

Paulo Freire's legacy and the prospects for Public Health

A educação se antecipa a uma verdadeira política popular e lhe sugere novos horizontes.
(Freire, 1983, p. 26).

Paulo Freire's works have inspired several contributions to the various groups and sectors of Brazilian Public Health, with the main impact being the instigation of the need to create a body of work (whether it be in research, training, management, political action, social movements, or in healthcare) with dedication and critical, humanizing and emancipatory political commitment¹.

Freire, his writings, and the many works with his theoretical and methodological perspective have been instigating the protagonists of Public Health to examine the methodologies of their practices and studies, from the perspective of ways of conducting and organizing which acknowledge, attribute value to and enhance people's autonomy and their active participation in the construction of health in the broadest sense, and as a social right. In historical terms, it is worth noting that the year 2024 – namely the year of publication of this Thematic Dossier – is marked by the memory of 60 years of the civil-military coup that arrested and exiled Paulo Freire, and so many other Brazilians who fought for political democracy in the country. The publication *Education: the practice of freedom*, in which Freire² addresses the issue of democracy as an experiential condition for the practice of education of a critical and emancipatory nature, may be considered one of the symbols of political and pedagogical resistance in the history of education in Brazil.

Over the course of the past few decades, collectives and movements have organized themselves to socialize, disseminate and study the Freirean legacy and its contributions to Public Health in greater depth. Different advances have been recorded historically as a result, to the extent that the Freirean perspective has been able to collaborate with the production of various public policies within the scope of the Unified Health System (SUS), and with the institutionalization of dialogic learning processes and of social participation in health.

On the occasion of the centenary of Paulo Freire's birth in 2021, as well as reinforcing the wide range of initiatives that, throughout that year, paid homage to Freire, his work, his theories and his contributions, *Associação Brasileira de Saúde Coletiva* (ABRASCO) produced, through its Board of Directors and several of its Thematic Groups, Forums and Commissions, a series of "Ágoras" (Discussion Forums) entitled "*Centenário Paulo Freire: Ágoras da Saúde Coletiva*" (available on the Abrasco/YouTube TV channel - <https://www.youtube.com/@TVAbrasco>).

Each "Ágora" had a specific focus, the first of which emphasized Paulo Freire's trajectory, thinking and contributions to Public Health. The second focused on experiences of care developed in the territories, and the third discussed training and research experiences in Public Health. As a result of this process, we present this Thematic Dossier in *Revista Ciência & Saúde Coletiva* to the academic community, which is comprised of five manuscripts, including studies, research, and reflections on some of the issues dealt with in the "Ágoras".

Paulo Freire induces Public Health to (re)consider the significant importance of professional and academic action that is permeated by the coexistence with the social reality and its protagonists, with the knowledge, dynamics, and diversities inherent to the territories. To this end, Freire further teaches us the central nature of dialogue as a methodology capable of enhancing the solidarity, respect and fraternal coexistence between the differences in knowledge and practices in health. The central aspect is dialogue as a mediator of professional action, that is also pedagogical and political, leading to the criticism, autonomy and emancipation of the people³.

We trust that this series of considerations will elicit reflection and lead to new experiences, ideas, productions, writings, and innovative public policies.

Pedro José Santos Carneiro Cruz (<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0610-3273>)¹

Reni Aparecida Barsaglini (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8903-2695>)²

Tatiana Engel Gerhardt (<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8707-6347>)³

Katia Reis de Souza (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2084-2606>)⁴

Renata Pekelman (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6249-5542>)⁵

¹ Departamento de Promoção da Saúde, Centro de Ciências Médicas, Universidade Federal da Paraíba. João Pessoa PB Brasil.

² Departamento de Saúde Coletiva, Instituto de Saúde Coletiva, Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso. Cuiabá MT Brasil.

³ Departamento de Saúde Coletiva, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul. Porto Alegre RS Brasil.

⁴ Programa de Pós-Graduação em Psicologia, Universidade do Porto. Porto Portugal.

⁵ Faculdade de Ciências da Saúde, Grupo Hospitalar Conceição. Porto Alegre RS Brasil.

References

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2. Freire P. *Educação como prática de liberdade*. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra; 1983.
3. Freire P. *Pedagogia da autonomia: saberes necessários à prática educativa*. São Paulo: Paz e Terra; 1996.