An emerging paradigm: the socio-cultural effects of arts education within the Military Police of Bahia, Brazil

Author: Dan Baron Cohen
workshop Topic: 2_5 Social Cohesion and reconciliation
Organization: Institute of Transformance: Culture & Education
Country: Brazil
Email: danbaronmst@hotmail.com

The Military Police of Salvador, capital of Bahia in the north-east of Brazil, has been known for its violent paramilitary policing for decades within Brazil, an institutional guarantee of the structural economic inequality that explains the paradoxical socio-cultural violence and remarkable innovation in Brazil today. This repressive culture was revealingly broadcast to the world in April 2000 at the peak of the national celebrations of Brazil’s indigenous histories and identities during coverage of the Other 500 Years. Hundreds of armed police destroyed a national monumental sculpture being constructed by the Pataxó people through an arts educational process and, shortly afterwards, thousands of police used tear gas and plastic bullets to disperse thousands of indigenous dancers, popular educators and their families.

Ten years later, the same Military Police force is developing its Arts Section to look at how arts-based pedagogies can be integrated into police education to develop community-based public safety policy. This ‘human security’ proposal grew out of UN Development Programme in 1997 to foster sustainable development in the region; however it was more directly catalysed by a public security crisis in 2004 caused by record-high youth homicide statistics in Salvador, where young people were being routinely murdered ‘after hours’ by death-squads and the Military Police itself was suffering regular casualties and significant psycho-emotional disorders..

Through dance-theatre workshops organised by community arts educators in the Federal University of Bahia, the Military Police established a pilot project to celebrate its officers Afro-Brazilian religious and cultural identities through a Citizens’ Opera. As a result of my experience of conflict transformation in post-industrial England and collaborations with conflicted communities in the north of Ireland, South Africa, Brazil (particularly with the Pataxó in the Other 500 Years controversy), and with special needs groups, I was invited to contribute to the development of this paradigm shift. Through Transformance workshops, the Military Police was able to participate in intercultural literacy processes to
reveal, decolonise and transform internalised silent and conflicted histories, and then apply the same processes in collaboration with youth from urban peripheries of the city.

This process is attracting the interest of police forces throughout Brazil and could easily be integrated into the popular federal government policy of Pontos de Cultura which, understood through the metaphor of acupuncture, stimulates cultural action in key points in the body-politic of civil society to generate new ethical, aesthetic and economic relations for social transformation. Like Pontos de Cultura, Citizens’ Opera is also attracting the attention of other countries dealing with a pandemic of violence and crisis of ‘social order’.

This workshop will demonstrate how this pedagogy’s techniques are used to build a new paradigm of public safety based on ‘citizen policing’, and the potential of arts education to become a key strategic partner in the development of sustainable communities and cities. By implication, it also demonstrates how arts education could be redefined, popularised and integrated into all teacher education as the pedagogical foundation of an ‘education for all’ which can respond creatively to the socio-cultural effects and needs of the tectonic shift we are experiencing in the home, the classroom, the workplace and even within our ‘second lives’. In this way, teachers, parents and the police – those who stand alone on the intimate thresholds between an unsustainable paradigm of competition and an emerging paradigm of cooperation – would be empowered to confidently practice and share the community arts of mediation, intervention, and social transformation.

References

Boueri, Aline Gatto (2006) Local mobilization led to community policing in Bahia in ‘Comunidad Segura’.
Pinto, César Braga (2001) Brasil 500 Anos: An Incredible Mischgenation in the Park in Journal of Iberian and Latin American Literary and Cultural Studies, Vol 1, No 2,

Unesco & the Government of the Republic of Korea

World Conference on Arts Education
Identification form for the submission of abstracts on Arts Education
(research/case studies/experiences of best practices)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surname:</th>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Mr/Ms/Dr/Prof:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BARON COHEN</td>
<td>DAN</td>
<td>Mr</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Past and present occupation (detailed description):

DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

Organization/Institution/University:

INSTITUTE OF TRANSFORMATION: CULTURE & EDUCATION

Address:

Rua Des. Pedro Silva 2202 (BL23, Escritório 32)
Florianópolis
Santa Catarina, Brazil

Telephone (+international code):

55 91 8107 8181

Fax (+international code):

E-mail Address:

[link to president@idea-org.net and danbaronmst@hotmail.com]
Title of the Paper:

An emerging paradigm: Socio-cultural effects of arts education within the Military Police of Bahia, Brazil