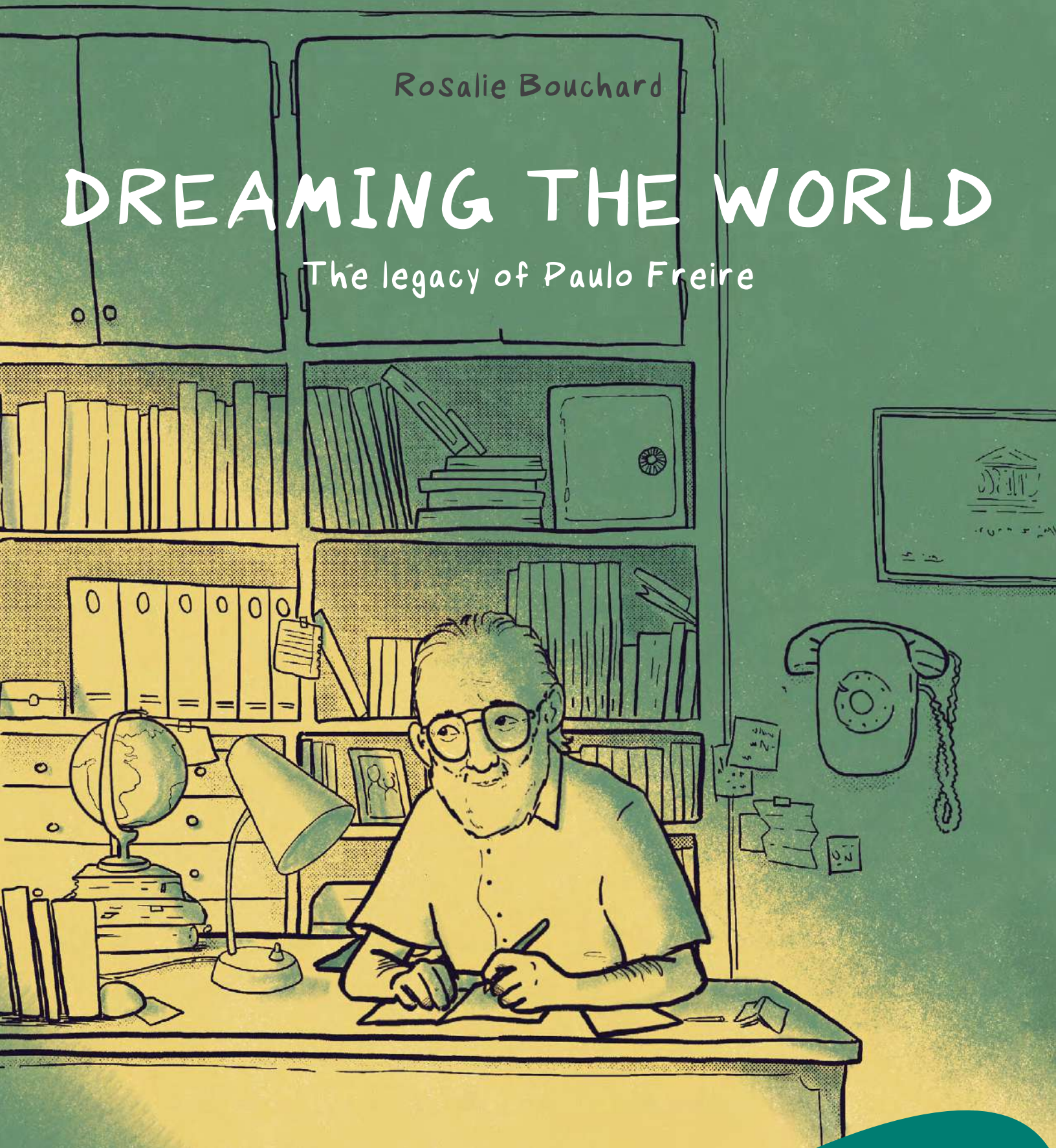


Rosalie Bouchard

# DREAMING THE WORLD

The legacy of Paulo Freire



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Canada

Global Affairs  
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aqoci

Association québécoise  
des organismes de  
coopération internationale



AQOCI dedicates  
this graphic novel  
to all those who,  
every day, work to  
strengthen democracy  
and encourage citizen  
participation.

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# DREAMING THE WORLD

The legacy of Paulo Freire



Rosalie Bouchard and AQOCI invite you to discover the pedagogue Paulo Freire and his work to increase citizen participation, rooted in consciousness-raising and collective engagement.

[aqoci.qc.ca](http://aqoci.qc.ca)

#IDW2025 #CitizenParticipation #RaiseYourVoice

## What is democracy?

Today, the term «democracy» generally refers to political regimes in which power is wielded by the people, either directly or through elected representatives. Countries with democratic regimes are characterized by free and fair elections, the rule of law, separation of powers, respect for freedoms and civil rights, and political participation.

## What is citizen participation?

Democracy can also be exercised through various practices that allow people to exercise their power in daily life and in institutional structures; this is what is made possible by citizen participation.

Public participation is a form of citizen participation in which individuals engage with formal mechanisms governed by clearly established rules with the goal of achieving a specifically articulated objective. These mechanisms can be structures or processes, permanent or temporary. They can be initiated by public institutions or by private organizations, businesses, or non-profit organizations.

AQOCI is recognized in Quebec as a leader in global citizenship education (GCE). "Global Citizenship Education (GCE) is a response to the urgency of acting on local and global issues. It is based on the recognition of the self-determination and interdependence of people and their interaction with all living beings; individual and collective commitments to promote women's rights, of human rights and the environment; and the assertion that we are all responsible for the world" (excerpt from the definition adopted by AQOCI members).

*No one educates others, no one educates themselves alone; people educate each other through their interactions with the world.*

- Paulo Freire



The first time I heard of Paulo was a long time ago.



See you later?



At a time when I was questioning my role as a student, as a citizen of the world, I was looking for my way somewhere between my books and the vast world that was calling me.



By chance, I came across some of his writings, as if fate had wanted to slip a little wisdom into my path.



He had grown up in a town in northeastern Brazil. Pushed into poverty because of the Great Depression, he saw all around him families, like his own, struggling courageously despite their stifled dreams. School was only a distant whisper, and playing allowed him to forget his worries.

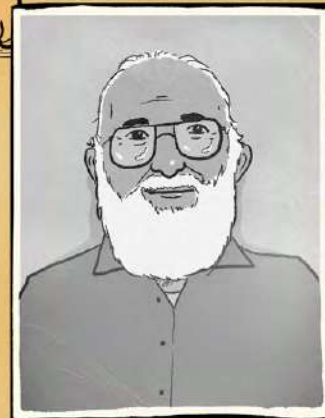
Paulo, are you coming to play with us?



Paulo carried within him a hunger greater than that of the stomach; that of the spirit.

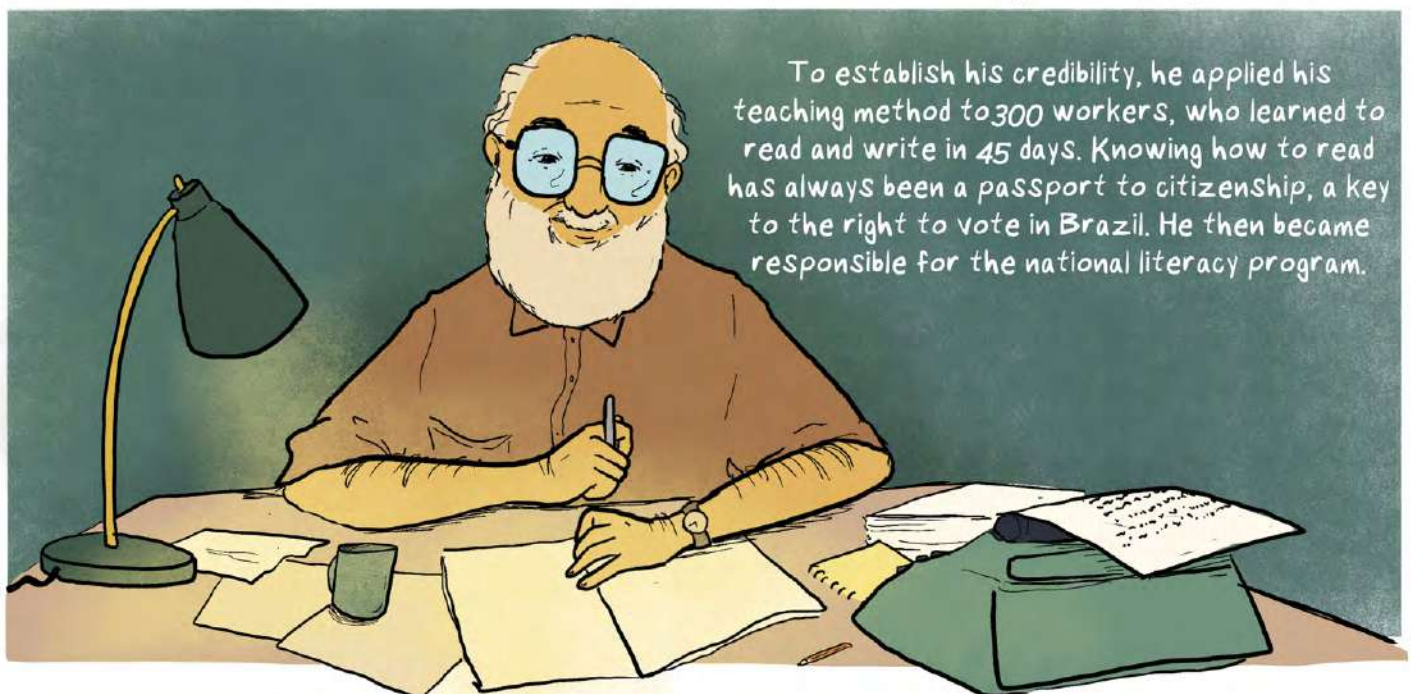
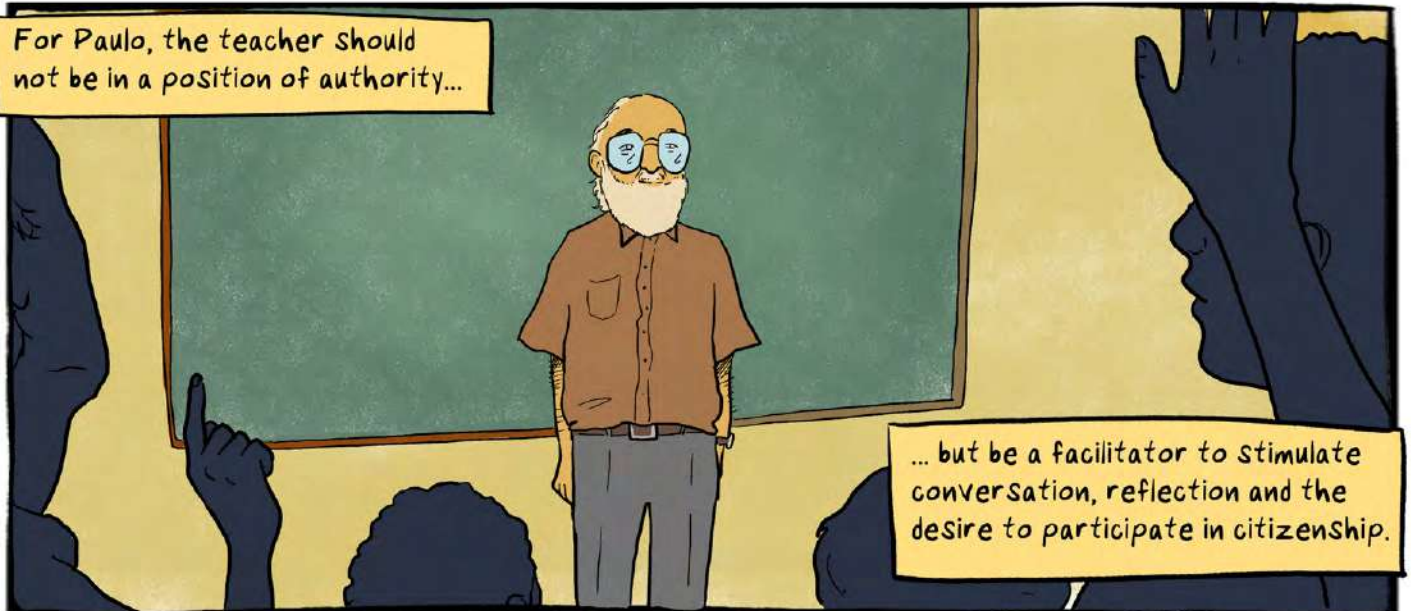
Yet, the emptiness in his stomach made the books blurry, the words elusive.

Pass, pass it here!



Thanks to his perseverance, he completed his legal studies. Inspired by his readings, Paulo dreamed of a society where each person could shape his or her own destiny. He was convinced that education could raise consciousness and unite people for social change. Rather than practicing law, he chose to follow the path of teaching.

His role as pedagogue led him to those whom the world had neglected. He didn't just teach letters and words but opened windows onto new horizons. His approach was rare for its time: writing, reading, reflecting and engaging in dialogue as tools for reading the world. Together with his students, they dreamed of a world where everyone would have a voice in deciding their own destiny.





Reading through his writings, I realized the importance of Paulo's vision of education for citizen participation



He saw education not as a constraint, but as an essential right.



For Paulo, education was not a privilege reserved for the few,

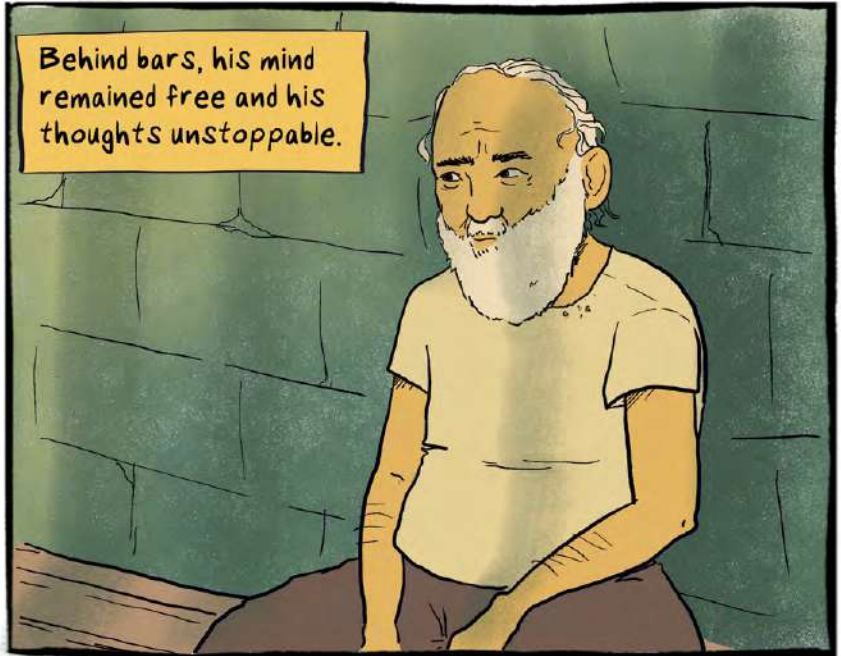
but a light open to all.



During the 1964 coup d'état, he was imprisoned by the military dictatorship. He was considered a traitor, a communist and, above all, a dangerous revolutionary.



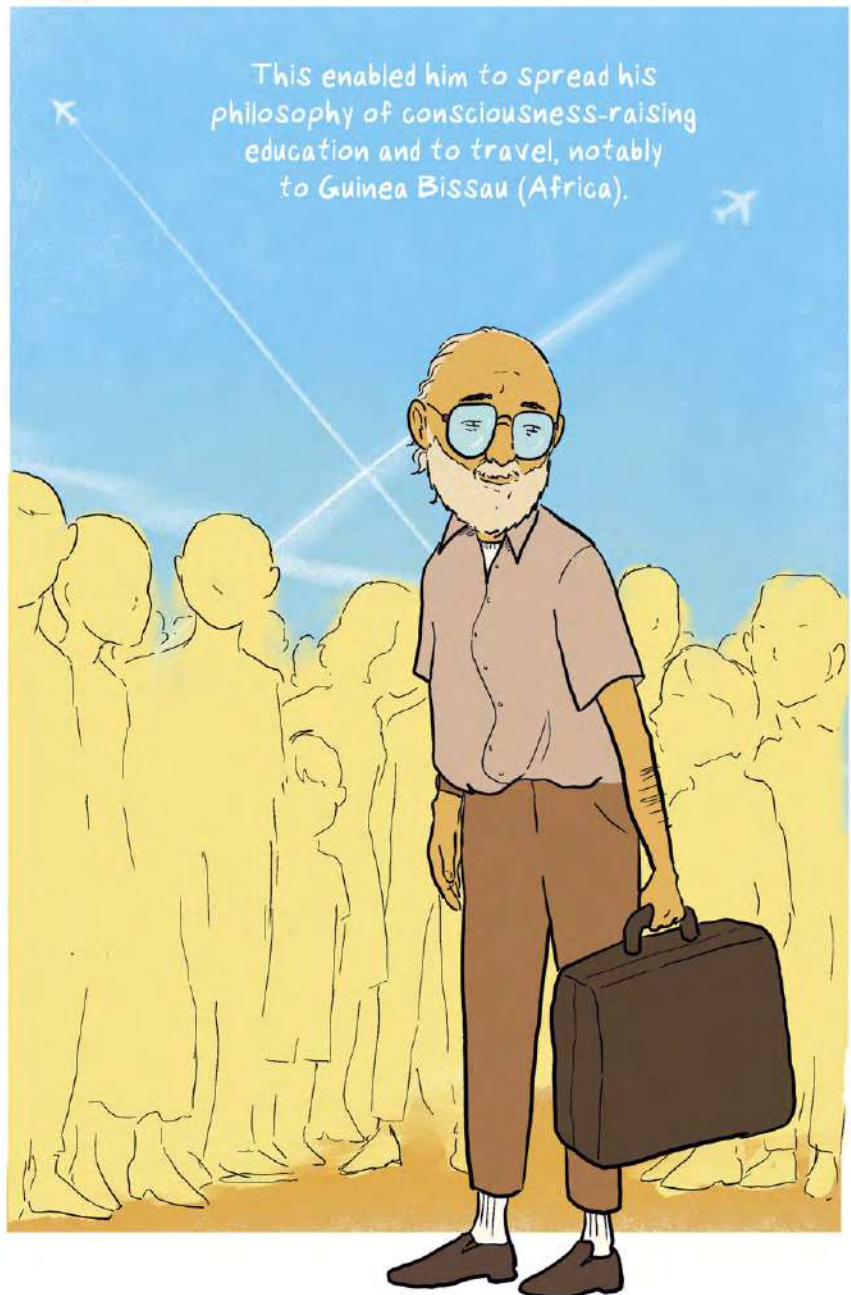
Behind bars, his mind remained free and his thoughts unstoppable.



After his release from prison, he went into exile with his family in Chile, taking with him the essence of his ideas, and the weight of his country's loss. There, he published his first book on pedagogy and freedom.



This enabled him to spread his philosophy of consciousness-raising education and to travel, notably to Guinea Bissau (Africa).



Paulo was in favor of a learning approach based on exchange with the teacher, allowing students to think critically and imagine the world.

RING!



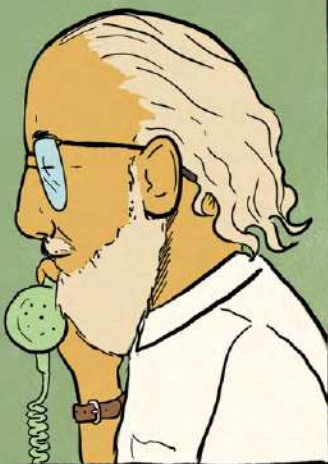
RING!

Citizen participation allowed women and men to develop their critical thinking skills, enabling them to analyze and avoid consuming passively.

Yes, hello?



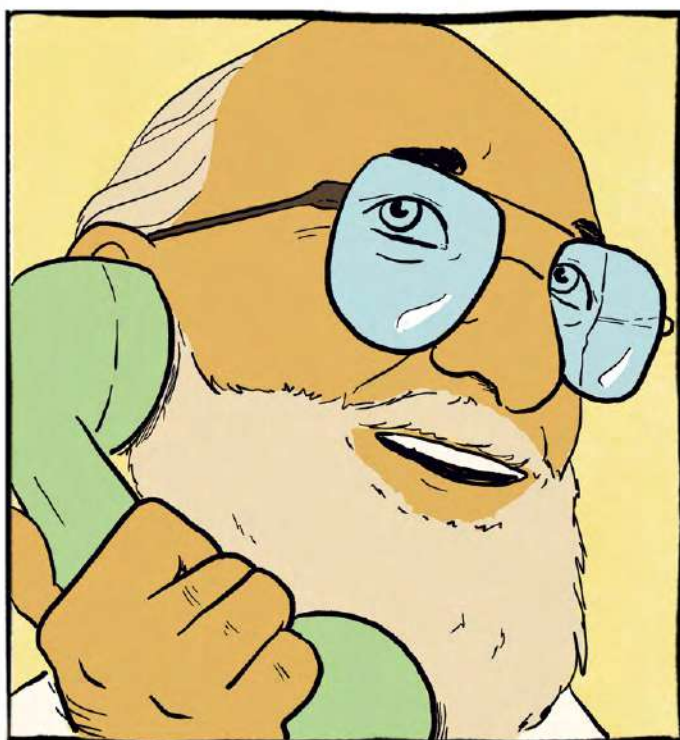
Paulo encouraged community members to...



...mobilize for their rights...



...and participate in local governance.



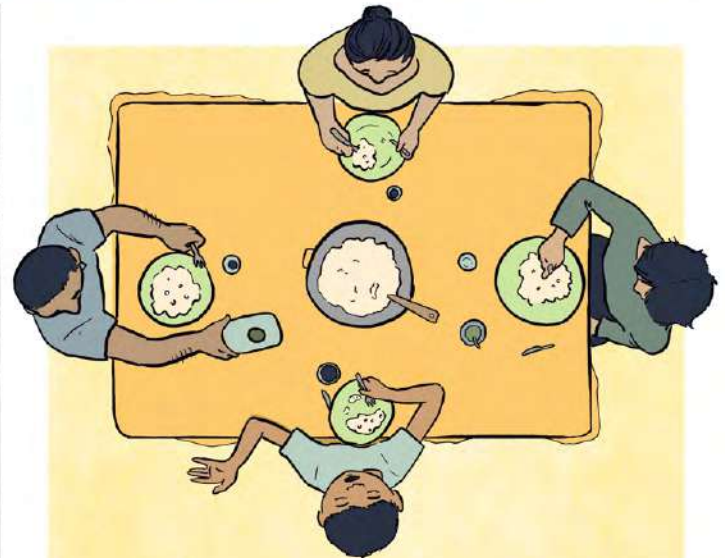
For him, learning was a way of becoming aware of the world, of injustices and inequalities, and of using critical thinking to make choices. He hoped in this way to spark a desire for creating a less discriminatory and much more open society.

In 1986, he was awarded the UNESCO Peace Prize.

"... Citizen participation allows women and men to develop their critical thinking skills..."



"... to analyze and avoid consuming passively..."



"Learning is a way of becoming aware of reality, and thus of using critical thinking to make choices. Discussion becomes a tool for emancipation."



NINGUÉM EDUCA NINGUÉM,  
NINGUÉM EDUCA A SI  
MESMO, OS HOMENS  
SE EDUCAM ENTRE SI,  
MEDIATIZADOS  
PELO MUNDO.

- PAULO FREIRE

\* No one educates others, no one educates themselves alone: people educate each other through their interactions with the world.

Over the years, I've come to realize that my student life, enriched by my experiences, has shaped me into a unique individual with a critical mind.



Every experience I've had, every relationship I've forged, has enabled me to make choices that influence my life, to fight discrimination at school and to promote equality for all.



Now I'm more aware that my voice counts  
and that we all have a role to play. Let us draw  
inspiration from Paulo Freire to build a world  
together where education and citizen  
engagement drive freedom and change.





*Sigwanis Lachapelle et  
Isaak Lachapelle-Gill*  
Leaders and knowledge holders  
w8banakiak

**Everywhere on the planet, and here on our territory, inspiring young people are making a difference by committing themselves to causes that are close to their hearts.**

Like Albert and Jana, Isaak and Sigwanis, young people around the world are committed to building a fair and just world. Their energy, creativity and commitment are invaluable assets in tackling social and global challenges. Through local and international solidarity initiatives, young people mobilize communities and inspire change. AQOCI values their commitment and their actions, which help us to shape a just and united future for the seven generations to come.



*Albert Lalonde*  
Climate justice activist



*Jana Abdul*  
Palestinian human  
rights activist

# Glossary

**Literacy**, according to Paulo Freire, is an educational process aimed at developing the ability to read and write while fostering a critical consciousness to understand and transform the world.

**Consciousness-raising**, according to Paulo Freire, is the process by which a person becomes aware of social injustices and develops the will to act to transform them.

**Dictatorship**, according to the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at the University of Sherbrooke, is a political regime characterized by arbitrary and authoritarian power, entirely submitted to the will of those who govern.

**Critical consciousness**, according to Paulo Freire, is the ability to question, analyze, and understand social realities to become aware of oppressions and engage in social transformation.

**A military junta**, according to the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at the University of Sherbrooke, combines legislative, executive, and judicial powers. It stands in contrast to a democratic regime, which is characterized by separation of constitutional powers.

**A pedagogue**, according to Paulo Freire, is a person who helps others to think for themselves and to understand the world so they can change it. The pedagogue believes that education should liberate and encourage everyone to participate actively in society.





# Quiz

- 1 The majority of the global population lives in democratic regimes.  TRUE  FALSE
- 2 The level of democracy enjoyed by the average citizen worldwide today has fallen to the level of 1985.  TRUE  FALSE
- 3 In the Middle East and North Africa, almost all the population lives under an authoritarian regime.  TRUE  FALSE
- 4 In Latin America and the Caribbean, the entire population lives in democratic regimes.  TRUE  FALSE
- 5 Women are relatively present in decision-making positions and political life around the world.  TRUE  FALSE
- 6 Globally, only 2.3% of women with disabilities hold decision-making positions.  TRUE  FALSE

TRUE  
or  
FALSE





**1: FALSE.** Although the number of democratic and authoritarian regimes is quite similar, we see that the vast majority of the population lives under authoritarian regimes. In fact, in 2023:

- 71% of the global population, or 5.7 billion people, were living in authoritarian regimes;
- 29% of the global population, or 2.3 billion people, were living in democratic regimes.

Source: V-Dem Institute. (2024). "[Democracy Report 2024 Democracy Winning and Losing at the Ballot](#)".

**2: TRUE.** Political regimes are not fixed; they evolve over time. While some countries are becoming more democratic, others are becoming more authoritarian. Over the past 10 years, there has been a strong trend toward autocratization, both in terms of the number of countries becoming increasingly authoritarian and the percentage of the population living under authoritarian regimes.

Source: V-Dem Institute. (2024). "[Democracy Report 2024 Democracy Winning and Losing at the Ballot](#)".

**3: TRUE.** Indeed, 98% of the population in the Middle East and North Africa lives under an authoritarian regime, and only 2% lives in a democratic regime, which is in Israel. However, even this country is currently on an autocratization path.

Source: V-Dem Institute. (2024). "[Democracy Report 2024 Democracy Winning and Losing at the Ballot](#)".

**4: FALSE.** In Latin America and the Caribbean, 66% of the population lives in democratic regimes. 4% live in liberal democracies, like Chile and Uruguay, while 62% live in electoral democracies, like Argentina and Brazil.

Source: V-Dem Institute. (2024). "[Democracy Report 2024 Democracy Winning and Losing at the Ballot](#)".

**5: FALSE.** Women are underrepresented at all levels of decision-making power worldwide, and gender parity is still far from being achieved in the political realm. Nevertheless, equitable participation and women's leadership in political and public realms are essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Source : ONU Femmes. 2024. [Faits et chiffres : Le leadership et la participation des femmes à la vie politique](#).

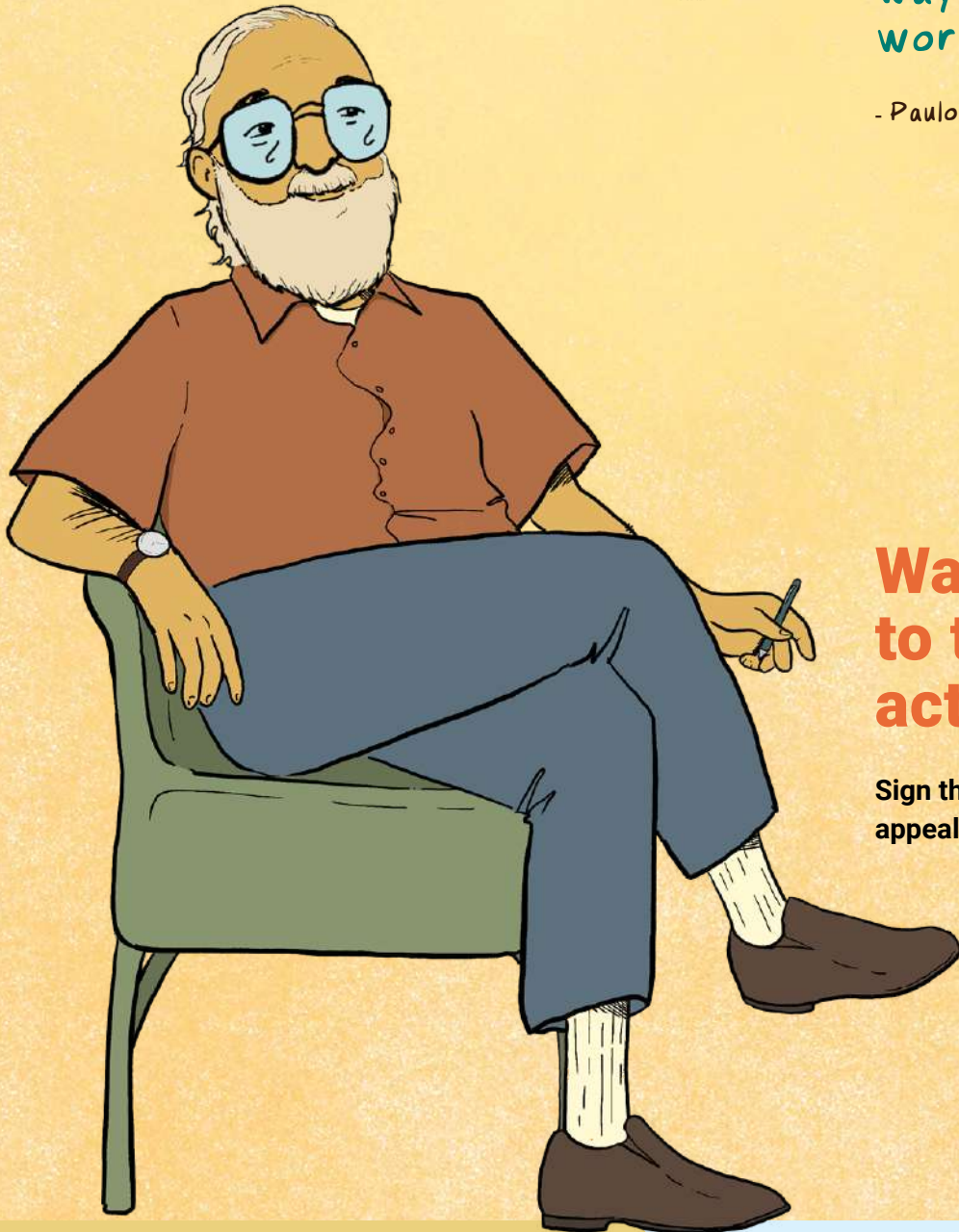
**6: TRUE.** Women with disabilities are underrepresented in decision-making bodies. Although men with disabilities are also underrepresented, 2.8% of them held a position as a legislator, senior manager, or manager, while only 2.3% of women with disabilities hold significant positions in decision-making bodies.

Source: UN Women. 2019. "[Issue Brief: Leadership and Political Participation of Women with Disabilities](#)".



The educator's aim is no longer simply to teach the person something, but to work with them to find ways of transforming the world in which they live.

- Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*



**Want  
to take  
action?**



Sign the indigenous peoples' appeal to protect the Amazon.





Rosalie Bouchard is an illustrator from a small village in Bas-St-Laurent with over 10 years of experience, particularly in the field of children's book illustration. Having studied graphic design and communications, she combines her skills to produce compelling creations. Her work is inspired by her travels, memories, and a sense of nostalgia drawn from her personal experiences. One of her long journeys in Central America deeply contributed to her inspiration for this project.

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