagogy in three different folds; first of all, in regards to his approach to education in general and what he envisions in literacy education. Then we will move on to studying his educational sociologist point of view, how education should attribute to the national reconstruction and development underscoring the correlation between society and

education to the public. Expanded to the broader spectrum of his studies, this chapter takes on further investigating his philosophy by touching upon his stance on international development.

Later in 2.3, we'll delve into some of the conceptual terms - such as 'Conscientization,' 'Praxis,' 'Problem-Posing Education,' 'Dialogic Learning' and etc. - coined by Freire which frame the overall architecture of Freirean education philosophy. Along with the threefold theoretical structure in 2.2 composed of literacy education, social progress - or national reconstruction in some cases - and international development, key concepts will be implemented to conduct a theoretical analysis on Cuban practice of literacy education "Yo Sí Puedo (YSP)," how it embodies and realizes Freirean educational philosophy, yet lacks or misses on managing some aspects of his theories.

2.2.1 Freirean Approach to Education and Literacy Education

Paulo Reglus Neves Freire who as a community organizer in the 1960s in the poverty-stricken Northeast of Brazil had extended what had begun as a community organizing technique to a method for adult literacy education (Holzman, 1988, p. 181; McLaren, 2000, pp. 141-142). He had done so by looking at the society with its different

strata of domination, mainly diverged into a stark dichotomy of Subjects³ and Objects, Oppressor and Oppressed. Freire's main concern resides on the role of education that can be greatly appreciated in two different aspects; one operated by the dominant class to blindfold the public and the other which conversely liberates them from domination. First aspect of education functions with an intention to prolong social inequity and their habituated dependence towards intellectuals and wealthier people. He saw that education is implemented as a sheer instrument of domination that somewhat hinders social mobilization of the poor and locks them into a situation where poverty is culturally embedded.

The other, he calls it the critical pedagogy or the pedagogy of the oppressed. Instead of domesticating the public into the taste of the oppressor, it liberates the poor – the representatives of the dominated strata - lets them be conscious of the existing social oppression and strive for their rights, along with their critical presence in the real world. In this section, Freirean approach to education will be discussed in detail not to mention its essential linkage towards achieving national development.

- Freirean Approach to Education

Mentioned briefly above, it can be understood that Freire's unique stance in

³In the Preface of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972) the translator comments that the term 'Subjects' denotes those who know and act, in contrast to 'Objects,' which are known and acted upon (p. 16).

education so-called critical pedagogy derives from his distinct outlook on society. He acknowledges society in two different worlds; that of the oppressor and the other of the oppressed. As an educational sociologist, Freire considers conventional education imposed by the oppressor as a masked instrument of domination and he contends that through oppressor-favored education, poverty is constantly inherited as an exclusive property for the oppressed. There he adds his contention by implementing the term 'prescription' to depict the basis of relationship between the oppressed and oppressor. In his most influential and foundational text of critical pedagogy movement *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972), he argues:

Every prescription represents the imposition of one man's choice upon another, transforming the consciousness of the man prescribed to into one that conforms to the prescriber's consciousness. Thus, the behavior of the oppressed is a prescribed behavior, following as it does the guidelines of the oppressor (Freire, p. 23).

Another term that Freire deploys when portraying the cultivation of unjust social order is the 'banking' concept of education. This notion understands education as a mere transmission of knowledge that flows one-way from the knowledgeable to the ignorant. Among the arbitrary sets of knowledge that divide people into the knowledgeable and the ignorant, locates power and power itself serves to minimize and annul students' creativity and increases the credulity of the oppressors feeding only to the benefit of the others (Freire, 1972, p. 47). However, it is important to take into account that human ignorance and knowledge are never absolute. No one knows everything. No one is

ignorant of everything (Freire, 1985, p. 15) and herein arises the necessity of communication that channels true solidarity between the oppressor and the oppressed.

However, true solidarity can only be achieved when operated upon the basic assumption that man's ontological vocation is to be a subject who acts upon and transforms his world. No man should be reduced to be the 'beings for another' nor regarded as an abstract category; thus, oppressed people should be seen as those who have been unjustly dealt with, deprived of their voice, cheated in the sale of their labor (Shaull, 1972, p. 12; Freire, 1972, p. 26).

However Freire believes that every human being, no matter how 'ignorant' or submerged in the 'culture of silence' s/he may be, is capable of looking critically at her/his world in a dialogical encounter with others. This is where the flip side of education, critical pedagogy must set in provided as the adequate tool for such an encounter. Through this exercise, s/he can gradually perceive her/his personal and social reality as well as the contradictions in it, become conscious of this own perception of that reality, and deal critically with it (Shaull, 1972, p.12).

- Freirean Approach to Literacy Education

Interestingly enough, in Freirean education philosophy literacy education is not greatly differentiated from education and they are assumed to be a similar concept being able to substitute one another. This is true originating from Freire's understanding of critical pedagogy without which the literacy that cultivates critical comprehension will always serve for the benefit of others and never for themselves in terms of liberation or

empowerment. Thus whatever specified education you deal with, critical thinking of literacy education must precede and must provide fundamental basis of learning.

As much as Freire tried to reveal the limit of conventional education system or talk about political instrumentalization of education, he interprets literacy within the social structure, within the strata of domination. He sheds light on the social status of people who are deprived of literacy – the illiteracy of the oppressed. He starts off commenting that nobody elects to be illiterates. One is illiterate because of objective conditions (Freire, 1985, p. 13; p. 48) so before jumping into discursive mechanics of reading and writing it is essential to question what is beneath the surface level; what had put him/her in that situation and what had prevented him/her from becoming literates. Often discussed along with illiteracy are the people in the poverty line, “the marginalized.” Freire refutes this expression for the same reason. In *The Politics of Education* (1985), he notes that:

Those who consider them marginal must, nevertheless, recognize the existence of a reality to which they are marginal - not only physical space, but historical, social, cultural, economic realities - that is, the structural dimension of the reality. In this way, illiterates have to be recognized as beings “outside of,” “marginal to” something, and admitting to this reality, we may legitimately ask: who is the author of this movement from the center of the structure to its margin? Do so-called marginal men, among them the illiterates, make the decision to move out to the periphery of society? [...] If marginality is not by choice, marginal man has been expelled from and kept outside of the social system and is therefore the object of violence (Freire, pp. 47-48).

If being marginalized is an act of expulsion, if they are not “beings outside of” but rather “beings for another,” illiteracy also asks for a different definition than a simple “disease” to be eradicated such as an “ulcer” or a “poison herb.” Again, Freire reflects it in a wider spectrum of social dynamics how illiteracy is driven by political purposes and represents an unjust social reality not just limiting it to a strictly linguistic or exclusively pedagogical or methodological problem (Freire, 1985, p. 10). In return, he contends that literacy should also be political in terms of engaging illiterates from the margin to the center through establishing itself as a process of search and creation by which illiterate learners are challenged to perceive the deeper meaning of language and the word, the word that, in essence, they are being denied (Freire, 1985, p. 10).

2.2.2 Freirean Approach to National and International Development

As an educational sociologist Freire had never ceased to contemplate education with its close relation to the society. In the previous section we discussed that he pungently criticized how illiteracy is socially stigmatized as a personal flaw such as an illness to overcome and that this results in marginalizing the people with illiteracy outside the society. However, Freire contends we should rather utilize this political aspect of literacy in terms of empowering and liberating the illiterates from the unjust

society through cultivating critical thinking of the world. As much as Freire focused on society's instrumentalization of education, in return he envisioned education's - in this case through critical pedagogy – impact toward the social change; literacy education and its relation to production, to health, to the regular system of instruction, to the overall plan for the society still to be realized (Freire, 1978, p. 13).

Critical thinking of literacy education seeks to know the reason for social practice and, through this knowledge as it deepens and develops, it also seeks new practice that is consistent with the overall plan for the society. Education is itself a dimension of social practice (Freire 1978, p. 89). That is to say, the discussion of adult literacy implies a discussion of the whole field of education in the society. And to discuss education, Freire repeats, is to think of the overall plan for the society itself (Freire, 1978, p. 105).

- Freirean Approach to International Development

Not only was Freire actively engaged with the illiteracy and poverty issues in his birth country of Brazil, his brief exile in Bolivia, five-year-dedication to agrarian reform movement in Chile and education reforms of former Portuguese colonies in Africa particularly Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique, allowed him to practice his critical pedagogy all around the world (McLaren, 2000, pp. 143-147). In 1978, Freire released a book called *Pedagogy in Process* selecting from his collection of letters during his

earlier work visits in Guinea-Bissau and there he introduced this unfortunate land an “overseas province,” referring to its political status during the days of Portuguese colonization. He deeply regretted such degradation of Guinea-Bissau condemning that with this pompous name, the colonists tried to mask their presence as invaders and their relentless exploitation of the people (Freire, 1978, p. 5).

His stance on colonized countries resembles his understanding of the situations in the Third World in general. He argued that the Third World is an object of misunderstanding - an arbitrary and manipulated image imposed by the metropolitan cities, usually by the first world - that they are the incarnation of evil, the primitive that in essence, historically unviable without depending on the director societies. He added that such a Manichaeian attitude is at the source of the impulse to “save” the “demon-possessed” Third World, “educating it” and “correcting its thinking” according to the director societies’ own criteria (Freire, 1985, p. 57). And the act of “salvation” of the Third World in regardless of good intention can only mean a practice of domination and cultural invasion. No one can expect positive results from an educational or political action program which solely reflects the expansionist interests of the First World and fails to respect the particular view of the world held by the people (Freire, 1972, p. 68).

To overcome the contradictory relationship of the two worlds, an ‘authentic help’ that bases partnership, that presupposes equal parties is in order. Again in *Pedagogy in Process*, Freire answers to the question of what constitutes an ‘authentic help:’

Authentic help means that all who are involved help each other mutually, growing together in the common effort to understand the reality which they seek to

transform. Only through such praxis⁴- in which those who help and those who are being helped help each other simultaneously-can the act of helping become free from the distortion in which the helper dominates the helped (Freire, 1978, p. 8).

Once encountered with the above idea of authentic help, one can easily relate its concept to the notion of solidarity briefly discussed in 3.1.1. For Freire, solidarity entails the recognition that liberation and transformation are collective projects that require dialogic participation and a critical consciousness of how both oppressor and oppressed are bound together through power relations (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, p. 45). Similarly, the alternative power dynamics -escaping from dependence and striving for empowerment - applied in the Third World is what constitutes authentic help in the developmental scenes. That is to say, an international aid program founded upon the firm ground of solidarity is what constitutes an authentic help.

To practice and realize authentic help and to demonstrate the determined commitment to the solidarity between the helper and the helped, it is crucial to maximize the participation of the helped by organizing the program content of education aid that is present, existential, concrete situation, and most of all, reflecting their aspirations. Helpers must never merely discourse on the present situation, must never design programs for the people which have little or nothing to do with their own preoccupations, doubts, hopes and fears. It is not the role of helpers to speak about their own view of the world, nor to attempt to impose that view on the helped, but rather to share and dialogue about the views from both sides (Freire, 1972, p. 68).

⁴The term praxis refers to reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it (Freire, 1972, p. 52; p. 73).

Instead, Helpers must utilize certain basic contradictions and pose this existential, concrete, present situation to the people as a problem which challenges them and requires a response- not just at the intellectual level, but at the level of action. It should be acknowledged that people's view of the world, manifested variously in their action, reflects their situation in the world. Educational and political action which is not critically aware of this situation runs the risk either of banking or of preaching in the desert (Freire, 1972, p. 68).

2.2.3 Freirean Approach to Literacy Education and International Development

In the previous sections, we had covered the great architecture of Freirean education philosophy built around two core concepts; his approach to education and to the development. Both were specified respectively into their relevant topics, for education it was literacy education and for the development, it was national level than moving on to the international. Although they were discussed separately in different sections, while delving into Freire's numerous works it became more and more evident that education serves as the root cause for the nation to progress and at times to retrogress. Following is a created figure encapsulating the discussion carried on in 3.1.1.

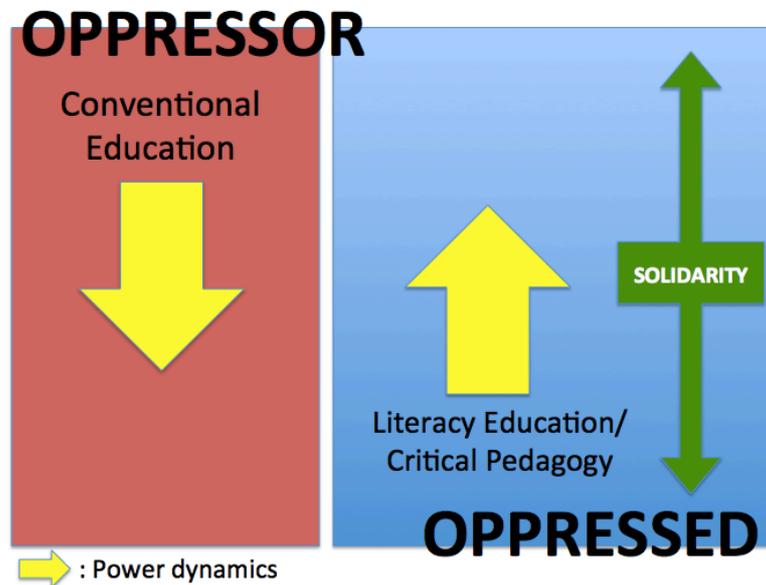


Figure 1 Freirean Approach to Education and Society

To briefly add an explanation of the above figure, Freire focused on two different roles of education effecting two different players of the society within the two different sets of the world. Within the present world depicted in red situates a system of education that solely serves as a tool for the oppressor to dominate, control, and domesticate the oppressed in the society. However in the society in blue, through literacy education that promotes critical consciousness of the world, people acknowledge the inequity deeply rooted in the present society, become empowered and finally liberate themselves from that fixated relationship of domination and violence. Here Freire never forgets to highlight the importance of solidarity that requires determined commitment of the both parties to transform the oppressive reality and sail through a new horizon of liberatory relationship.

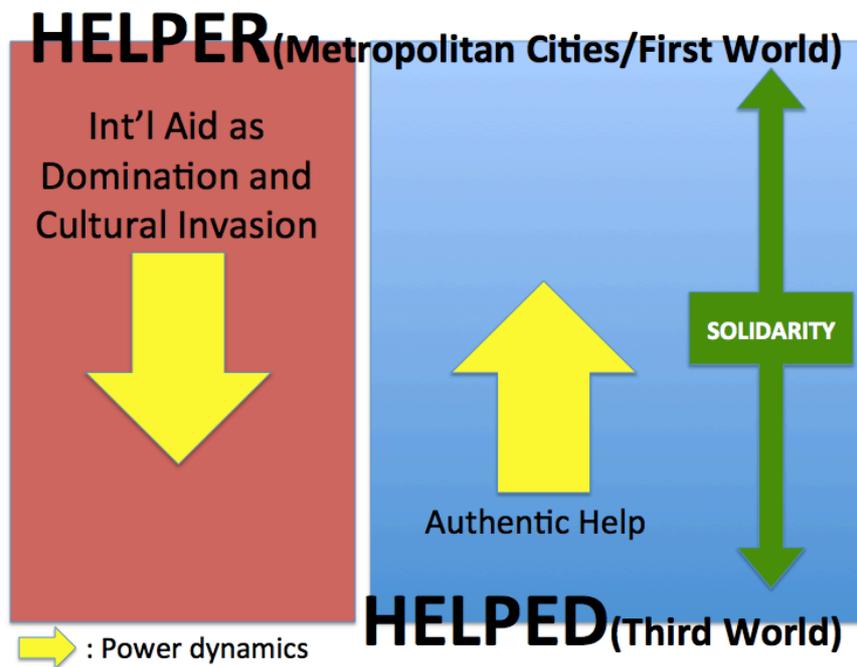


Figure 2 Freirean Approach to International Development

Figure 2 applied in an international development scene is the very idea that figure 3 is projecting. Just like the society in figure 2, the world is boldly divided into the wealthy First and the poorest bottom of the Third World. In many cases, the wealthy blocs of metropolitan cities enter into the impoverished area with flashy propaganda of philanthropic international aid. However, Freire had equated their movement to that of expansionists describing it as a mere cultural invasion and neo-colonization with a pure intension of perpetual poverty.

However, through authentic help in blue that bases solidarity in action he believes that meaningful change in the Third World, a transformative development can actually take place in the poorest areas of the world. Freire's primary goal of a change in social relations is to be achieved in the education sphere (Holzman, 1988, p. 181) and

authentic help signifies the common effort that understands the reality they seek to transform (Freire, 1978, p. 8). It can be assumed that Freire had been pivoting on literacy education or critical pedagogy to liberate the people from the poverty-stricken Third World.

2.3 Theoretical Framework of Freirean Philosophy to International Education Development

In the previous chapter of 2.2 we had succinctly analyzed Freire's educational philosophy in three different layers of education, national development and the structural plight in the third world and the blue print for the meaningful aid within those societies. In the pages of 2.2 most attention was paid to Freire's critical approach to literacy education or education in general directed towards but not limited to his understanding of the third world and his suggestion to the international aid practices that bases solidarity between both parties and emphasizes critical pedagogy as a core concept in the aid modality.

However in 2.3 we would like to investigate deeper into Freire's world of critical pedagogy extracting its four vital pillars that overarch Freire's educational philosophy: 'Conscientization,' 'Dialogue and Thematic Investigation,' 'Problem-

posing Education,’ and ‘Culture Circle.’ Pages will be allocated to discuss each concept in detail and how they affect and interact with one another within the big picture of Freire’s critical pedagogy. Later in Chapter 4, the analytic discussion conducted in Chapter 2 will serve as a framework to further reflect and study upon Cuban practice of international literacy program, “Yo Sí Puedo.”

2.3.1 Conscientization

If one is suggested to select a word that adequately encapsulates the gist of Freirean educational philosophy, it is likely that the strong consensus will be reached upon a term ‘Conscientization’ from the Portuguese word, Conscientização. This term strongly promotes the attitude of illiterates or the marginalized people in our society to become aware of surrounding reality not simply in the way it is given but become critically conscious of social, political, and economic contradictions, and take action against the oppressive elements of reality (Freire, 1972, p. 15). In *The Politics of Education* (1985), Freire elucidates the concept of conscientization as follows:

Conscientization refers to the process in which men, not as recipients, but as knowing subjects achieve a deepening awareness both of the sociocultural reality that shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality (Freire, 1985, p. 93).

We can deduce from above words that Freire considered conscientization to be a dialectical process between reflection and action. It is not viable through confined reflection on the unequal society nor can it be reached through mechanistic acquisition of rudiments of letters and numbers. In Freire's philosophy, literacy and conscientization operate concurrently (Avoseh, 1990, p. 1). As a part of literacy process, conscientization starts with a critical comprehension of man as a being who exists *in*-reflection - and *with*- action - the world (Freire, 1985, p. 68, italics original). Man exists *in* the world and by reflecting on it, he earns a constant clarification of his existence in the world, of what remains hidden and unshared (Freire, 1985, p. 107). Now literacy here is a political project. The task is to make the illiterates aware of the cause of their plight. Then Literacy education slowly evolves into a liberational act that entails a radical resistance of dehumanizing and unjust social economic and political conditions (Avoseh, 1990, p. 3).

When illiterates recognize the world not as a "given" world but dynamically "in the making," man exists *with* the world through his action of simultaneously transforming the world and grasping and expressing the world's reality in their creative language (Freire, 1985, p. 68; p. 106). Now his previous resistance leads to a destruct of structures after which man is in a position to create new structures (Avoseh, 1990, p. 3).

Man also exists with the world; with other men. Understanding conscientization as a process of growing and developing in awareness whose target is to know and transform reality, dialogue becomes a necessary condition (Avoseh, 1990, p. 3) holding a vital position throughout this liberating literacy. Now we will proceed with an in-depth discussion on dialogue and its content of thematic investigation.

2.3.2 Dialogue and Thematic Investigation

“Dialogue is an encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world.” asserted Freire (1972, p. 61). Again to name the world, critical consciousness plays a significant role in terms of realizing praxis – the two dimensions of reflection and action in order to rectify and transform the ugly elements of existential situations of the oppressed. This practice of praxis is applied equally to the constituent elements of a dialogue which means, down to each word that stimulates and contributes to dialoguers’ critical thinking (Freire, 1972, p. 60).

Likewise with the previous discussion on conscientization, a true dialogue does not accept the ingenuous separation between men and the world but discerns them as an indivisible entity that is constantly open to interacting and transforming. Given this feature of a dialogue, Freire underscored its content to be geared towards investigating *generative themes* that inaugurate the dialogue as the practice of freedom (Freire, 1972, p. 69). Freire had these themes of the dialogue termed generative because no matter in which direction the dialogue flows, he wanted it to unfold into as many themes as possible, which in their turn call for new tasks to be filled (Freire, 1972, p. 74).

The generative aspect of a dialogue not only bears new themes to be discussed but also evokes critical thinking as a liberational practice. While linking diverse meaningful themes dialoguers discover the interpenetration of problems – usually the dehumanizing and unjust elements deeply penetrated into our society. Hence, as a process of searching for the meaningful thematic, dialogues should include a concern for the links between themes, a concern to pose these themes as problems, and a concern for

their historical-cultural context (Freire, 1972, pp. 79-80). It should also be noticed that the more active an attitude men take in regard to the exploration of their thematics, the deeper they delve into reaching their critical awareness of reality, and into spelling out those thematics, taking possession of that reality (Freire, 1972, p. 78).

2.3.3 Problem-Posing Education

The methodology of thematic investigation, dialogue, conscientization, and overarching critical pedagogy all put in a significant effort to present reflective dimensions of individual's contextual reality. So does problem-posing education, an alternative direction of education under the umbrella of Freire's critical pedagogy that incorporates men-world relationship to abandon the conventional goal of deposit-making learning and replace it with the posing of the problems of men in relation to the world (Freire, 1972, pp. 52-53).

Problem-posing education was initially suggested by Freire as an opposition to the vertical pattern of 'banking education.' Freire coined conventional system of education 'banking education' rejecting its methodology of merely transferring the information from teacher to students. He believed that banking education attempts to mythicize reality, to conceal certain facts which explain the way men exist in the world. However through problem-posing education, learning sets itself the task of demythologizing (Freire, 1972, p. 56). In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972), Freire remarks:

In problem-posing education, men develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation (p. 56).

Continuing the previous discussion on two contradictory educational concepts, while banking education strictly rejects dialogue, problem-posing education regards dialogue as indispensable to the act of cognition to disclose reality (Freire, 1972, 56). It is considered that through dialogue the disabled communication between teacher and students is no longer present and problem-posing education leads them into a dialogical relation of teacher-student and students-teachers. It is to say that teacher is no longer merely the one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in their turn while being taught concurrently teach. Here teacher and students become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow. Men teach each other, mediated by the world, by the cognizable objects whereas in banking education they are 'owned' by the teacher (Freire, 1972, p. 53). Below is the table that succinctly lists the contrasting idea that two educational concepts contain.

Table 1 Banking Education vs. Problem-Posing Education

Banking Education	Problem-Posing Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mythicizes reality, conceals certain facts which explain the way men exist in the world. • Resists dialogue. • Treats students as objects of assistance. • Inhibits creativity and domesticates (although it cannot completely destroy) the intentionality of consciousness by isolating consciousness from the world, thereby denying men their ontological and historical vocation of becoming more fully human. • As immobilizing and fixating forces, it fails to acknowledge men as historical beings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • De-mythologizes. • Regards dialogue as indispensable to the act of cognition which unveils reality. • Makes students critical thinkers. • Bases itself on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality, thereby responding to the vocation of men as beings who are authentic only when engaged in inquiry and creative transformation • Takes man's historicity as its starting point.

Source: Reconstructed in a table format by the author based on the information provided in Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972, p. 56)

2.3.4 Culture Circle (Círculo de Cultura)

Culture circle, *Círculo de Cultura* in Portuguese, was first conceptualized and practiced by Freire in the 1950s. It comes from the way that participants of this discussion session sit around in a figure of a circle and as a part of problem-posing education, the vertical structure of a teacher or an authority is no longer valid (Freire, 1972, p. 63). The ‘culture’ from the culture circle comes from Freire’s anthropological concept of culture, that is, the distinction between nature and culture. Freire believed that discussing this distinction would allow illiterates to discover that they are makers of culture as much as literate people are, that aspects of their lives are man-made and therefore subject to change (Shor, 1987, p. 217).

Freire referred culture circle to name the moments for the development of a debate about the existential reality of the learners (Pelandré, 2002, p. 72), a moment where the circle animator or the group coordinator problematized the situations presented to the participants through pictures or slides taken from their own quotidian realities. By documenting the most urgent experiences by many of the participants of a culture circle and outlining those experiences in a generative theme (e.g., a case, story, photo, drawing, document), students are given the opportunities to name, problematize and deconstruct issues which are paramount in their lives (Souto-Manning, 2010, p. 31).

Thus it can be concluded that culture circle is a collective process of conscientization through a Freirean ensemble of problem-posing education, dialogue, praxis, generative theme and etc., embracing the most vital concepts of critical pedagogy.

CHAPTER 3. INTERNATIONAL LITERACY

PROGRAM OF “YO SÍ PUEDO”

Literacy is a gateway to learning. Without a skill of reading and writing, you can only rely on your sensual organs, listening, tasting or seeing the information which would drastically limit the amount of learning you are exposed to. However, literacy goes beyond learning. It should never be reduced to a mere instrument of simply delivering and receiving messages but with your creative literary skills, you nurture and widen your horizon and it takes you to becoming an interactive and conscious human being. Despite its interconnected nature of literacy, major international development institutions such as OECD or World Bank often refuse to offer funding for this field, condemning on its low impact, which the effectiveness rate of some projects may only be 12 to 15% (Abadzi, 1994, p. 7; UNESCO, 2008, p. 73).

It seems not all literacy programs are failing in terms of achieving high numerical outcomes of effectiveness. The literacy program of “Yo Sí Puedo (YSP)” has relatively high success rate, reaching up to 90% (UNESCO, 2008, p. 72) retrieved from the case of Ecuador in 2005. Despite its world-renowned success, it never promotes itself as a panacea to all literacy programs nor is it here to share ‘one-size-fits-all’ guidelines to sweep away all the other literacy education practices taking place around the world. Rather, it is here to emphasize what should be discussed before the fast growing numbers of literates, before the amount of money invested by the donors and

before what's been often talked aimlessly at the conventional tables of multinational donor communities.

Instead, it is here to talk about education; what matters to them as an 'education' aid program. By implementing a literacy program of YSP, Cuban educators practice their belief in education; the kind of message they want to deliver and also the kind of changes they want to see in each and every student in their class. What is important for them is not always about how many people become literates in how many days with how much money, but they embrace and value the powerful transformation they see amongst the illiterates which includes their engagement and participation within the society, their consciousness of not 'beings for another'⁵ but for themselves.

The spirit of YSP promoting literacy in hopes of nurturing a critical and conscious being very much encapsulates the educational philosophy of Paulo Freire. Unlike those literacy practices of the World Bank that are absent from educational theories or practices (Klees, 2012, p. 56), it's been acknowledged by the scholars in and out of the program (Canfux Gutiérrez, 2007, p. 87; Holzman, 1988, p. 183; Steele, 2008, p. 33) that it has adapted the core concepts of critical pedagogy by Paulo Freire.

This chapter sets the scene by providing an overview of Cuban education aid mainly discussing how the notion of education is perceived and what kind of consensus on the commitment to education has been reached among Cubans and their society. It embarks on a brief historical flashback of their educational accomplishment of "The National Literacy Campaign" in 1961. The campaign provides an iconic image of Cuban

⁵ 'Beings for another' signifies one's status that suffers from oppression and domination within social strata deprived of his/her individual will and critical consciousness of the surrounding reality. It situates in contrast to the 'Beings for oneself.'

education equally potent today how it is understood as a main driving force for the entire nation to move forward. Additionally, it is also interested in investigating how this domestically constructed concept of education had influenced in creating unique structure of their practice in the field of international assistance, namely the “South-South Cooperation (SSC)” represented in their world-renowned literacy program of “Yo Sí Puedo (YSP, Yes I Can).”

3.1 Overview of Cuban Education Aid

3.1.1 Understanding Education in Cuban Society

Mentioned briefly in the previous pages, Cuba is internationally referred as an iconic country of providing high quality education despite its weak economic foothold. To list some of the profiles of Cuban education; Cuba had achieved universal school enrollment and attendance, proclaimed as a “Territory Free from Illiteracy” from 1961, and has a strong scientific training base particularly in chemistry and medicine. And most of all, Cuba is consistent in pedagogical quality across the nation with the equal opportunity even in impoverished areas both rural and urban (Gasperini, 2000, p. 7).

With these educational achievements in mind, questions arise relating to Cuba’s exceptional interest and investment on education; what is their motivation and what does

high quality education mean to Cubans and why is it important? While searching for the answers, one can easily witness that they all somehow dissolve into one monumental event in Cuban education history; “The National Literacy Campaign” in 1961.

The fierce battle against illiteracy on the island of Cuba commenced with the announcement that was delivered by Cuban president Fidel Castro at the United Nations General Assembly in September 1960. His words were passionate and determined, stressing that through a concentrated literacy campaign and an equal access to education, “Cuba would be the first country in America without any illiterates.” With the year of 1961 proclaimed as “the Year of Education,” the national task to liquidate illiteracy kept moving forward by mobilizing the most people in Cuba. By the end of the year this heroic campaign had managed to produce more than 707,212 literates in the island. This reduced the illiteracy rate from the 20% to the 3.9%, which was incomparably lower than any other countries in America (Supko, 1998, p. 2).

Convening Cubans to celebrate its “Territory Free from Illiteracy”, the National Commission of Literacy presented the official evaluation of the yearlong campaign. Amongst many other decisive factors, it had pinpointed “the thorough coordination, the solidarity between revolutionary organizations and the public, the popular ambience, and the stimulus of workers from all sectors (Comisión Nacional de Alfabetización, 1961, p. 5)” to have played a pivotal role in terms of achieving this historical result. This national campaign was one of Castro’s first nation-wide projects that he had undertaken after his triumph of Cuban Revolution on the 1st of January in 1959. On his own terms education had a significant meaning: the public had to suffer from exhausting years of Batista’s regime mainly due to deprivation of education, which occurred to him as a

complete manipulation intended to blindfold the public and henceforth, persist his everlasting power over the state (Instituto Cubano del Libro, 1974, p.18). In order to avoid the retrogression to the old demagogy, Castro strived for better education not just provided because it is considered as basic human right, but the education that lets public express their opinion, take part in their society and be conscious of what is affecting their everyday life.

In sum, the process of 'Education' transcending from the past and transforming into the enlightened was what 'Revolution' meant to Castro. He once mentioned, "All revolution is an extraordinary process of education [...] Revolution and education are the same thing (Universidad Popular, 1961, p. 271)." Noting that this was quoted during the Cuban Revolution in the early 60's, he had assimilated 'Revolution' to the massive alteration of political values and practices with which Cubans had to be inculcated (Fagen, 1969, p. 4). Though carried out in mass, Castro believed the triumph of the revolution to be only achieved by transformation of individuals. He was indeed, well aware of the power of education and thus, attributed great importance to education as part of the means of achieving social transformation (Carnoy & Samoff, 1990, p.7).

The 60's experience and the understanding of education as a transformation of each human being and its accumulated impact that expands to that of the society are fundamental to how Cubans envision education today. Cuban education - since the drastic reform in the 60s and up until now - has been under close surveillance by the state government striving to provide equal access and high-quality education for all. It is true that Cubans have far fewer social and economic choices and far less political and individual freedom, but they have a far more broad-based opportunity to be highly

educated. In Cuban political interpretation, this right to health, security, and knowledge represents what they would call the "true" definition of human freedom (Carnoy, 2007, pp. 42-43).

In Cuba, formal schooling is responsible for children's academic and social progress and government's total commitment to quality education has resulted in what we call 'Cuba's Academic Advantage' today. It should be highlighted here that it is not to suggest all democratic societies be drawn into new political agenda of Cuban authoritarianism; but to take the opportunity to value and reaffirm that the role of state in Cuba, especially social context⁶in education facilitates children to enjoy equal access and decent quality of education nation wide.

Cuba's public responsibility in education is also expanded worldwide. It is offered in a form of international education aid which takes up the second largest proportion of all Cuba's overseas assistance (Hickling-Hudson, 2004, pp. 3-4, 19-20; Rich, 1989, p. 406). In the following chapter will be dealt in-depth, Cubans' interpretation of international aid and their key principles in practice.

⁶Carnoy (2007) points out that even within the context of political democracy, to secure better education for children it is important to approach the degree of social safety, moral imperative, and educational quality (Carnoy, 2007, p. 43). Here he specifically emphasizes a social context that assures the best opportunity for children to succeed in school, that is, a social context that provides a "moral imperative" for educational success and tight control over family choices. This is much more geared to override social class-based family and youth decisions that reproduce inequality and are inimical to a meritocratic society (Carnoy, 2007, p. 39).

3.1.2 Education Aid in Cuban Overseas Assistance

Unlike how international attention to Cuba's overseas assistance is relatively recent thing, Cuba is never a fledgling in this area. While establishing strong education system in its home country, Cuba has also experienced over four decades of internationalizing education by assisting other developing countries (Canfux Gutiérrez, 2007; Hickling-Hudson, 2009; Preston et al., 2012; Rich, 1989, pp. 406-407). Education aid - occupying the second largest proportion in Cuba's overseas assistance - appeared in a timely fashion being the result of two principal factors of the 80's. First of all, revolution in the 60's had emphasized education and personal development and they have contributed to the emergence of large skilled labor force. Second, Cuba was relatively challenged in monetary forms of aid due to the U.S. trade embargo around that time (Hickling-Hudson, 2004, pp. 3-4, 19-20; Rich, 1989, p. 406). With two of these factors combined, it was timely adequate and righteous for Cubans to usher themselves into ambitious humanitarian assistance worldwide.

Some might argue that this foreign policy of Cuba was to make the most use of surplus human capital and attract hard currency toward the homeland. However, economic return on pure aid was not in Cuba's immediate favor. Cuba's commitment to humanitarian assistance goes far deeper than economic gain. Economic benefits enjoyed by Cuba from its Third World trading partners occupied such a minute portion of trade balance that even this hardly warrants such vigorous assistance programs (Rich, 1989, p.

411). For Cuban civilians working abroad, it was not uncommon that the returnees receive favored positions or salary increases as a by-product of their services abroad. But, because there is no guarantee of improved position, it is doubtful that material incentives are the reason that Cubans volunteer to go abroad (Rich, 1989, p. 410).

Then what is it? What are the principles for Third World itself Cubans to jump into field of international aid either free or low cost (Rich, 1989, p. 409)?

Just how Cubans understand education within a socially secured consensus of “moral imperative,” internationalism as well as education aid occurs to them in a similar sense that it is a moral duty, a matter of principle and consciousness. It was evident that Cubans abroad demonstrated strong commitment to humanitarian and patriotic concerns and among themselves there was a prestige value to being an internationalist. This was perceived along the line with post-revolutionary development support that Cubans received worldwide. Thus, international assistance was instilled deep in Cubans’ mind - using Fidel Castro’s own words - an opportunity to “settle their debt with humanity (Rich, 1989, p. 410).”

With all above in mind, fundamental principle of Cuban education aid is a practice of internationalism that values collaboration; a collaboration that is a matter of solidarity, not of financial flows or financial leverage (Anderson, 2008, p. 55). This means, unlike much of the aid provided by the international financial institutions, Cuban assistance does not serve the larger goal of drawing participants into the market arrangement of economic globalization. They don’t impose conditionality on the partners, but enter into negotiated and agreed relationships with them (Preston et al, 2012, Kindle location 883-886). They have a remarkable record of mixing with the

nationals without much cultural conflict as often occurs with more ethnocentric western advisors. And this along with many other factors develops the greater trust that improves the chance of successful outcome of development projects (Rich, 1989, p. 411). In this way, Cuba has been building regional solidarity in change with the high quality education service. Cuban educators were agile with finding the educational niche apt for the development of the counterpart country and within a cost-sharing framework, the financial support was occasional depending on the cases of educational cooperation with fragile nation states such as Haiti or East Timor (Anderson, 2008, p.55; Hickling-Hudson, 2004, p. 20).

- South-South Cooperation in Cuban Education Aid

In addition, Cuba's understanding of overseas assistance is that countries of the 'South'⁷ should try to reduce their dependence on the wealthy bloc of countries by assisting each other (Hickling-Hudson, 2004, p. 20). This is a counteractive response to opprobrium that the mainstream aid modalities have been receiving over the past decades. Escobar (1997, p. 91) in his article of *The Making and Unmaking of the Third World Through Development* pungently criticized that "Development was and continues to be a top-down, ethnocentric and technocratic approach, which treated people and

⁷The term South denotes low-income states or nations, in contrast to North that refers to wealthy developed states.

cultures as abstract concepts, statistical figures to be moved up and down in the charts of ‘progress.’”

In above description, development is backed by the theory of modernization degrading cultural aspect as something that can be disappeared as one nation economically advances. Hence, aid policies - with no exception to the education field - tend to digress from the context and local consultation and be partisan mainly adjusted to those of the ‘modernized’ donor country. And this approach, to some extent, makes the current development practices neo-colonist in nature (Steele, 2008, p.32).

The precise juncture of ‘Northern’ socioeconomic principles and neo-colonist nature is what Cubans strive to defy in the aid community. Regretting on the centuries of repression by outside entities that Cuba and majority of the ‘South’ countries both share, as a member of the ‘South’ Cuba stresses on partners’ ownership in achieving their ‘social transformation.’ In this sense, the role of Cuban education aid is pivotal reflecting on the impact that its educational projects brought to the country half a century ago and today with its high quality of education, it is righteous that education aid takes up big proportion in Cuba’s overseas assistance (Rich, 1989, pp. 406-407).

Cubans participate at the international development scene with identical beliefs and ideas extended to the international settings. That is to say that they emphasize the development of education, first and foremost to any other sectors in terms of eradicating poverty in the Third World. However, Cubans deal with the issues of international development beyond short-lived betterment. To Cubans, the ultimate goal of international development lies at the stable growth and prosperity in the counterpart country. Like how Cubans transformed and developed their society through Cuban

Revolution in the early 60's, the aid intervention that Cubans are offering to the world signifies "revolution" in their respective countries. It was "revolution" in a way that it expressed the dissatisfaction and rejection to the present impoverished society and aspired for transformation, its development. Furthermore, it was truly revolutionary that in order to transcend from the economically and socially deprived past they implemented interventions that were heavily driven by the education sector namely through a literacy program of YSP.

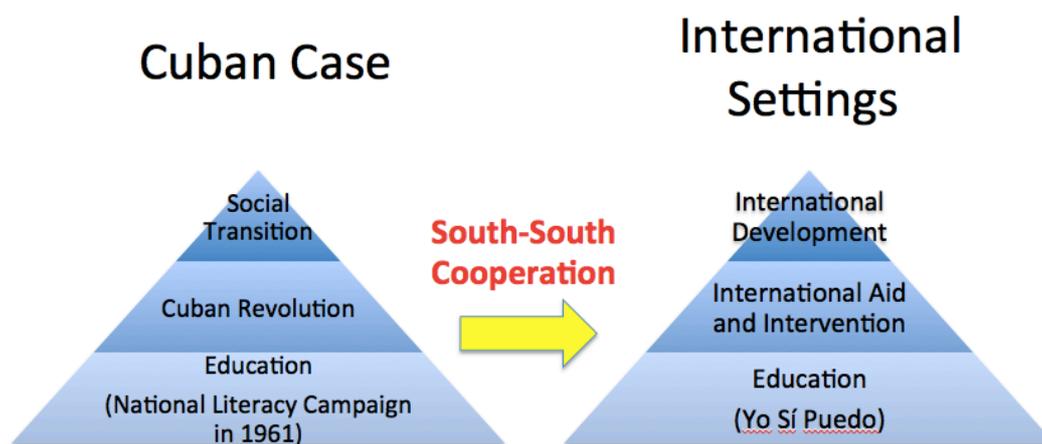


Figure 3 Cuban understanding of International Education Aid

3.2 Characteristics of Cuban Education Aid: In the Case of “Yo Sí Puedo”

In this section of 3.2, the chapter makes a closer approach to the Cuban education aid program of “Yo Sí Puedo (YSP, Yes I Can)” presenting its overall description and its unique methodology designed by the IPLAC (Instituto Pedagógico Latinoamericano y Caribeño, Pedagogical Institute of Latin America and Caribbean) scholars of Cuba. Not only does it introduce YSP’s alphanumeric literacy learning but also it delves into the stages that the program goes through while implemented in a destined country, namely ‘Socialization and Mobilization,’ ‘The YSP Classes,’ and ‘Post-Literacy of Yo Sí Puedo Seguir (Yes I Can Continue).’ In 3.2.2, the theoretical concept of the program is elaborated which provides rationale and the essential linkage to the theoretical analysis allocated in the pages of Chapter 2.

3.2.1 Brief Introduction and Methodology of “Yo Sí Puedo”

The learning method of literacy, “Yo Sí Puedo (YSP)” was designed by the school of educators in IPLAC (Instituto Pedagógico Latinoamericano y Caribeño,

Pedagogical Institute of Latin America and Caribbean) in 2000. It was first experimented in Haiti by broadcasting its lessons as a radio program and not after long, it was also available on TV. Up until 2011, this literacy program had benefited more than 5 million people from 28 different countries (Jaime Canfux Gutiérrez et al., 2011, p. 11). These included the third world, like Haiti and Nicaragua and developed states such as Canada, New Zealand and Spain.

The main reason for this outstanding program to have been welcomed by the world derives from its cost-effectiveness. Program's being aired collectively it doesn't require many instructors in site. The average cost is estimated US\$ 23-33 per learner and it has relatively high success rate, reaching up to 90% retrieved from the case of Ecuador in 2005. In principle, a learner can acquire a basic level of literacy skills in sixty-five sessions over two months for a maximum of two hours a day (UNESCO, 2006a, p. 5; UNESCO, 2006b, p. 228). In terms of learning mechanics, since each letter is provided in a pair form with numbers, due to the daily transaction with money it is easier for illiterates to memorize (UNESCO, 2006a, p. 2).

- Three Phases of “Yo Sí Puedo”: ‘Socialization and Mobilization,’ ‘The “Yo Sí Puedo” Classes,’ and ‘Post-Literacy’

Though each program of “Yo Sí Puedo” included characteristics specific to

partner country's context, most had passed through three key phases; 'Socialization and Mobilization,' 'The "Yo Sí Puedo" classes,' and 'Post-Literacy' (Boughton et al., 2013, p. 9). At the nascent stage of 'Socialization and Mobilization', one distinct approach to adult literacy education is that just how illiteracy⁸ was portrayed as a legacy of unjust history in Cuba, lack of education was considered as responsibility of the whole community, rather than a problem for individuals (Boughton et al., 2013, p. 13). Thus, by emancipating individuals from the stigma of deprived education and instead highlighting it as a massive historical and social problem, people are encouraged to finally reach for the opportunity to be educated. For illiterates, enrolling in such a public activity is a significant step. Students would not have volunteered to sign up for the classes if there had not been a strong feeling of community support (Boughton et al., 2013, p. 14). In sum, this literacy program explicitly had its own way of interpreting literacy education and had managed to embody it into the local context.

Before the initiation of actual course, at the phase of "Yo Sí Puedo" classes, learners are classified into three levels of 'Purely Illiterates (Iletrados Puros),' 'Semi-Illiterates (Semi-Iletrados)' and 'Special Illiterates (Iletrados Especiales).' In each class, students spend an hour or two repeating numbers and learning alphabets – depending on the language that is instructed – through a TV program. Going into details about the classes, first few minutes of YSP start with motivating students for learning. Class discusses what the difficulties have been in terms of learning or their life itself. Then they move on to 30 minutes of TV lesson followed by short period of group reflection.

⁸Torres (1991) mentioned that Illiteracy is an emblem of "the underdevelopment caused by imperialist intervention and an indirect product of the country's economic and political backwardness in Cuba (Torres, 1991, p. 126)".

The trained class facilitator must confirm their learning before carrying on to the next step (Canavire, 2011, p.6).

With each class following the procedures above, the learning stages are divided into three different blocks of 'Preparation (Adiestramiento)', 'Learning to Read and Write (Enseñanza de la Lecto-Escritura)' and 'Consolidation (Consolidación)' (UNESCO, 2006a, p. 2). The first ten classes of the program are allocated for 'Preparation' stage, where students develop oral expressions and psychomotor abilities. Primary learning in this stage consists of graphic representation of numbers from 0 to 30 and studying vocals. Among the next 42 classes of 'Learning to Read and Write,' in 23 classes students learn each letter every day and the rest 19 classes they spend linking the numbers with the previously unknown letters. The last 13 classes of 'Consolidation' are directed to solve problems with handwriting and logically organize a short sentence (Canavire, 2011, pp. 5-6). In order to be considered literate, a person must be able to write a legible letter in a defined format at the end of the course (UNESCO, 2006a, p. 2).

However, this program as a part of adult literacy education does not limit itself with teaching knowledge about the language, it thinks beyond the classroom about the lives of the impoverished and marginalized who take up most of the illiterates. For instance, each lesson begins with a phrase in which there are words containing a letter of the day but makes a specific point or raises an idea. The first phrase is simply 'Open the gate,' the message being so familiar but enlightening that literacy is opening up a new world and you've started a new journey. Later in the lesson treats variety of thematic issues such as environment, hygiene, nutrition and gender (Boughton et al., 2013, p. 16). This literacy education is strongly influenced by Freire who had challenged the banking

style of colonial education implemented to acculturate the society to the Northern standards and instead, espoused relevant education that is learner-based and dialogical pedagogy (Steele, 2008, p. 33). With this Freirean philosophy in mind, “crucial to the method’s success are the learner’s relationship with the educator and consistent attendance to give a sense of identification with the sociocultural context” (UNESCO, 2006b, p. 228).

Depending on each country’s program, YSP sometimes carries on with basic arithmetic exercises at the end of the course. Responding to the demands of countries such as Mexico and Paraguay, some communities have adopted these elements for YSP-trained individuals to access and continue to other formal programs (UNESCO, 2006a, p. 2). In some cases, the course is provided with sequel name of “Yo Sí Puedo Seguir (Yes I Can Continue),” in order to encourage them to pursue the basic level of education and prevent learners from retrogressing back to the status of illiteracy. These efforts are to do with the last phase, ‘Post-Literacy.’ This stage consists of activities designed to help the newly literate participants to continue their literacy beyond what has been achieved in the basic lessons, and to create healthy literate culture in the community (Boughton et al., 2013, p. 9). Yet again, the principles of YSP an education aid based on solidarity and humanistic interaction, considers literacy as socio-educational practice; a collective responsibility of community, not an autonomous skill. Indeed, comprehensive literacy is a responsibility of whole community since it is also about embedding into ongoing community life: it is the evolution of low literates into active agents through a gradual process of social inclusion from the development of themselves, expanded to their families and to their community (Boughton et al., 2013, p. 23).

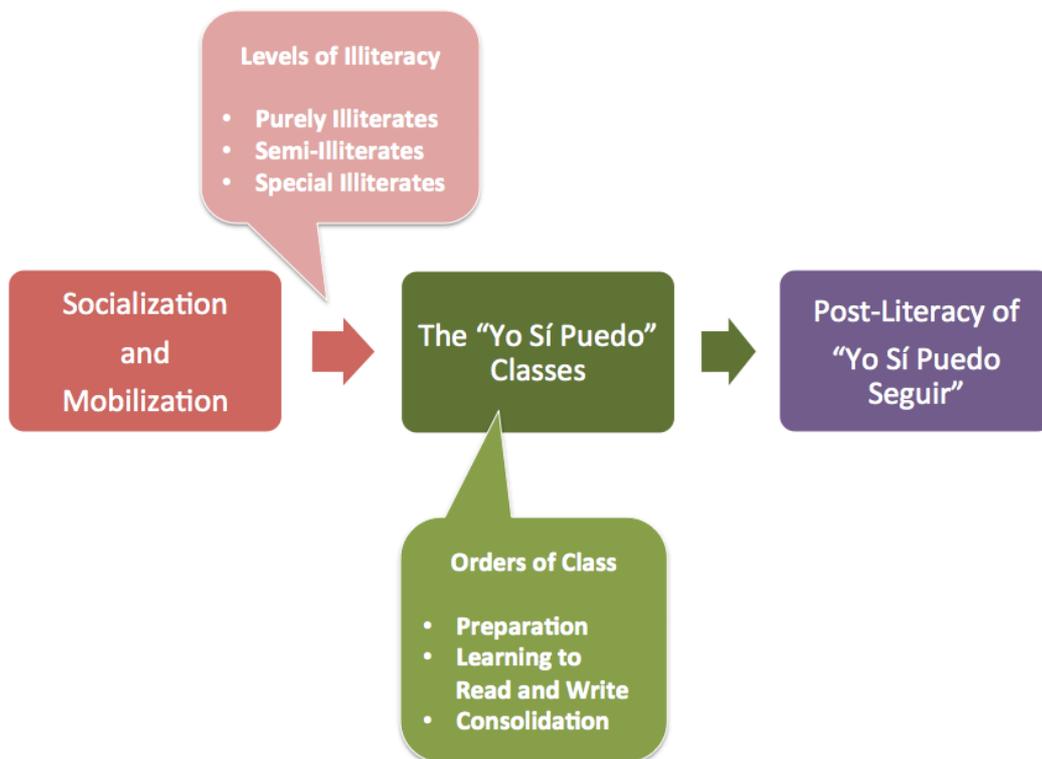


Figure 4 Stages of Cuban Literacy Program, "Yo Sí Puedo"

3.2.2 The Theoretical Concept of the Literacy Program "Yo Sí Puedo"

Illiteracy in Cuba, especially in the era of Cuban Revolution and onwards, has had a significant meaning. Illiteracy was an emblem of "the underdevelopment caused by imperialist intervention and an indirect product of the country's economic and political backwardness (Torres, 1991, p. 126)." Thus, with its spiritual origin from the National Literacy Campaign in 1961, education aid through a literacy program is truly

revolutionary enlightening the citizens from deprivation that each counterpart country had suffered from, just like the campaign's slogan; "Be educated to be free (Ser cultos para ser libre)." Thus, when embarking on a new "Yo Sí Puedo (YSP)" program, great importance is attributed to contextual analysis. They examine wide variety of aspects about the counterpart country ranging from its indigenous language, linguistic norms, socio-economy, customs, and folklore amongst many other critical factors that are assumed to influence on the formation of learners.

The IPLAC scholars have defined that "literacy is a process of socio-educative integration in which you dialectically develop an ability to read and write, the capacity to be prepared for the job market, and the education to be able to shape your life" (A. Pérez García y otros, 2006, p. 18). In this sense, learning cannot be excluded from the life equation that the process of consolidating the new learning with the previous acquisitions becomes a serious issue. In order to arouse the minimum amount of collision between the two, it is critical for program designers to be fully aware of their culture, history, and social norms, acknowledging that the ultimate goal of literacy lies at the better adaptation to where they are from; the successful return to their ethnic group, their community, and their nation (Jaime Canfux Gutiérrez et al., 2006, p. 22).

The program's socio-educative approach coincides with Freirean understanding of literacy, as it was affirmed in IPLAC's publication that the knowledge of the world which surrounds learners should precede before heading into teaching how to read and write (Canfux Gutiérrez, 2007, p. 87). Thinking society over individual also applies conversely. The scholars of the literacy program do not underestimate or overlook the role of each human being in the world. They value human beings as a living reality of

individuals and history. This implies that while human beings interact with objective reality, they also maintain and remain in their own moment of history in order to integrate in the context of social and intercultural relation. Committed to permanent changes and transformations, dialectic fashion is applied at all times (Jaime Canfux Gutiérrez, 2007, p. 85).

Understanding two different dimensions of the world and individuals through a scope of one another and the role of literacy enhancing their mutual communications and interactions, these can also be reflected from the words of Freire (1985) in his literature of *Politics of Education*. There he noted:

“Learning to read and write cannot be done as something parallel or nearly parallel to illiterate’s reality...Illiterate learners must see the need for another learning process: that of “writing” about one’s life, “reading” about one’s reality...The critical view of literacy...develops students’ consciousness of their rights, along with their critical presence in the real world (Freire, 1985, p. 10).”

CHAPTER 4. DISCUSSION

In chapter 2 we explored deeply into the world of Freirean educational philosophy as an alternative approach to current international education aid. He envisioned educational utopia, viable only through critical pedagogy that allows people to recognize the unjust social order, defend their rights, and voice out their opinion as a conscious being. Here the discussion also contained Freire's extended view – extended thus, analogous to his previous interpretation of the dichotomous society - towards the impoverished areas around the world as opposed to the metropolitan cities in the First World. Then off to chapter 3 we had covered the overview of Cuban education aid mainly discussing how the topic of education is perceived among Cubans and in Cuban society and how this domestically constructed understanding had influenced in creating unique structure of their practice in the field of international assistance, especially in the sector of education reflected in the case of “Yo Sí Puedo (YSP).”

Continuing to chapter 4, it is allocated to analyze YSP (Chapter 3) through the lenses of Freirean educational philosophy (Chapter 2). Mentioned briefly in the previous chapters, it has been affirmed by the scholars in and out of the program (Canfux Gutiérrez, 2007, p. 87; Holzman, 1988, p. 183; Steele, 2008, p. 33) that YSP had adapted and embodied Freire's critical pedagogy. Hence, the aim for this chapter is to identify some of the characteristics of YSP that can be represented and introduced as a concrete realization of Freire's critical pedagogy. Like the figure below, we will discover what features of YSP overlap with those of Freire, based on the preliminary studies provided in chapter 2.

Additionally, it must be noticed that this chapter is constructed in two-folds, 4.1 and 4.2 respectively. Chapter 4.1 highlights the common features of YSP and Freirean critical pedagogy and later in 4.2, it carries on by sharing what YSP is deprived of and thus required in order to present a better fulfillment of Freire’s literacy education. Moreover, the challenges of YSP as an international aid program are also revealed in this section. The author emphasizes that it is equally valuable to analyze the limit of this Cuban literacy program in order to remain balanced and at the same time, draw a fruitful implication to the ongoing practices of worldwide education official development aid.

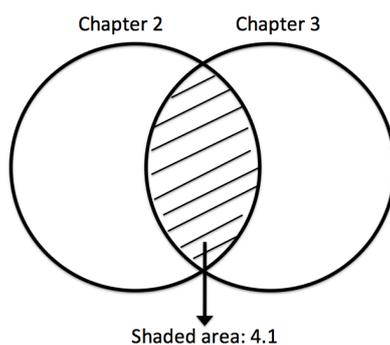


Figure 5 Discussion of Chapter 4

4.1 “Yo Sí Puedo (YSP)” as a Practice of Freirean Education Philosophy

In this part of the chapter it will be discussed how this internationally applied literacy program from Cuba qualifies as an embodiment of Freirean critical pedagogy (Shaded area of the figure above). Based on the studies conducted in chapter 3, this

section will follow the framework of the previous analysis divided in two aspects: Freirean approach to international development – including his suggested aid architecture – and to literacy education accompanied by his core concepts of ‘conscientization,’ ‘Dialogue and Thematic Investigation,’ ‘Problem-posing Education,’ and ‘Culture Circle.’

4.1.1 YSP’s Approach to International Development

As much as Freire was engaged with social and educational issues in his home country of Brazil, he was truly an international educationalist partaking diverse education reforms in other impoverished regions of the world, many in Latin America and also in Africa such as those ex-colonies of Portugal, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. Before and after his experience in the Third World he often expressed their lamentable situation drawing an analogy from his previous contention about the dichotomous social structure of the oppressor and the oppressed. He believed that the perpetual poverty in the developing world is due to the manipulation of the wealthy nations which have meticulously designed to interfere with and prevent the economic independence or development through measures such as distorted barbarian image of the Third World or philanthropic international aid which is often masked and tends to be benevolent only to the vested societies around the world.

Instead, Freire proposes what he calls ‘authentic help’ that allows foreign aid to

be effective, meaningful, and literally ‘authentic’ by operating upon the spirit of solidarity. He suggests that authentic help involves both ‘the helper’ and ‘the helped’ help each other mutually and grow together recognizing that liberation and transformation of the reality call for dialogic participation and a critical consciousness of both parties. Through these practices they can escape from the Manichaeian attitude of “saving” and “correcting” the reality of the Third World feeding into the criteria of the wealthy donor countries.

Freire’s understanding of international aid described above resembles that of Cuban international policy classified as ‘South-South Cooperation (SSC)’ as opposed to the conventional practices of the traditional donor group of the North, namely ‘North-South Cooperation.’ Cubans criticized that the current international aid is strictly market driven and neo-colonial in nature perpetuating the poverty of the global South. Thus they suggest an alternative approach that the countries of the South should try reduce their dependence on the North by assisting one another. They do this by operating upon the fundamental principle of solidarity without any financial leverage that usually triggers and draws both donors and recipients into the market arrangement of economic globalization. However they express solidarity by celebrating partnership between two parties of cooperation free from any expected economic compensation to be returned. Preston et al. (2012, Kindle Locations 1508-1517) list some of examples of Cuban aid that characterizes this point well;

1. *Respect for the national sovereignty and self-determination of the countries involved;*

2. *No conditionalities;*
3. *Agreements take account of the different economic levels of each country, so that countries can help each other on the basis of solidarity rather than following only the rules of the market. In education, this means that a cost-sharing principle that includes paying local salaries to Cuban educators is worked out with countries that can afford it, while the poorest countries are given Cuban assistance for little or no payment;*
4. *A variety of approaches to bilateral financing are identified;*
5. *The joining of a third party is admitted if this party agrees with the general solidarity principles (the third party could be, for example, UNESCO, UNICEF, the UNDP, or it could be another country);*
6. *Technologies and knowledge are transferred to poor countries in need of them, on the basis that knowledge is the patrimony of humanity, and not private property for profit. This means, for example, that the Cuban-designed adult literacy materials and approaches to medical training are shared, not sold.*

In the following page, the figure 6 is presented as a hybrid form of previous two figures; figure 3 of Cuban understanding of Education Aid and figure 2 of Freirean Approach to International Development selecting an area of authentic help. It can be understood from this figure below that the vertical arrangement of figure 2 between the helper and helped has been parallelized through the process of solidarity and Freire's

solidarity-oriented model lets Cuban SSC to be understood within equal terms. In so far as Freire's interpretation of solidarity is concerned, it should also be mentioned that it emphasizes not only the dialogic participation of the both parties but also raises critical consciousness of the reality that they are determined to transform. Herein lies another crucial accordance between Freirean approach and YSP that the Cuban literacy program is founded upon educational goals of promoting critical awareness towards the society. More about the educational connection is elaborated in the following section.

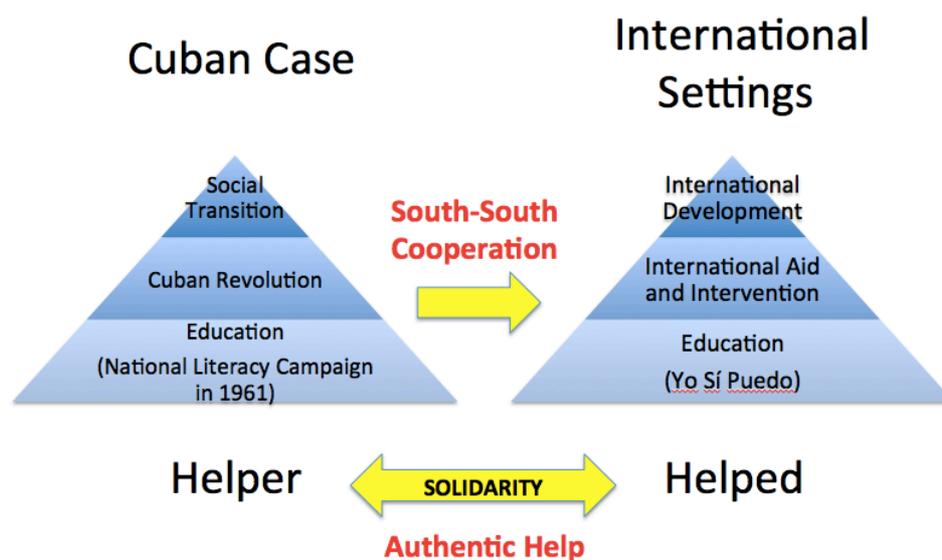


Figure 6 Cuban SSC and Freire's Authentic Help

4.1.2 YSP's Approach to Literacy Education

In this section of chapter 4, we will discover some of the practices of YSP that reflect and characterize Freire's critical pedagogy focusing on its core concepts studied

in chapter 2. They range from Freire's educational goal of conscientization and problem-posing education, to literacy education in process – features of critical pedagogy evident in class - such as dialogue, thematic investigation and the group of culture circle.

First we'll touch upon the emblem of critical pedagogy, Freire's term of conscientization. In the preliminary studies presented in chapter 2, it was affirmed by Freire's (1985, p. 93) text of *The Politics of Education* that conscientization refers to the process of which men as a conscious human being achieves a deepening awareness both of the sociocultural reality that shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality. It is a combined concept of raising awareness and building capacity; a collaboration of reflection and action. That is, when illiterates recognize the world not as a "given" world but dynamically "in the making," man exists with the world through his action of simultaneously transforming the world and grasping and expressing the world's reality in their creative language (Freire, 1985, p. 68; p. 106).

- YSP's Approach to Conscientization

The IPLAC (Instituto Pedagógico Latinoamericano y Caribeño, The Pedagogic Institute of Latin America and Caribbean) scholars who designed and conducted the Cuban literacy program "Yo Sí Puedo (Yes I can, YSP)" noted in their publication of *Hacia una escuela cubana de alfabetización (Towards a Cuban school of literacy, p. 85)* that the literacy method of YSP directs its purpose to elevate the self esteem of people who never had the opportunity to become literate and who had been excluded from the

social participation in terms of – but not limited to - improving their economic situation. This Cuban method deals with increasing a confidence of the participants, and finding themselves a strong conviction that they can, like the name of the program, become confident and of course literate. Cuban educators find this possibility and their capacity inherent in every participant of the program.

Similar to Freire's conscientization within literacy education, neither is the goal of YSP confined to mechanical learning of rudiments of letters and numbers. First of all, YSP acknowledges power dynamics of the society and it reads the complex relationship of education and society. It is well aware of how literacy attributes to drawing a clear line between the haves and non-haves and how it fabricates a social phenomenon of exclusion and creates delicate social strata that hinder a certain group of people from jumping on the ladder to a better economic condition.

Thus, under the name of literacy education, Cuban educators never fail to concentrate on the transformation of an individual and his/her surrounding society. It starts off as an individualized process of strengthening self esteem and empowering the marginalized. Then it involves the transformation of illiterate from economically and mentally enfeebled human being to the person who is confident and highly active and participatory putting him/herself into the social scenes to improve his/her economic condition. Once again, analogous to Freire's conscientization, YSP is a dialectical, simultaneous, and synthetic work of reflection and action, a practice of what Freire calls, praxis.

- YSP's Approach to Dialogue, Thematic Investigation and Problem-Posing Education

Freire (1972) remarked in his foundational text of critical pedagogy movement *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* that “dialogue is an encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world (p. 61).” To name the world, he believed that dialogue should entail generative themes that stimulate and contribute to dialoguers’ critical thinking which is essential in terms of constructing a true dialogue. Freire had these themes of dialogue named generative because he wanted the topic to unfold as many times as possible discovering more interpenetrative issues and problems of the society.

Freire’s critical thinking and dialogic aspect under the concept of problem-posing education is also evident in the program of YSP. Cuban educators employ an extensive and composite approach to their literacy education believing that learning to read and write derives from an idea or a phrase that triggers debate or reflection. They think that phrase is a linguistic unity that conveys an idea and opinion about a certain aspect of social life and nature. Thus, YSP doesn’t limit itself to the conventional way of literacy education but rather pursues a conscientized and transformative learning of literacy (Canfux Gutiérrez, 2005, p. 45).

Each class of YSP goes through the stages of ‘Introduction (Introducción),’ ‘Learning to Reading and Write (Aprendizaje de la Lecto-Escritura),’ and ‘Exercise and

Consolidation (Ejercitación y Consolidación).’ At the opening stage of Introduction, class starts with an idea or a line whose meaning arouses debate or reflection. This idea that triggered a dialogue always carries the key word with a letter that will mainly be covered in class. To sum up, the idea or the phrase of the day here operates similar to the general theme from Freire’s critical pedagogy and the debate itself refers to a dialogue or thematic investigation of problem-posing education in his terms.

For example, due to the alphanumeric system of literacy education in YSP, first five numbers are vocals, A, E, I, O, and U respectively and because of its most use, alphabet A is paired with number one like the figure below. A phrase or idea for this class would be ‘Open the gate,’ the message being so familiar but enlightening that literacy is opening up a new world and you’ve started a new journey. Later in the lessons can treat variety of thematic issues such as environment, hygiene, nutrition and gender (Boughton, et al., 2013, p. 16).



Figure 7 Alphanumeric Pair of Alphabet A and Number 1

The dialogue or debate in the opening stage of the class is lead by a facilitator of the literacy group however s/he is not called a teacher because s/he is considered as one

another member of the literacy group whose role is to ‘facilitate’ the learning of the participants (Canfux Gutiérrez, 2005, p. 52). In the Cuban literacy program, facilitators are expected to:

- Create conditions for participants to be active in the study process.
- Encourage reflection, exchange of experiences and discussion among the participants.
- Continue the exercise of learning through drills and activities that are presented in the video-class.
- Address individual differences of the participants by providing individualized help to those who express greatest difficulty (Canfux Gutiérrez, 2005, p. 53).

It is manifested here that facilitator’s intervention to learning is strictly confined, literally facilitating the learning of the participants. It is understood that becoming literate simultaneously with deepening critical awareness cannot and must not be done by someone else and this makes the relationship of facilitator and students mutually respected and valued. This horizontal relationship between teacher-students was also mentioned within the concept of problem-posing education as opposed to the vertical pattern of banking education. Freire discussed that through dialogues in problem-posing education, teacher is no longer merely the one who teaches, but who is himself taught with students. Here teacher and students become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow (Freire, 1972, p. 53).

- YSP's Approach to Culture Circle

Freirean concept of Culture Circle comes from the way that participants attend the session in a figure of a circle free from any vertical structure of a teacher or an authority during the discussion (Freire, 1972, p. 63). The cultural aspect of this group accepts Freire's anthropological concept of culture, that is, the distinction between nature and culture. Freire believed that discussing this distinction would allow illiterates to discover that they are the makers of culture as much as literate people are, that aspects of their lives are man-made and therefore subject to change (Shor, 1987, p. 217).

The Cuban literacy program of "Yo Sí Puedo" is also highly culture-sensitive and takes into account the anthropological aspect of culture throughout the program. First, the program makes clear that at the designing and preparatory stage, the researchers conduct a study on the destined community, particularly its language and linguistic norms, socioeconomic characteristics, customs, folklore, and among other equally important aspects. The study provides fundamental information and material utilized throughout the program such as creating diverse characters appeared in the audiovisual recording, an archetype of the culture to which participants belong. The characters in the video represent the lifestyle, cultural specificities and linguistic and economic ways that participants relate to their community, ethnicity or country. While learning literacy through the quotidian characters of farmers, plumbers, and single moms on the program, participants relate and identify themselves with them and they feel empowered and strengthen their self esteem (Canfux Gutiérrez et al, 2006, p. 26).

The preliminary studies of the assigned community are primarily for Cuban

educators to grasp upon the characteristics of the population and identify its cultural foundation and background. Cuban educators understand that the participants are not ignorant but have individually accumulated their own sets of knowledge through daily lives and from the oral culture of practical experiences as well as from the transmission between generations (Canfux Gutiérrez, 2005, p. 53). This makes the learning process anthropological in nature interacting with objective reality experienced by participants in their specific historical moment. Later, it develops participants to be able partake at the social and intercultural relationship more in a dialectical way, constantly subjected to changes and transformations (Canfux Gutiérrez, 2007, p. 85).

4.2 Limits of “Yo Sí Puedo” as a Practice of Freirean Education Philosophy

Freire (1985) in his publication of *The Politics of Education* (P. 26) referred to a dialogic education of the peasants and envisioned how this political-pedagogical reach could cover all areas of agrarian reform in the Third World possibly through a radio program run by the relevant government agency. Interestingly enough, Cuban government had been in charge of exercising such practice in the Third World and its program “Yo Sí Puedo (YSP)” had been acknowledged by the international community winning diverse international education awards – such as the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize in 2006 - for its influential and effective educational work around the world.

No matter how successful the program can be or despite the warm welcome it has received from the international development community, it still faces limitations or the challenges when incorporating and modifying Freirean education philosophy into their international policies practiced by Cuban government. First and foremost, it has been clarified by Freirean scholars that his critical pedagogy is a form of cultural politics that transcends the theoretical boundaries of any one specific political doctrine, most of the times identified as a classical Marxist theory by his critics (Giroux, 1985, p. 13). However, it is broader and more fundamental than any one specific political discourse since it represents a theoretical discourse whose underlying interests are fashioned around a struggle for forms of knowledge, skills, and social relations that provide the conditions for social and, hence, self-emancipation (Giroux, 1985, p. 13). Freire's cultural politics as an expression of radical social theory, however, seems to be imparted or degenerated into an umbrella of political agendas implemented to strengthen the political ties of the Socialists bloc. It's been affirmed by the Cuban experts that their literacy program is spread to 28 different countries and has reached more than 5 million literates. The highest expression of this policy was however the joint collaboration of Cuba, Venezuela and Bolivia to develop the national literacy program in Bolivia within the support of Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América (ALBA, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America) (Canfux Gutiérrez, 2011, p. 11). Here, YSP deeply rooted with Freire's liberation and conscientization was nothing more than a masked celebration and distorted introduction of new political bloc.

Continuing the previous discussion, the author would like to contend that as a literacy program of practicing Freire's critical pedagogy, YSP makes an immense

mistake of trapping itself in a self-contradictory position by linking itself to the formal education system through the post-literacy program of “Yo Sí Puedo Seguir (YSPS).” Freire had expressed an utter denial of connecting a primary schooling as an appropriate follow-up for the after literacy. He addressed that it is as if adult literacy were a necessary treatment to be administered so that people can go through the conventional primary school monotony (Freire, 1985, p. 26). Through the program of YSPS however, Cuban educators suggest later joining and being included back to the traditional structure of schooling (Canfux Gutiérrez, 2007, pp. 94-95; UNESCO, 2006a, p. 2) without transforming or rectifying unjust social orders that have prevailed and have constantly prevented them from the active participation of the society. Unlike Freire’s belief in education ‘the former as an instrument of oppression and the latter as an instrument of liberation (Freire, 1972, p. 96),’ YSP and YSPS are yet again analogous to the conventional practice of education feeding into the dominant groups of the society, in this case to the leaders of socialist groups operating identically enough to any other privileged groups that Freire intended to defy.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

The global education policy formulated by powerful international organizations tends to include;

“narrow economic and utilitarian goals set for education, the limited and misleading input-output and cost-benefit analysis employed, the inadequate knowledge base on which decisions are made, the failure to take into account the context as well as the voices of the intended beneficiaries of proposed reforms of education systems, and the general neglect of teachers and the conditions that would enhance their work (Arnove, 2012, p. 1).”

Accordingly, the demand for the alternative global aid architecture arose comprised of policies that are more democratic and participatory (Hickling-Hudson et al., 2012, p. 210) and that would authentically gear to strengthening the potential of countries to find their own paths to poverty alleviation and to individual and social flourishing (Arnove, 2012, p. 1). Now this leads to the focus of the study on Cuban education aid program of “Yo Sí Puedo (YSP)” what it implies and suggests as an alternative approach to the Northern strategies underlining standardized testing, paraprofessional teachers for their low cost, user fees, and privatization (Hickling-Hudson et al., 2012, p. 209).

5.1 Summary

In the beginning of the study, chapter 2 covers the overview of the challenges in the field of International Education Development (IED) in two different angles of aid architecture and the issues of quality in international education aid respectively. The latter half of the chapter discusses the world of Freirean educational philosophy as an alternative approach to IED where he envisioned educational utopia, viable only through critical pedagogy that allows people to recognize the unjust social order, defend their rights, and voice out their opinion as a conscious being. Here the discussion also contained Freire's extended view - extended meaning analogous to his previous interpretation of the dichotomous society - towards the impoverished areas around the world as opposed to the metropolitan cities in the First World. Then off to chapter 3 it deals with Cuban education aid mainly discussing how the topic of education is perceived among Cubans and in Cuban society and how this domestically constructed understanding had influenced in creating unique structure of their practice in the field of international assistance, especially in the sector of education reflected in the case of YSP.

Continuing to chapter 4, it is allocated to analyze YSP (Chapter 3) through the lenses of Freirean educational philosophy (Chapter 2). Mentioned briefly in the previous chapters, it has been affirmed by the scholars in and out of the program (Canfux Gutiérrez, 2007, p. 87; Holzman, 1988, p. 183; Steele, 2008, p. 33) that YSP had adapted and embodied Freire's critical pedagogy. Hence, the aim for this chapter is to identify some of the characteristics of YSP that can be represented and introduced as a concrete realization of Freire's critical pedagogy. The analysis was conducted in two-

folds; the aspect of international aid and the other of Freirean education philosophy witnessed in the program of YSP.

Freire, as an international educator, partook diverse educational reforms in the Third World where he believed that the perpetual poverty derived from the manipulation of the wealthy nations imposing a barbarian image of the developing world and offering so-called philanthropic aid only to prolong dependence and impede their own development. Instead, he proposes what he calls ‘authentic help’ that involves both the ‘helper’ and the ‘helped’ mutually appreciate their cooperation by recognizing that liberation and transformation of the reality call for dialogic participation and a critical consciousness of the both parties. This is a practice based on the ethos of solidarity which also takes place within South-South Cooperation (SSC) of Cuban international aid. Cubans express solidarity by celebrating partnership between the two with a full respect for the national sovereignty and self-determination of the participating country and free from any financial leverage that usually draws donor and recipient into the market arrangement of globalization.

In terms of theoretical concepts implemented in YSP, Freire’s term of conscientization was instilled and has framed its educational purpose. Under the name of literacy education, Cuban educators concentrate on transformation of an individual and her/his surrounding society. This was embodied into activities of YSP conforming to Freire’s concept of critical pedagogy such as dialogic and problem-posing education, thematic investigation, and culture circle. These are especially highlighted at the opening stage of the class. Each YSP class starts off with participants discussing an idea or line whose meaning arouses debate or reflection. For example, a class could begin

with a phrase ‘Open the gate,’ a message being so familiar but enlightening that literacy opens a new world and you’ve embarked on a new journey. YSP is also culture-sensitive; even its basic mechanism of alphanumeric literacy learning was drawn from the context of Latin America where even illiterates are well equipped with numbers benefiting from their high-figured monetary system.

It must be noted, however, that this study contains some limitations in regards to the scope of the study analyzing the program mainly in the framework of education philosophy, then narrowed down to the critical pedagogy championed by Paulo Freire in the late 20th century. Nevertheless, the author considers this effort to be embraced rather exploratory, taking into account that many education aid practices are overwhelmed and dominated by their taxonomic inclusion to the international aid. That is to say, they are often distorted and driven by the ulterior motives and consequently overlook their root cause of education aid as to foster a better education in the Third World. In this sense, looking at an education aid program strictly in a pedagogical way is worth conducting.

Another aspect of limitation arises from the compatibility issue. Since Cubans have established their own sets of aid architecture and conduct practices that originated from their anthropological culture and society, YSP is undoubtedly a ‘Cuban’ aid in nature. Then it makes us wonder if Cuban models could conform and be exemplified to the mainstream aid practices which worship the standardized norms and are vacant of their respective ethos and philosophy even from the stage of their inauguration. However the objective of this study, mentioned previously, is not to duplicate and witness the outcome of YSP worldwide but examine various cases of international education aid to foster and celebrate vibrant cultures of development aid.

5.2 “Yo Sí Puedo” and the Implication to Education ODA

This study has evolved in two different channels of international aid and the other of education philosophy, evident in both Freire’s critical pedagogy and Cuban literacy program of YSP. From the analysis of the former aspect, we learned that SSC of Cuban international aid resembled what Freire had envisioned as an international aid practice so called authentic help. For Cubans, overseas assistance is an international project of ‘experience sharing.’ Although as simple as it may sound, this implies much about Cuban international aid.

First of all, to Cubans, aid is an experience sharing that is, priority lies within the self-determined development of the participating country. Cubans are well aware that there is no such thing as an absolute, master-key-like policy to economic and social development and neither does a country with better economic situation have the right to impose or inculcate with certain way of development nor practice such power to the less developed countries. It is similar to how Freire believed in becoming conscientized on your own. He contended that conscientization could never be reached within the power of someone else; it is a task of your own. Conscientization can be understood in similar terms with the national development. It is an elevation to another level of society and true development - without the inherent risk of retrogression but on the ladder of constant growth - cannot be conquered and established by an outsider. Once it takes on the route constructed by others, good intention of aid turns into interference and

violence.

Instead, Cubans participate at the development of a country in search for its endogenous way of growth and confine their input to strictly an experience sharing. This guarantees a good amount of space for the partner country to enjoy its ownership and provides Cuba's rationale behind welcoming its active participation especially at the designing and preparatory stage of international education program while researching and taking into account the cultural and anthropologic background that provide fundamental understandings of population of the destined community. It surely is a mirror like practice of what international organizations urge on witnessing within their aid programs, an embodiment of 'Relevance,' 'Impact,' and increased 'Sustainability.'

Cuban aid as an experience sharing not only lets Cubans exhibit different purpose of aid but also allows them to come up with a signature content originated from their self-determined development that no other countries can imitate nor perform a better aid. From the chapter that dealt with an overview of Cuban education, we reviewed that education or literacy education played a pivotal role in terms of achieving social progress and transformation in Cuba. For Cubans YSP programs practiced all around the world mean their historic National Literacy Campaign in 1961 revisited and reconstructed in different settings of the region. Literacy and quality education for the public were what they learned from their experience of development thus it gives them confidence and affirmation that they want to share the lesson.

From the educational perspective, Cuban education aid is operated on the basis of education philosophy. In the chapters from 2 to 4, we discussed that YSP embodies Freire's critical pedagogy which Cubans think quintessential particularly in the

developing world where physical and mental dominance are rife calling for an empowerment of the marginalized through the literacy practice of conscientization. This is quite astonishing witnessing the current situations of education aid where heavier focus is on international 'aid' rather than 'education.' It gets even more mind-boggling when the practices of conglomerate-sized international organizations that frame and shift the landscape of aid business simply disregard and consider less about theories and philosophies of education when in return about the domestic issues of education, they are most referred and discussed (Klees, 2012, p. 56).

All in all, Cubans jump into the international development business with an in-depth knowledge and quality skill of what they can do best and attribute to the world. Author thinks that Cuban aid is somewhat inspiring in terms of enriching diverse cultures and eliciting different dialogues in the ever-standardizing aid community. Also, it is rather motivating and thought-provoking to the traditional players on their side of the story; what they can bring to the table if they were to enter without the heavy loaded pockets of developmental fund and refrain from the obsolete and tainted thoughts of expecting the biggest return from the global South.

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국문초록

프레이리 교육철학의 국제교육개발협력으로의 함의: “Yo Sí Puedo (나는 할 수 있다)” 사례를 중심으로

현 국제교육개발 분야는 흔히 기계적이고 지시적인 하향식 원조 방식을 표방하고, 지나치게 성과 중심의 질적인 접근이 부재한 교육원조를 구현해 왔음을 지적받고 있다. 이에 대한 대안적인 접근으로 파울루 프레이리(Paulo Freire)의 교육철학이 제시되고 있으며, 그는 수혜국 문화를 반영한 참여를 바탕으로 하는 상향식 원조방식을 추구하였다. 프레이리의 교육철학은 국제문해교육 프로그램인 ‘나는 할 수 있다(Yo Sí Puedo)’에서 발견될 수 있으며 이 논문은 교육개발원조의 대안적 접근으로 ‘나는 할 수 있다’ 문해 프로그램에 투영된 프레이리의 교육철학을 분석함으로써 국제교육개발 분야로의 다양한 시사점을 찾는 것을 주목적으로 하고 있다.

첫째, 프레이리는 원조 방식에 있어 연대(Solidarity)를 바탕으로 하는 ‘진정한 원조(Authentic Help)’를 주장하였는데 이는 쿠바의 교육개발원조로 제공되는 ‘나는 할 수 있다’ 프로그램에서 역시 찾아볼 수 있었다. 즉 쿠바 교육자들은 프로그램을 수행하며 두 국가간의 연대를 강조하고, 수혜국의 자주권 및 자기결정권을 존중하며, 세계화에 좌지우지되는 시장 중심의 공여국-수혜국간 경제적 의존 관계를 비판하였다.

둘째, 이론적 측면에서 ‘나는 할 수 있다’ 프로그램은 프레이리의 ‘의식화(conscientization)’ 개념을 도입하고 이를 교육목표로 삼았다. 쿠바 교육자들은 문해교육을 통한 개인과 그 주변 환경의 변화(Transformation)에 주목하고, ‘의식화’ 이외의 ‘대화 및 문제제기 교육(Dialogic and Problem-posing education)’, ‘주제 탐구(Thematic investigation)’ 그리고 ‘문화 공동체(Culture Circle)’ 등과 같은 다양한 프레이리의 비판교육 개념을 도입함으로써 제 3세계 비문해 퇴치에 기여하였다.

프레이리 교육철학을 반영한 ‘나는 할 수 있다’ 문해 프로그램은 ‘경험 공유(Experience Sharing)’의 국제적인 노력이라 할 수 있겠다. 쿠바 교육자들은 절대적이고 천편일률적인 교육정책을 지양하고, ‘경험 공유’로 교육원조를 한정지움에 따라 참여국의 자기주도적 발전을 가장 우선시 하고 그들의 자생적인 방법을 통한 발전을 독려하였다. 본 문해 프로그램 역시 쿠바 국내 문해교육의 오랜 역사 및 전문성을 바탕으로 개발함에 따라 진정한 경험 공유를 실천하려 노력하였다.

마지막으로 교육의 측면에서 ‘나는 할 수 있다’ 프로그램은 프레이리 교육철학을 표방하며 교육철학 및 이론 없이 막무가내로 시행되는 주요 국제기구들의 교육개발원조 프로그램들과 차별화 됨을 발견할 수 있다. 즉 쿠바 교육자들은 깊은 지식과 질적인 전문성을 갖추고 교육개발에 참여함에 따라 다양한 원조 문화 조성에 기여하고, 나날이 표준화 되어가는 국제개발원조 공동체에 귀감이 됨을 알 수 있다.

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