

# Is it possible to build another intellectual paradigm for entrance and graduation from university?

*Experiences from the Portuguese-speaking African Countries (PALOP) in the era of globalization*

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## abstract

*This article offers a brief reflection on the importance of returning to the work of shaping the processes of entering and graduating from our university spaces, making them true "epistemological places," where the directive is to "think to act better and act to think better" (Cabral), as a means to depart from the current dilemma in which we have become embroiled from an epistemological, and thus anthropological, point of view: we've become a continent in which what is contemplated isn't lived and what is lived isn't contemplated. This has led us to become eternal consumers of that which we do not produce (in terms of knowledge as well as economic production) and producers of that which we do not consume (from an economic point of view and in terms of producing endogenous knowledge). Thus springs the importance of rethinking the question of educational paradigms in order to recover the liberating dimension of education developed by Paulo Freire and Cheikh Anta Diop as a form of rebuilding the dream of the fight for liberation in the PALOP (Portuguese as an official language) countries: health and training, necessary precedents for the construction of peace, progress, and happiness for our peoples.*

“E ducation,” says Paulo Freire, “is an act of love, and therefore an act of

courage. We can’t be afraid to debate. To analyze reality. We can’t run from creative discussion without running the risk of it being a farce.” For Freire, this is because “existing is a dynamic concept. It requires an eternal dialogue between men. Between man and his Creator. It is this permanent dialogue of men and women with their surroundings and even over the challenges and problems of historical fact.” (Freire, 2011). History, says Engelbert Mveng, is the place of permanent questioning. In this existential perspective that opens itself to history, from the outset, the possibility of a formal notion of history, conceived as a mode of being or destiny of man or woman that can only be felt in the stories of men and women living day-to-day, is thrown out. God loves, man struggles and waits, and God frees: after all, freedom is the ethical face of the hope of a people. It works less as a pedagogical axiom than as a challenge for present history. This is, then, education as the practice of freedom and liberation, as an act and factor of cultural education.

According to a proverb from the Bambara people of Mali, “Mama giving birth doesn’t mean that Mama is done.” So that begs the question: Why, and what’s left? At birth, responds Joseph Ki-zerbo, the arduous work of education begins: learn or perish! And in these terms, according to the Burkinabé, arises the question of the future of not only Africa, but also of other peoples that were under the yoke of colonialism. From that point of view, education as a paradigm for the rehabilitation of young people in Africa in today’s geopolitics should be a priority for Africans before all else, because the moment to vigorously organize ourselves, to take into our own hands the fate of our own countries and the continent, in its entirety, has arrived. Education is fundamentally an anthropological, and at the same time, epistemological problem. It is fundamentally a question of knowing. Now, knowledge, says Tierno Bokar, is a light that inhabits each human being; it is an inheritance of all that our ancestors knew and transmitted to us as the heritage that we generally call tradition, and

that the humanists called “greco-latin classics” or simply “the humanities.” This helps us to comprehend that knowledge, and therefore every type of education, is historical knowledge more than anything. In Africa for example, it’s commonly said that everything is history: the history of the land and water, the history of the plants, history of the stars, etc. But the greatest and most sublime of them all is the story of the *muntu*, that is, of the human being—the subject and object of knowledge, and therefore the educator and learner. Inherited knowledge develops where there exist training centers, schools, universities, and, above all, young people ready to receive this same education and put it into practice.



Amilcar Cabral | Illustration: Juliana Barbosa

## II

# **The construction of collective and historical thought: the educational experience of Portuguese-speaking African countries**

**A**milcar Cabral said that we have to be, each day, more and more capable of thinking

deeply about our problems in order to be able to act well, and we must act continuously to improve our thinking. This speaks to, in other words, the driving need and obligation we have in the PALOP, 40 years after the independence of our respective countries, to attempt a reflection that is “thinking to act better”: thinking about our yesterday and our recent past, indicating paths for a future of “communicative endogenous action” in the perennial adventure of searching for the truth and for better living conditions, progress, development,

peace, and happiness for our countries and peoples. Finally, this was the principal objective of the fight for freedom undertaken by liberation movements in Portuguese-speaking African Countries and for this reason they valued the unconditional support of the political and progressive cultural world and especially that of Pope Paul VI. That support was expressed concretely in a historic audience granted by Pope Montini to the leaders of these movements (Agostinho Neto, Amílcar Cabral, and Marcelino dos Santos) in the Vatican on July 1, 1970. On leaving the meeting, Cabral, who headed the delegation, said: “we managed to achieve a great victory that we never would have obtained by armed force.” Cabral had perceived very well that that moment had forever dictated the end of armed resistance and opened new perspectives, new paradigms in the integral process of fighting for the liberation of Portuguese-speaking countries. It was a victory of reason, intelligence, and knowledge over force, ignorance, and the characteristic obstruction of knowledge in communicative action at the height of imperial colonialism. It was really the victory of the principal element of the liberating paradigm that, from the outset, had been a basis for all the processes of liberation that Amílcar Cabral himself presented in terms of “**health and training**”: health, considered to be “the greatest wealth of our people,” and, consequently, education and culture as training practices for the people, to guarantee a permanent, integrated health, and to live as free people, responsible for their own destinies and for the fate of humanity. It was about restoring and enabling once again the total or integrated health of our peoples, given that the elements that were part of the paradigm of freedom fighting in its integrity (political, economic, cultural, and armed resistance) were always considered as *acts and factors of culture*. This means that the revolution undertaken by PALOP countries was essentially an educational process, and one of cultural education with the goal of training new men, capable of living with “health and training” in the new international geopolitical context that the *encontro-rencontro* (Aimé Césaire) between Europe and Africa created for our countries and people. In the path of Cheikh Hamidou Kane, the liberation movements had understood very well that “the school of the newly arrived,” and therefore European thought, which was the product of European culture and history, was henceforth “the biggest challenge for the Dialobés (African) people.” and that in this process of struggle that was undertaken, it was imperative to send our best, the few that had received schooling back then, to this “school of the recently arrived” to learn “that same art of winning without being right” and to be then able to put this knowledge to use in service of the production of the “integral health” of our countries and people. And so they were sent after independence, these groups of young people, to receive education in various

corners of Western Europe, Africa, and Latin America. In Guinea-Bissau, they created pilot schools that were centers of inculturation in the educational process developed by the PAIGC in the liberated zones while we were fighting for freedom. This whole educational process had a single objective: guaranteeing the education of new men and women, training them in appropriate educational and cultural instruments to learn to “think with their own head, starting from their own reality” (Cabral), for the best possible conditions for the effective building of peace, progress, and the integrated development and happiness of our own people, just as the CONCP (Conferência das Organizações Nacionalistas das Colónias Portuguesas) program prayed for.

In the context of exemplifying this common struggle then, the objectives were clearly defined for PALOP countries. And for that reason Amílcar Cabral said clearly: “We the CONCP commit ourselves to our people, but we don’t fight simply for a flag in our country or to sing an anthem. We the CONCP desire that our countries, which were martyred, humiliated, and insulted for centuries, will never be ruled over by insults, nor will our people be exploited...we don’t want any more exploitation of our country, even if it is done by black men. We fight to build in our countries—in Angola, Mozambique, Guinea, on the islands of Cabo Verde, in São Tomé—a life of happiness, a life where each man respects all men, where discipline will not be imposed, where no one will lack work, where salaries will be just, where each will have the right to all that man has built or created for the happiness of mankind. This is what we fight for. If we do not achieve it, we will have failed our duties and we will not reach the goal of our struggle. (Cabral, 1977). Not reaching the objective of our struggle meant failing the interests of our respective peoples. Cabral again emphasized forcefully that “If we, tomorrow, betray the interests of our people” and countries, certainly “it won’t be because we didn’t know, it will be because we wanted to, and thus we won’t have any excuse.”

Now, 45 years after the independence of the PALOP countries, what stock can we take concerning the effective realization of effort and concern that constituted the principal objective of our fight for self-determination as nations and free, independent states in the grand theater of nations? But above all, what stock can we take today concerning the categorical imperatives of struggle: that of always thinking to act better and always acting to think better; and always learning to think with our own mind and from our own specific

historical and cultural reality, while always keeping our eyes and spirit open to the rest of the world? After all, the universities, before all else, are places for the production and acquisition of liberating knowledge, because they are oriented toward “creating” new men and women, and, secondly, training them in vital pedagogical instruments in terms of original thought in the service of production of integrated health for their respective countries and peoples. Serving countries and peoples, or rather, the primacy of service to the country, is the essence of the ethics of education produced during the fight for liberation.

In these first 45 years of independence for the PALOP countries there was certainly a massification of education going into the middle of the '70s to the end of the '80s that ended with the structural adjustment programs of the IMF and World Bank, to which Africans adhered to totally, to the point of losing this intercultural battle —not only “the hat, but also the head” (Ki-Zerbo)—in terms of production and knowledge acquisition. Africans thus abandoned thinking with their own minds and from their own historical and cultural contexts, and stopped thinking of education as a practice of freedom and integrated development of people in the era of globalization. In search of a development “clé en tête” (Ki-Zerbo), we began to see education simply as a practice of mimicking North-West-European thought, and began devaluing almost everything global and peripheral. The universities thus transformed themselves into mere places of acquisition of mimetic knowledge, and, save for a few exceptions, managed to transform themselves fundamentally into places for the production of knowledge as well, though it was still obsessively eurocentric. It was in this context that arose the current proliferation of universities in many African countries, including PALOP countries. We have, then, universities in which more than 80% of the content that is learned and taught comes from outside of the African continent. It is in this context that I think one should place the question of knowing how and why to enter and leave university in the PALOP countries particularly, but in Africa more generally, today in the era of globalization.

Renowned intellectuals like James Aggrey, Cheikh Anta Diop, Joseph Ki-zerbo, Stanislav Adotevi, Paulo Freire, Jean-Marc Ela, Aminata Traoré, Fabien Eboussi-Boulaga, Carlos Lopes, Paulin Hountondji, Ebénézer Njoh Mouelle, Théophile Obenga, Achille Mbembe, Patrícia Godinho Gomes, José Castiano, Severino Ngoenha, and so many other African and

Africanist intellectuals have reflected on this question of education in Africa in its paradoxes and particularly on African universities since independence. For this reason, while simultaneously advocating vigorously for reading the texts of these authors, I simply want, in the steps of Amílcar Cabral and others, to submit a small, modest homage to the importance and the value of study and original thought in the process of integrated development of the people, understanding, in this sense, the university to be a place of excellence in producing original thought, in the “classical African humanities” (Cheikh Anta Diop) in this era of globalization. Finally, calling for the necessity of always guaranteeing for young university students an education and humanist spirituality centered on the lens of ***Maat e Ubuntu***: that is, life—our life—is always for others. Education as a precursor to learning how to live, means, fundamentally openness, attention, and service to others, especially to the most disadvantaged. For this reason, developing a spirituality of the new man and woman in the 21st century means developing a culture of unconditional availability (Cheikh Hamidou Kane) to the priority of service to our countries and peoples, especially those discarded by our world-system (Dussel). I’m convinced that this aspect is what was missing, above all, in these 45 years of social and political life in the PALOP. The new woman or man conceived of by Cabral in the age of the struggle for independence never left the forest of Madina de Boé, and, hence, would never get to be part of any legislature that would govern the country in these 45 years post-independence. This gave birth to, in this perspective, a frightful crisis of historical conscience: that of a country and people, the reflection of an African revolution, that is an example for the whole world of a current representation of a country and people, a classic example of anthropological and structural poverty that is experienced at the continental level and around the world in the era of globalization.



Illustration: Juliana Barbosa

### III

## Constructing knowledge, displacing eurocentric

## and colonial paradigms for the transformation of a plural university

**F**rom the beginning of the fight for independence, the importance and value of lifelong study for activists, combatants, cadres, and leaders in the PALOP liberation movement was always a key element. So, during the workshops done in 1969 in the liberated areas of Guinea, Amílcar Cabral, calling the attention of those present to the importance of that moment of study, said: “We are in this convention to work, and in this moment, our comrades, with various types of weapons in hand, attack the Portuguese colonists in our neighborhoods... The colonists fear the action of our fighters, action that is fundamental and likewise decisive for the advancement of the national struggle for freedom. But our comrades can be sure that, if some of the Portuguese colonial leaders had the opportunity to arrive at this room and see us seated in this seminar with the work orders that we just approved, I guarantee you that they would be struck with even more fear than they already have for our bazookas, cannons, light arms, and our fighters (Cabral, 2014). Cabral explains the nature of and the possible reasons for the fear the colonial leaders and managers might have, and continues: “The Portuguese colonists know what’s happening very well. They might be scared, but they’re not stupid” (who knows, ignorant). Now, we could ask, what is it that they know and their own fighters, the large majority of them Bissau-Guineans and Cabo Verdians themselves, excluded from the educational process in the colonial era, didn’t know? “They know,” says Cabral, “that the combatants and the weapons can win a war, but that this alone cannot guarantee the freedom of a people. Really, the use of weapons to win the war and even for the progress of a people is possible, but what is decisive is the man! What matters is the conscience of the man! The Portuguese colonialists know that the bigger our conscience, the more clearly each one of us knows what we want, from where we came and where we’re going, the more difficult it will be for them to continue ruling over our people. And for us, it will be easier, or less difficult, to win

the war for liberation and guarantee a life of work, dignity, and justice for our people” (Idem, p. 25), which is a principal objective for our own revolution embodied by the liberation movements in Portuguese-speaking African countries.

The Portuguese colonial bosses not only knew, but also had been aware of all of this, because they learned it in school: they possessed a knowledge that also, at the same time, produced awareness of the value of “weaponized theory” — that is, the value and the driving force of thought in the lives of the people. Paraphrasing Jean-Marc Ela, I would say that the fight, the war, freedom and liberation, development, education, human culture, etc, above all else, are what go through the hearts and minds of men and women in each era of humanity. To rule over a people it was necessary to produce a base of knowledge, a kind of thought to inject into the spirit of the dominated and to continue assiduously in the study of the life of the societies of the dominated. That’s why even the colonizing leaders knew well the strength and importance, the grandeur and the inestimable value of “weaponized theory” in the life of a people. They knew well, highlighted Amílcar Cabral, that “the value of a man or a woman is measured by the set of ideas, by the strength of the ideas that they have in their mind” and protect jealously within the cavern of their hearts and minds.

They knew then, that a seminar, a college, a university, etc. was, for their colonial system, would guarantee complications, because it would “reinforce the knowledge that the Africans themselves were going after and searching for in their long march to liberty, where they were and where they were going.” But, above all, adds Cabral, “beyond knowing the concrete context of the struggle, the situation of our people, our situation in Africa and in the world and the state of the enemy, the seminar — and therefore knowledge, education, school, and the university — is going to reinforce, more and more, in the minds, in the spirits of our comrades, their decision to give their lives for the cause of our country and our people.” “That,” says Amílcar, “is something that can put fear in the hearts of the Portuguese colonialists.”

But for Amílcar Cabral, there is something still more important in all of this and that works, I find, as an example for any university student: “The colonialists would’ve stayed more frightened if they could observe the **seriousness** with which this convention takes place, the **determination** on the faces of the comrades, the **will** clearly expressed in each of them

**“understanding how to serve better still”**: seriousness, determination and the perennial search for understanding in our studies and readiness to serve! Here then in the footsteps of Cabral, I also vote in favor of the entry and exit of our young university students in the different universities of the PALOP countries, in order to always be seen as “an event that marks a given stage of evolution in your life and the life of our countries and peoples, of advancement, of the same struggle for freedom and liberation initiated centuries ago by our people, starting with the fight against slavery and trafficking of black people; this struggle has been inherited by the liberation movements of the PALOP and triumphed, in part, with the proclamation of independence of our countries and peoples.

May all be capable of taking the best advantage of entry into the universities because, during such times as these, entry into the university should be considered a necessity in fighting for our countries and people. Study remains, in fact, the most decisive aspect of our struggle to realize liberation, peace, reconciliation, progress, and the happiness of our people. And thus springs the needs to study more and more each day, seriously and with determination, reading documents, books, everything that the university and its professors are capable of providing; to always seek to improve one’s own capacity to read the environment and the world around us, but above all to improve the humanity that is in each one of us, constantly improving the human man or woman being that inhabits each of us to in order to leave the universities above all, as new men and women, whole men and women, capable of allowing our African continent to truly be the continent of the 21st century.

As Cabral urges, an activist, and therefore a university student that wants to serve their country or their people, must always have time to study. He or she must avoid wasting time in futile conversation, in African rumors, in idle gossip, jokes in poor taste, in crazy times at the university, etc. Each one always makes the effort to improve oneself each day in whatever is useful to do or understand how to do. As Amílcar Cabral teaches, one thing is certain: if a people wants to advance, their sons and daughters, the supporters of their parties, the staff and the leaders, the governing people, etc. must they themselves be capable of advancing more each day. This is because the demands of the struggle are larger each day; they didn’t end when we ran off the human traffickers in the age of slavery, the slave trade, and the colonialists, nor when we took back our land completely. To the contrary, it was from that moment on that the struggle really got started in terms of the

progress and happiness of our people. People like us, students and teachers, can never stop learning each day that passes, because the demands are constantly growing. This is, therefore, in the words of Cabral, the vow that I make to all: “Let us learn the practice of life, let us learn the theory, let us learn from the experience of other people. But may we never stop learning.” That, warns Cabral, is essential in order to guarantee us the necessary tools to lend ourselves effectively to the difficult task that the universities prepare us for: the task of contributing to the triumph of life over death in our respective countries.

When they leave the universities, each will have certainly achieved a path in their life and will have the certainty that “if they don’t leave this path, they can continue on to wherever their ability takes them. No one will look back.” Whoever has entered the universities has already conquered, in fact, their rights as a man or woman with dignity. Now It only depends on their will to advance or stay behind. In leaving the university, “each man or woman will have their fate in the palm of their hand” (Cabral). They will be able to lift themselves high and show themselves as a valuable son or daughter to our countries and peoples in PALOP, to better serve our countries and peoples. “But they will also be able to seize their destiny by kickstarting it themselves.” Each one will have an open path to advance, on this side or the other in accordance with their conscience, in accordance with their work. “They will be able to choose to be a villain or a man or woman of value” (Idem). But let us never forget that, in the past, our fight for the triumph of life over death in PALOP and Africa more generally, has to be the product of our work in tandem: let us learn to work as a team, interdisciplinarily and interculturally. Culture, in fact, is a force, “*une force séminale*” that always survives the events of history for the simple reason that it is never born in the same land as the powers that threaten it. That said, we treasure the teaching of the proverb that says that “one never measures the depth of a river with their own feet.” The river that we are attempting to cross with our entry into the university is very deep; one doesn’t simply try to cross the river of PALOP debt, which is but a mere symptom of a deeper evil that our countries and people are going through — our continent in its totality. At this crossroads, in order to avoid the possibility of losing the way, may we be capable to keep our endogenous feet well fixed to our Mother Earth. But before we commit ourselves to this adventure may we be capable of translating into practice the teaching of the proverb that warns us about an important principle: “Cross the river *en masse* and you will have no fear of the crocodile.” The PALOP countries gave proof to the world that only united

(CONCP) does one win completely.

Yes, the endogenous development that we desire for our countries and peoples and that constitutes the primary reason for enrolling and graduating from the university, will be once and for all or simply never will be. Learn, therefore, from your time as university students to work together in dialogue that is interdisciplinary, intercultural, and above all inter-peripheral (Lopes, 1997).

I am pleased to think that the university that each one chooses is simply a bottle that they have to send out to sea; it certainly isn't a liquid ocean that I imagine remains so distant from our university; but it is, the ocean of time that each has, from now, on the need and the obligation to assume and also to surpass on the day of his or her departure from this university, making a difference, wherever it may be that you decide to live and work, for the triumph of life over death in the PALOP countries, on the rest of the African continent, and the outside world more generally. Then, as the proverb teaches, "it always necessary to dig the wells of today to prepare for the thirst of tomorrow." When in fact, the turtle leaves its nest knowing very well that its destiny is the ocean and not the dry land on which it finds itself. But that dry land remains the only path it has to reach its destiny in the ocean. May the university which each chose to attend thus be an occasion of transition in learning how to live, wholly, as free and responsible men and women, the pride of Africa in the 21st century.



Paulo Freire | Illustration: Juliana Barbosa

## IV

# **Reflections on the paradigm of education as an act and factor of integrated educational culture**

**A** proverb of the Igbo people of Nigeria says that “Anyone who doesn’t know what the rain dampened, also doesn’t know what part of their body to dry.” The task of a humanist, of a philosopher of education, and of a pedagogical expert, is precisely to tell their people and the world “where the rain hit them” and for that reason, which part of their body needs to be dried. That is what the great pedagogue Paulo Freire and so many others did as an effective response of restitution of human dignity to the oppressed people of the world, in particular in Latin America, and of the PALOP, inviting them to rise to their feet and retake their hope and capacity to live fully as any self-respecting man or woman in our world.

Now, each generation, said Frantz Fanon, must, in relative opacity, be capable of discovering its mission, and either fulfill it or betray it. We can then ask, today, what is our mission as “humanists,” meaning, learned people, of culture, teachers, called upon to transmit knowledge capable of “producing” authentic, actualized men and women responsible for others — the destitute, needy, the impoverished — in our world that is marked by the zeal of selfishness and civilized indifference? What is our mission to today as educators, that is, intermediaries between the truth and the students, that, once individuated, “that come from our body” and from the body of our society and the world in general in which we live today, but above all come from the youth today that “the rain wet” and which need to be dried with the “humanist classics” in order to make the PALOP and the African continent the continent of the 21st century in terms of integrated development of our respective peoples? We are capable, however, nowadays, of producing on-the-ground scientific thought on education, post-Freire, capable of responding to this same challenge, taking into account the great cultural variety of the people that live in the PALOP and also the African continent in its totality and under a less Eurocentric perspective, which to this day is produced in the PALOP generally?

Paraphrasing Fanon, you can be sure that “if our task as educators, teachers, educated,

cultured people, etc. is to transform the PALOP or Africa into a new Europe, then it is worth continuing to look to Europe for the fate of the education of our youth and our peoples. This is because the Europeans are epistemologically and culturally prepared to build the “Europe” paradigm for us in the PALOP. But if we think of the educational process in terms of humanism and want this to advance humanity, then as Fanon says we need to “change skin,” inventing a new Panafrican humanist thought “on the ground.”

In fact, it almost unanimously believed that the crisis happening today in African countries beginning in the post-independence period until today and that explains the reason of absolute mimicry practiced at the political, economic, educational, and cultural levels, and precisely owed to the crisis, or rather, to the absence of native thought that in the important historical continuity is nonetheless capable of being an answer to the problems with which we are confronted with today in geopolitics and day-to-day international affairs.

A response to this crucial question on the subject of education must also consider the exhortation of Chiekh Anta Diop, the father of our notion of the African Renaissance, when he says that for as long as our countries continue to reflect and analyze our worlds (past, present, and future), remaining prisoners of the North-West-European paradigm, we will never know the true exaltation of our liberty and much-desired liberation. This is because, even if all of us as human beings are endowed with intelligence and thus capable of producing new ideas on our humanity, there is still an element that differentiates us in the ideas that we produce concerning the world and ourselves: it is the intellectual paradigm (Lopes, 2016). And by “paradigm,” Diop means a psychological frame of reflection composed of a set of spiritual, cultural, and philosophical values that are behind a philosophical ideal resulting from the historical myths that individuals, belonging to a determined people, use to gain an understanding of the world itself. Meaning that it is always impossible to analyze a problem or comprehend the world itself without an intellectual reference frame — that is, the referential system of ideas that one uses to manage to read and understand a determined reality or problem such as the question of development and of education as an act and factor of culture. Said paradigm applies, therefore, in respect to the set of ideas, practices, rules, and cultural and methodological values that one uses as guiding models, consciously or not, when analyzing a determined problem and therefore even when we speak of ourselves to others. This set of rules results

almost always as fruit of cultural influence and from the values of a given society, and functions in respect to our education, training, our preconceptions, values, intentions, desires, aspirations, our conscience, etc.

Now, in what sense, based on those criteria and paradigms, does the PALOP, does the Africa of today talk about education, development, or humanism? With which criteria and paradigms do we communicate about ourselves to others today in international and world affairs in the era of globalization, especially in matters of education? What educational paradigms do we use today in the education of children and young people that are capable of allowing them to know themselves better, to comprehend our history and the history of humanity in its entirety, and to interpret our reality, condition, and the specific situation of Africans in the PALOP? What are the ideals that orient our thinking when we speak of the system of youth education? To what aesthetic and value-based judgments are our reflections, our being, and communicative action submitted to, inside and outside the African continent? Can we today begin a discourse on education as a practice of integrated humanism looking, before anything, for a discussion internal to Africa and the PALOP? And can we be capable of placing ourselves outside the great clichés and catchphrases circulated by large North-West-European international businesses on this same subject? Can we begin a discourse on this subject that is not a mere replica or reaction to an external demand created by specialized international agencies, media agencies from North-West-European States? Are we capable of creating a reference of historical value, one that is moral, ethical, political, economic, cultural, and geopolitical on the theme of education, one of humanism and development and about the world in general which is not a mere mimetic replica of second or third-order appealing to the desires of the international community? Finally, how can we today leave that prison in which African countries find themselves, which consists of always thinking on what we don't live, effectively, and living what we do not think, and which turns us into perennial consumers of what we don't produce and producers of that which we don't consume, and perennial consumers of educational paradigms what we don't produce and producers of educational paradigms and knowledge that we don't consume, with all the litanies of death that this continues to produce in our world? Who, today, forces us to remain rooted in these paradigms? How do we leave this vicious circle and become capable of proposing another educational paradigm that takes into consideration the cultural reality in which we live as active subjects of history itself and

historicity, but also of global, human historicity? Finally, what is the paradigm of education as an act and factor of the integrated educational culture that we need for our times?

However we wish to answer these questions, the important thing is remembering that, in matters of education and producing knowledge, we cannot fail to consider, as Amílcar Cabral warns, the difficult task of always thinking with “our own head, and with our feet firmly on the ground,” from our historical and cultural context, from our reality and the conditions of Africans and from the PALOP rooted in the vaster, larger world that nonetheless expects from us what only we can give as an answer to the thousands of problems with which humanity faces daily. Globalization in, at the crux of it, is an answer and solution to local problems with possible global impact. What is, then, this specific contribution that we want to raise today to the global “appointment of giving and receiving” (Senghor) in matters of education as a practice of humanism and integrated development of people, and of attention to those abandoned by the world-system, that can serve as an example for the rest of the world?

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