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| https://intranet.ucll.be/nl/system/files/hulpbronnen/Communicatie/huisstijl/UCLL_LOGO_RGB.png |
| |  | | --- | | academiC Year 2019-2020 |  |  | | --- | | **PEERLEARNING FROM DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES**  study applied to the project Instituto de cultura Brasil itália europa in the neighbourhood ribeira of salvador, brazil |  |  | | --- | | Bachelor thesis submitted by **Sharon Huysmans** for obtaining the diploma  BANABA International Cooperation for North South Relations. | |

**PEER-LEARNING FROM DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES**

study applied to the project Instituto de cultura Brasil itália europa in the neighbourhood ribeira of salvador, brazil

**Sharon Huysmans**

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| Brazil has various socio-structural challenges and one of them is education. The country has to deal with unequal access and this is reinforced by privatization of the system. As a consequence minority groups will have less opportunities and this is an inequality which causes inequalities in several other aspects of their lives (e.g. position on the labour market). Therefore the ‘**Instituto de Cultura Brasil Italia Europa’ (ICBIE),** a NGO, strives for empowering disadvantaged youth by offering educational and cultural courses at a low cost for the people of Salvador. They follow the vision of Paulo Freire, a key figure of the conflict-sociological approach.  This dissertation has the aim to explore the functioning of the ICBIE. On one hand is being examined how the method of peer-learning is embedded in the organization and on the other hand is examined how the organization is anchored in the community. The research is realized through participatory action research (PAR). This resulted in a combination of observations, a literature review, in-depth interviews and a questionnaire. The results give an indication of the method of peer-learning, and which benefits and challenges are being experienced, and the possibilities of the institute in the community. |

**Abstract**

Keywords: “Brazil, peer-learning, education, culture, Paulo Freire, youth”

Academic year 2019-2020 Bachelor thesis submitted for obtaining the diploma BANABA International Cooperation for North South Relations

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| “Teaching at ICBIE has the main objective of training conscientious citizens, stimulating curiosity and socio-cultural growth among young people in the community. It is not just getting to know a language, but getting in touch with a different culture, studying the art, the history of that culture and thus enriching the cultural background of young people to show them new opportunities for knowledge.”  Quote from a student/tutor |



# Preface

Brazil is a country of differences and unity. At one side there are the daily struggles of politics, inequality and other social challenges, on the other hand Brazilians live for their carnival, art and culture. This seems contradictory. However, during my internship in Brazil I learned that these two are connected. Their art and culture are something that helps them to survive these social challenges and helps them to deal with it. The people here see opportunities and chances everywhere.

In this light I had the chance to do my internship in the organization ICBIE. The organization focuses on the development of youth in the community of Ribeira. It is started by Marlene and Pietro, a couple who wants to provide language classes and a variety of workshops, but also has created a library and a museum that remembers the history of the peninsula. They truly devoted their life to the people, organization and the community.

What attracted me the most in this organization was that it was not linked to my previous studies as a criminologist. I wanted to go as far as possible out of my comfort zone and yet it felt natural to teach English here. I feel such fulfilment and joy when I succeed to explain something to someone else and they understand it in a way that they can explain it on their turn. Besides teaching them, I also learned a lot from their attitude and how they look at life. Automatically I felt the need to do more than they expect me to do due to that I believe in this organization and their mission.

When coming to Brazil I was nervous. I did not know what to expect in terms of social challengers or neither did I know how I could be significant for the people here. I did not have a solution or remedy for the structural problems here. During my internship learned that just being here, just giving them the chance to meet people from outside the country already means a lot. A couple of times the people from my organization told me that there is place for everyone here who feels not to fit somewhere else and that everyone is welcome to be part of the family. I felt this way. I did not only make friends here; I am part of the family.

Therefore, I want to thank in the first place my promotor Kim Peeters, who was there to support me throughout the adventure and realizing this research. In the second place I would like to thank the ICBIE, and especially Marlene and Pietro, for all the opportunities and that I was able to have a look at what their dream is. My message for them is that they do make a difference and they are necessary for the community. Someone said to me that they’re not a place but an idea that starts with them, grows in their students and is passed on to the community. I agree that this is the best way to describe the ICBIE. Third I want to thank all the people I’ve met at the ICBIE and who I saw making progress, even if they didn’t notice it themselves. Fourth, but not least, I want to thank my friends and family who supported me to start this adventure and especially the new friends, Meg and Jean, who I wouldn’t have met if it wasn’t for this adventure and whom I admire.

Sharon Huysmans

# Acknowledgements

This research has been realized in the context of my internship at the ICBIE to obtain the degree of the Advanced Bachelor International Cooperation North-South.

The objective of this research was to see how peerlearning functions in the context of the ICBIE. It’s important to know that **my position** at the ICBIE knew various roles. I was there as an observer to learn from the context and to help during the English classes. Therefore, I was a participant in the context and I have a closer contact with the respondents. However, I didn’t experience this as an obstacle during my research, on the contrary it was a benefit when asking people to participate. I tried to be as objective as possible, but this is never 100% guaranteed since neutrality is impossible since a researcher always has some interaction with the context.

To examine the concept of peerlearning, the perspective of different groups was taken into account. Respondents either belonged to the group of staff/ teachers/ volunteers or to the group of students. Depending on the category they belonged to, they received a different method. Since teachers and volunteers have a more general overview, they were approached for an in-depth interview. The students were questioned through a questionnaire. Both categories received the same questions. Concerning the questionnaire, the choice was made to also keep the open questions to avoid that they might be influenced since in this population, and the subject of learning, the **risk for socially desirable answers** is high and therefore tried to minimalize this. Besides that, there were also the **limitations of time and accessibility** due to the coronavirus. Due to that almost only the permanent classes have a WhatsApp group, respondents were contacted through these groups. However not all respondents could be contacted due to some groups don’t exist anymore and others never have existed. Therefore, for future research it’s best to give questionnaires before or after a class. In this way there’s not the difficulty of not having everyone his contact and the response rate will be higher.

*Therefore, it’s important to stress that the questionnaire needs to be seen as an additional source of information and not as representative for the entire population.*

# Resumo de gestão

*An English version of this management summary can be found in Appendix 1.*

Lembremos: Um livro, uma caneta, uma criança e um professor podem mudar o mundo.

- Malala Yousafzai.

Isso descreve a visão do Instituto de Cultura Brasil Itália Europa (ICBIE) no bairro de Ribeira de Salvador, Brasil. A organização foi criada em 2005 pelos fundadores Pietro Gallina e Marlene de Souza para criar oportunidades para os adolescentes, oferecendo vários cursos.

Durante meu estágio nesta organização por 5 meses, que terminou mais cedo devido uma pandemia, tive a chance de conhecer a alma do ICBIE. Aprendi o que o ICBIE significa para a equipe, os voluntários, os estudantes e toda a comunidade. Eu até tive a chance de observar quantos alunos fizeram progresso em uma determinada área. Além disso, notei que muitos voluntários e tutores uma vez começaram como estudante. Eles se tornaram um modelo para futuros alunos, tornaram-se um multiplicador. Devido a isso, vi que eles trabalhavam muito com o que a literatura chama de "aprendizado por pares" ou ‘peerlearning’ em inglês. Por isso, decidi focar em minha pesquisa o funcionamento da aprendizagem no ICBIE, prestando atenção a todos os benefícios e desafios. Além disso, eu queria explorar qual é a interação entre o sistema, a sociedade, o grupo-alvo e qual o papel do ICBIE nisso.

Minhas perguntas de pesquisa são as seguintes:

* Como o aprendizado entre pares é incorporado à organização?
* Quais são os benefícios e limitações do funcionamento da aprendizagem entre pares?
* Que possibilidades existem para uma ancoragem mais estrutural dessas práticas?

Essas questões de pesquisa foram examinadas por meio de uma pesquisa empírica. No entanto, devido ao fato de esta pesquisa ser realizada durante a pandemia de Covid-19, o método de pesquisa precisou ser adaptado. Portanto, a preferência vai para um método misto. Entrevistas em profundidade foram usadas para coletar informações de 9 figuras-chave do ICBIE. Um questionário foi utilizado para coletar informações dos alunos. Lá, a taxa de resposta foi bastante baixa (N = 12).

A seguir, serão discutidas as principais conclusões de cada questão de pesquisa. Cada um deles será discutido da perspectiva da equipe, que são os professores e voluntários, e da perspectiva dos alunos. A partir disso, seguirão possíveis recomendações para o futuro do ICBIE.

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| --- |
| 1. **Como o aprendizado entre pares é incorporado à organização?** |

O aprendizado por pares é um método que vem ganhando espaço no sistema educacional devido ao motivo pelo qual ambas as partes, tutores e alunos se beneficiam. É definido como o aprendizado entre si e entre si e conhece várias abordagens (tutoria, modelagem, educação, aconselhamento, monitoramento e avaliação). No ICBIE, dois deles estão explicitamente presentes. O primeiro é a tutoria de pares, o que significa que os professores funcionam como exemplo e, no ICBIE, isso às vezes já é a segunda geração. Alguns tutores se conectaram ao ICBIE como estudante e depois se tornaram tutores nesse campo específico. A segunda abordagem é a tutoria entre pares, onde os alunos aprendem com o professor, voluntários e outros alunos.

Todos os tutores acreditam no aprendizado por pares, mas ainda usam seu próprio estilo de ensino. Isso pode começar com a teoria e, em seguida, fazer exercícios ou imediatamente tentar aprender com os erros ou mesmo com uma abordagem orientada a problemas. Neste último, o tutor pergunta o que os alunos querem aprender e com os quais eles enfrentam dificuldades e depois estrutura as aulas.

Uma razão para essas diferentes abordagens é que os tutores ensinam com atenção às limitações dos alunos e, portanto, preferem uma abordagem mais individual. Isso dá a oportunidade de aprender no seu ritmo.

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| 1. **Quais são os benefícios e limitações do funcionamento da aprendizagem entre pares?** |

1. **Como o aprendizado entre pares é incorporado à organização?**

O método de aprendizagem por pares traz muitos benefícios, mas também limitações ou desafios. Primeiro, a coisa positiva, os benefícios. Em primeiro lugar, os alunos se sentem incentivados e estimulados. Em segundo lugar, ajuda a desenvolver habilidades transferíveis. essas habilidades não estão limitadas a um curso específico, mas são habilidades para a vida. Em terceiro lugar, o método proporciona um intercâmbio intercultural entre os alunos com antecedentes diferentes, mas também com os voluntários do ICBIE. Trabalhar com voluntários tem seus benefícios, pois enriquece os alunos culturalmente. No entanto, a maioria dos voluntários permanece por um curto período de tempo, o que dificulta o início de seu próprio curso. Em outras palavras, eles transferem conhecimento, mas de outra maneira isso pode complicar as coisas.

Os desafios do aprendizado por pares podem estar em vários níveis. Em primeiro lugar, pode haver uma falta de conhecimento da língua materna. Isso dificulta o ensino de um idioma, pois há uma falta de conhecimento gramatical que pode causar diferenças dentro do grupo de turmas. Essas diferenças podem ser causadas pelo desconhecimento da língua materna, mas, por outro lado, os horários das aulas não são tão flexíveis devido à falta de pessoal e à falta de recursos financeiros. Portanto, as aulas são comparadas em primeiro lugar, se o aluno está disponível. Em outras palavras, em uma classe do mesmo nível do curso, as diferenças de conhecimento que os alunos têm podem ser diferentes.

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| 1. **Que possibilidades existem para uma ancoragem mais estrutural dessas práticas?** |

A missão e visão oficiais do ICBIE é capacitar jovens desfavorecidos, oferecendo cursos educacionais e culturais. Eles oferecem vários cursos por um preço baixo ou gratuito. Ao fazer isso, eles querem compensar o acesso desigual à educação no Brasil.

O Brasil é um país com vários desafios sócio-estruturais e o ICBIE quer quebrar essa tendência. Eles querem conscientizar sobre essas desigualdades e dar à comunidade as ferramentas para mudar sua posição e toda a sociedade, rompendo o círculo da pobreza. O círculo da pobreza significa que, quando pessoas de más condições de vida não têm a oportunidade de receber educação, suas possibilidades de emprego diminuem e permanecerão naquele bairro vulnerável. No Brasil, esses bairros são chamados de favelas. Em outras palavras, o ICBIE segue a visão de Paulo Freire. Esta é uma abordagem sociológica de conflito da educação, onde a educação funciona como o lugar para mudar a injustiça na sociedade. Um projeto importante que impactou a sociedade foi Salvador Grafita (2005), onde foram realizadas oficinas de graffiti e elas fizeram arte nas ruas. Antes disso, era impossível fazer isso porque ninguém respeitava o grafite, exceto o próprio artista. Atualmente, com a pandemia causada pelo COVID-19, o ICBIE tornou-se parceiro do projeto GeoCombateCovid-19-BA, onde pesquisadores coletam dados relacionados aos gerentes de pandemia e apoio, sociedade civil e pesquisadores, contribuindo para os estudos.

Como essa visão precisa ser difundida, existem várias recomendações para fazê-lo. O primeiro é a reorganização da infraestrutura. O segundo é promover o trabalho voluntário no instituto. A terceira é a publicidade em larga escala e, como conseqüência, mais alunos e voluntários. A quarta e última recomendação está fazendo pesquisas com a comunidade para identificar as necessidades locais e oferecer um novo curso que responda a uma determinada necessidade.

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# List of abbreviations

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| ECA  FLACSO  GDI  GII  HDI  ICBIE  IHDI  LGBT  MPI  PAL  PAR  PBF  PISA  PNAD  PPCAAM  PT  RJ  SDG  UCLL  UNICEF | Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente  Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales  Gender Development Index  Gender Inequality Index  Human Development Index  Instituto de cultura Brasil Itália Europa  Inequality-adjusted Human Development index  Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender  Multidimensional poverty index  Peer assisted learning  Participatory action research  Programa Bolsa Família  Programme for International Student Assessment  Pesquisa Nacional de Amostra Por Domicílio  Programa de Proteção a Crianças e Adolescentes Ameaçados de Morte  Partido dos Trabalhadores  Restorative Justice  Sustainable Development Goals  University Colleges Leuven-Limburg  United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund |

# Introduction

As long as I know, I have this desire to explore other cultures, to meet new people, to learn from others and to understand myself better. Therefore, I chose to follow the advanced bachelor *International Cooperation North-South.* The program gives students the chance to learn from people with another culture and to appreciate these differences. In the context of this program I went on an internship in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil. The choice for this country had several motivations. On one hand it was the context that felt the most out of my comfort zone and on the other hand the negative image that Brazil has which is widespread about the safety and security. This intrigued me as a citizen and as a criminologist.

From November 2019 until April 2020 I did my internship at Instituto Cultural Brasilia Italia Europa (hereafter ICBIE). ICBIE is situated in the suburbs of Salvador, in Ribeira. It’s an organisation which has the objective to offer a widespread of courses to the community in order to empower adolescents to develop skills that can improve their position in society. Following from this mission, this bachelor dissertation focuses on a subject I have observed during my internship. Within this research I tried to use the skills I developed during my former education, Criminology, and the knowledge I absorbed during my student job on the project Leuven Restorative City. The combination of my professional and personal interests leads to a dissertation about peer-learning. I’m convinced that education is the foundation of everything in life and that anyone can achieve anything as long as they get the possibilities and the institutional context to stimulate their development.

Education, or the lack of it, is an important topic in Brazil. In the Brazilian context it seems that there’s no equal access to education. There’s a specific lack of knowledge of foreign languages. At school, students learn the basics of the basics or in other words; the English classes are limited to the verb “to be”. In the world of today, where globalisation is an important process, this limitates the possibilities of adolescents. Therefore, Marlene and Pietro started the organisation *Instituto de Cultura Brasil Itália Europa* with the objective to offer educational and cultural courses with the objective to empower youth to change their future and the future of the entire society.

It was at the ICBIE that I met many adolescents with a lot of potential, but with lack of opportunities to develop these skills. It was during my internship that I noticed that they give people the chance to learn something new and to pass on their own skills to others. Learning from and with each other is a typical way of working here. Everyone who gives workshops here, was somehow already linked to the ICBIE.

When doing my daily activities at ICBIE I noticed that I like to give English classes. It gives me this feeling of fulfilment when I explain something to a student, he understands it and then explains it to someone else in the same way. It confirms what I already knew, this organisation is necessary. Besides teaching others, I never saw them as ‘less than me’ since I might even learn more from them in another way. I have met so many beautiful people with heart-breaking and -warming stories that I wanted to give them a platform to share their experiences and their opinions about the organisation.

Due to the fact that it’s possible that there is a misinterpretation about this concept, the first part of this Bachelor dissertation will focus on clarifying two questions;

1. What does the concept ‘peer learning’ mean?
2. Which are possible approaches of peer learning?

In the second part of this Bachelor dissertation, the following **research questions** will be clarified;

* 1. How is peer learning embedded in the organisation?
  2. Which are benefits and limitations of the functioning of peer learning?
  3. Which possibilities are there for a more structural anchoring of these practices?

This bachelor dissertation contains five parts. In the first part an overview is given of the broader context on macro, meso and micro level with all the challenges about the education system taken into account. In the second part the most important concepts for my own research will be explained such as peer-learning and its effectiveness. In the third part follows an exhaustive overview of the methodology is given. The methodology will be differentiated according to the position in the organisation and someone will either fill in a questionnaire or an in-depth interview. In the fourth part the results will be analysed per research method and in the fifth part they will be compared and discussed. In the sixth, and last part, the conclusion of this research will be addressed and the possible recommendations in short and long term.

# Contextual framework

ICBIE is an NGO situated in the suburbs of Salvador da Bahia (Brazil). The organisation wants to empower youth through educational and cultural courses. However, before zooming in on their functioning, a description of the context is necessary.

Therefore, in this contextual framework the context will be discussed on the level of Brazil, Salvador and ICBIE. The first level, Brazil, consists out of an overview of politics, the role of civil society, childrens’ rights and education. The second level, Salvador, exists out of a short overview of the history and the socio-structural challenges. The third level focuses on the place of internship.

## Brazil

Brazil, officially the federative republic of Brazil, is situated in South-America. It is the largest country of South-America and Latin-America and also the fifth largest one in the world. Besides this, Brazil also has known a turbulent political history and the citizens face several socio-structural challenges. In the following part I’ll first give an overview of the current political situation. Then, I’ll describe the civil society with its socio-structural challenges. Finally, I’ll explain the target group, adolescents.

### Politics

The actual president of Brazil is Jair Messias Bolsonaro. His policy is described as far-right or ultraconservative, but to explain what his impact is on the actual situation, and more specifically the Social Development Goals (SDG’s), we first need to go back in time.

***Political history: about Dilma, Lula, Lava Jato***

From 2003 – 2013 Brazil had social democratic governments led by the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT). Luiz Inácio da Silva (hereafter, Lula) served two terms of presidency from 2003 until 2011. His political agenda focused on the socio-structural challenges. Lula strived for social inclusion by creating social programs. After Lula, Dilma Rousseff (hereafter Dilma) became the first female president of Brazil. During her presidency, the World championship of 2014 took place in Brazil. This was one of the reasons that triggered the protest actions on the street concerning the big investments that were done. With the new presidential elections, Dilma won even though her popularity declined. One of her main focuses would be to economize and this had big consequences for the working class. The citizens were unhappy and other politicians, more specifically the opposition, too. It led to her being accused of corruption and that she did an ‘illegal tax shift’. Some politicians say it is a violation of the tax law, other say that they use this to execute a political coup. However, what followed was an investigation called Lava Jato (carwash) that had the objective to investigate possible corruption amongst politicians and the whole situation led to the impeachment of Dilma in 2016. Concerning the case of *Lava Jato*, it appeared that the oil company Petrobras was involved and that several companies were somehow connected to the PT. Without getting into details, this led to the Lula being charged. He was being suspected of being involved in corruption. He got payed with real-estate, an apartment in São Paulo. This resulted in Lula being imprisoned while there was no direct evidence that connected him to this case.

***Election of Bolsonaro***

It was after these events, that Jair Messias Bolsonaro got elected as the president of Brazil (Transparency International NL, 2018) and won with a difference of 10% from Fernando Haddad. Bolsonaro is a member of a conservative party and is seen as far-right. This trend was also noticeable on within the parliamentary elections and the elections for governors. A possible explanation for this radical change of course, is attributed to the previous events that damaged the belief of Brazilians in politics and justice. Rumour has it that the conviction of Lula, was because other politicians wanted to exclude him. Due to the convictions he was, and still is, not able to run for presidency. Some say this conviction justified since Lula tried to hide it very well, others say that judge Moro, who convicted him, was not as objective as needed to be in a democracy. This last rumour gets stimulated by an independent medium Intercept that reported about communication between the new president and the justice system about a conspiracy of convicting Lula by falsifying evidence. Besides this, the objectivity of judge Moro is discussable since he later becomes the minister of Justice of the government of Bolsonaro. In theory, this is a violation of the basic principle of a democracy, separation of powers.

More and more voices are rising considering the capabilities of this president and moreover whether he’s capable of maintaining a democracy. At first this question was manifesting in Brazil, but since the outbreak of a pandemic (COVID-19) his presidency is being questioned internationally. The question rises as a consequence of his attitude and plan of action according the pandemic, or better said the lack of it.

***COVID-19 and presidency***

In March 2020, Brazil got affected with the virus COVID-19 and declares a state of emergency. The governors of the states got into action by taking measurements concerning social isolation by closing certain public areas (shopping centres, restaurants and bars, beaches, schools) (Phillips, 2020, para 3).  The **minister of health,** at that time**, Luiz Henrique Mandetta,** supported thus plan of action to minimalize the speed of contamination. By doing so they hope to ‘flatten the curve’ and avoid putting more pressure on the healthcare system, which is near collapsing. Despite these critical situation, Bolsonaro wants to reopen the country. This is against the advice of his own government and public health experts (Fishman, 2020, para 3). He believes that a lockdown above the already existing economic crisis, will be a complete disaster (Paraguassu & Eisenhammer, 2020, para 1). He strongly advices to return back to the normal situation and appears in public taking part in protests against the corona measures in Brasilia, the capital of Brazil and the epicentre of politics (Korstjens, 2020, para 5). This disagreement led to firing the minister and triggered other events such as the resignation of **Sergio Moro, the minister of Justice** (Fishman, 2020, para 8; Vanoost, 2020, para 2). The reason for this is that the president fired the head of the federal police since he wanted to have insight in a case where his son is involved (Fishman, 2020, para 8).

Even though there are agreements it seems that “Bolsonaro is not signalling defeat or moderation, but rather that he is willing to go all out on his war against Brazilian democracy”, (Fishman, 2020, para 4) according to Intercept. As a consequence of Bolsonaro his attitude during the pandemic, the question whether his presidency is still defendable shifted to the international news. Voices are rising about his capabilities and moreover whether he’s capable of maintaining a democracy. Media are even speculating about an impeachment since at least 28 members of the Parliament already asked to start this procedure. Their reasons were the following “including acts against democracy, national security and freedom of the press, mismanagement, abuse of authority, and breaches of health standards endangering human lives” (Osava, 2020, para 2). Sociologist Elimar do Nascimento, professor at the University of Brasilia, says this is unfeasible since five conditions must be met and these are (Osava, 2020, para 3);

* Having a popularity of less than 10 percent;
* Opposing the majority of the media;
* Losing 'the battle on the street';
* No longer having the support of the companies;
* A condemnation by two third majority of the Members of the Parliament.

Bolsonaro his popularity is still 30%. However, the other 70% wants to stress that they don’t support him and started an action. When the outbreak of the pandemic started, people were already drumming their pans as a protest action from out of their homes, but now they are also spreading a message through social media through a logo. The logo is a circle and below it says *antifascista* which refers to how the policy of the president is being described, as far-right and ultraconservative. The description above varies and refers to the social category the person is linked to or one of the social roles he/she has such as ‘graffiti artist’ or ‘teacher’.

***Policy and commitments; the Social Development Goals (SDG’s)***

Besides those turbulent elections and the outbreak of COVID-19, the government of Bolsonaro meant another policy and several changes. Whereas the previous governments were sociodemocratics and focused on social programs (e.g. *Bolsa Familia[[1]](#footnote-1)*) to combat socio-structural challenges (poverty, inequality) and empower youth by investing in education, Bolsonaro wants to restore the trust of citizens in police and politics. An explanation for this is at one hand the events involving the previous presidents and on the other hand the past of Bolsonaro as a military.

Besides the focus of his policy, the government of Bolsonaro announced to step out of the UN environmental treaty, end the commitment to the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG’s)** and withdraw from various humanitarian commitments. Besides the discontinuation of participating in these commitments, he announced plans to *privatise education*, to economize on the health sector and to lower the pensions. This had as a consequence that there were more protest actions in April, May and June of last year. The government Bolsonaro also wants to take some measurements that will affect adolescents. The first one is to destroy the youth law, abolish the Ministry of Children's Rights and reduce the support for youth councils. Overall, a consequence of the election of Bolsonaro is a reduce of engagement to respecting the Human Rights and all this will create a climate where inequalities will rise and these will be felt in the society that will be confronted with socio-structural challenges.

It’s in combating these socio-structural challenges that the SDG’s come in the picture. The **Social Development Goals (SDG’s)** are 17 goals that are confirmed by the General Assembly of the United Nations with the goal to achieve them before 2030 (‘SDGS’, n.d.) . The commitment to realise the 17 SDG’s is important on international and national level, but also for the quality of life. However, the realization is problematic in Brazil. Here, a few SDG’s are being discussed. This is not an exhaustive overview of the Brazilian situation.

The first problem concerns the SDG *‘no poverty’ (SDG 1)*. However, Brazil is a country with many inequalities on social and economic level. There’s a big gap between the rich and poor. This has as a consequence that some categories of people are being systematically excluded of certain public services. The two most important services are health and education. In both sectors there’s a trend of privatization which makes the access for people of low-middle class.

The second problem concerns the *SDG ‘Quality education’ (SDG 4*). Education in Brazil is subjected to privatization and due to this the quality between public and private schools varies, and it’s not benefitting the public schools. As a consequence, poor or disadvantaged youth goes to public schools where education is of lower quality.

The third problem concerns two SDG’s that can be combined. One is about *‘gender equality’ (SDG 5)* and the other one about *‘reduce inequality’ (SDG 10).* Both SDG’s address the inequality between citizens. These inequalities are situated on the level of gender, ethnicity and sexual preference. In other words, the groups that are being marginalized are women, people with an afro-Brazilian descent and LGBT. This marginalization might be influenced by implicit norms concerning gender, prejudices and traditional roll patterns.

### Civil Society

Civil society refers to the collection of non-governmental and non-profit organizations. These are neither connected to the government nor the economy and are the necessary link between citizens, especially minority groups, and the government. Civil society strives to represent the values of their members and is has therefore an important role in society since the voice of the civilians is being heard through them. In doing this, they focus on the interests of minority groups and the difficulties they’re facing.

***Socio-structural challenges***

Brazil is a country of diversity knows many differences and therefore many inequalities and socio-structural challenges. It are these challenges that the civil society wants to change. In the following these will be briefly discussed by categorizing them as “poverty”, “inequalities” and “crime”.

* 1. **Poverty**

Brazil gets the label of being a development country. One of the factors which contributes to this label is their poverty rate. 26,5% of the population is living below the national poverty line (Human Development Reports, 2018). However, when we look at the Multidimensional poverty index (MPI) this scores 3,8%. This index shows the percentage of the population which is poor on many levels and takes into account the severity (Human Development Report, 2018). The unemployment rate is 55,9% of people from 15 years and older whereas the female to male ratio of unemployment is 1,26. The total youth (15 – 24 years) unemployment rate is 28,6% and the female to male ratio here is 1,30 (Human Development Reports, 2018).

* 1. **Inequalities**

The most prominent inequalities are those of economic means, gender and ethnicity. The Inequality-adjusted Human Development index (IHDI) and the Human Development Index (HDI) score both 0.761. “The IHDI combines a country’s average achievements in health, education and income with how those achievements are distributed among country’s population by “discounting” each dimension’s average value according to its level of inequality” (Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index, n.d.). In other words, this score gives an indication of the Human Development that’s possible when there are no inequalities. Since this is a rather high score, it indicates that inequality is limitating the potential to develop. When looking at the Gender Development Index (GDI), Brazil has a score of 0.995. The GDI points out that there is a gender gap. However, Brazil scores 0.386 on the Gender Inequality Index (GII) (Human Development Reports, 2018). The GII is rather low, which indicates low inequalities between women and men. This can be explained by The *Pesquisa Nacional de Amostra Por Domicílio* (2018) (hereafter PNAD). This research shows that the unemployment rate of women (14,2%) is higher than that of men (11,0%) and that women are 51% of the unemployment population. Concerning race, 64.1% of unemployed people in Brazil were black or brown. There was also a connection between level of education and being unemployment. Here, people who dropped out of school were more likely to be unemployed.

Besides this, there are also the socio-structural challenges such as poverty and migration from rural to urban. These factors lead to inhuman living conditions (favelas). Due to this situation, an increase of single mothers and problems of substance abuse and domestic violence occurs.

1. **Crime**

**“Brazil is the world’s murder capital.”** (Muggah, 2019, para 1)

The image of Brazil is associated with crime, corruption and cartels. This image might be influenced, or even caused, by the fact that Brazil is the second largest country that’s being used as a transit country for drug trafficking. They have a history of corruption scandals (Lava Jato) and the crime rates are high. The latest HDI of 2018 states that the homicide rate is 30,2 out of every 100,000 people (Human Development Reports, 2018). In 2019 there were 41,250 homicides or 19,7 out of every 100,000 people (Asmann & O’Reilly, 2020). This means an average of 113 homicides a day. According to a report of the UN of 2015, Brazil is on the sixth place in the international ranking with a crime rate of 29,53 out of every 100,000. (<https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/BRA/brazil/crime-rate-statistics>). It seems to be declined since 2018. However, that year there was a rivalry between two gangs that caused a peak of violence and might give a distorted picture.

***Difficulties and human-rights defenders***

The civil society is experiencing difficulties due to the policy of the government Bolsonaro. On top of that 23 human rights defenders were killed last year, which has been the highest number in years (Asmann & O’Reilly, 2020). Besides, killings committed by police have never been higher (Asmann & O’Reilly, 2020). An explanation for the use of excessive lethal force by the police could be the tough on crime vision of the government (Muggah, 2019).

Considering the high murder rate on a human-rights defender, Amnesty International (AI) says: A human-rights defender is not somebody who acts for himself. He represents a community; therefore, his murder is meant to demobilise, scare and silence others.” (Albuquerque, 2018, para 4).

One of the most known human-rights defenders is Marielle Franco. She came up for the rights of women, black people and homosexuals. Besides that, she had an opinion about the rise in police violence (Albuquerque, 2018, para 5).

The previous government tried to prevent these murders by starting a national protection programme for activists in 2005. It seems a beautiful initiative and that’s almost all it is. According to the assessment of the Brazilian Committee for Human Rights Defenders the Brazilian politics lack the will to implement it properly. The main reason for this could be that it protects activists who question the functioning of the country. The government would implement a program to protect people who will make it more difficult for them to do the politics as they are doing it now.

### Childrens’ rights

One third, 30%, of the Brazilian population are children and youth (Human Development Reports, 2018). Previous research, ‘*Pesquisa Nacional de Amostra Por Domicílio (PNAD-2018)’,* shows that 53,5% of children under 15 years old studies and has a job and 22,8% of the category under 15 years old has a job. One of the most problematic findings is that besides dropping out of school rises the chances for unemployment, there would be 2,7 million children involved in child labour.

**Crime against and amongst youth**

The Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO) said in the report ‘Lethal Violence Against Children and Adolescents of Brazil’ that there were 10,500 homicide victims in the country (da Silva, 2017, para 17). This is a rate of 16.3 murders out of hundred thousand children and adolescents (0 – 19 years). If this isn’t alarming, the fact that Brazil was ranked third out of 85 countries, is. The report of the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) of 2014 states that four out of 1,000 adolescents whom are murdered are younger than 19 years (Bargent, 2017, para 1). According to UNICEF this rate should be between 0 and 1 and if this rate continues, 43,000 adolescents will be murdered between 2015 and 2021.

A worrying trend is violence by and against young people. In literature they usually speak about ‘street children’ and it refers to the increase of children that are hanging around on the streets (Pare, 2004, p. 220). It seems that adolescents who are male and/ or black are more likely to be murdered than females and/ or white adolescents. In general, the statistics are alarming.

Besides that, they get recruited especially as cheap workers to participate in organized crime (Bargent, 2017, para 9). Besides this it is difficult to avoid getting involved follows out of this quote:

*Either they are involved in criminal activities, their peers are involved, they resist criminal attempts to recruit or use them, or they are stigmatized by states forces that treat youths as criminals.* (Bargent, 2017, para 10)

It shows that the socio-economic factors are a motivation for the children to go on the street to earn money for their family or to escape from the situation at home (Pare, 2004, p. 221). Besides these factors, sociologists give two other important motivations for children to engage in criminal activities. The main reason is the lack of quality of education and another one is that they want to participate in the society and therefore they want to be on the same level as others. Juvenile offenders are motivated by wanting what they don’t have (Buonarotti, s.d., p. 121).

According to the Statute of Children and Adolescents (1990) the profile of an offender is as described in the following quote:

In Brazil, due to historical aspects, mainly slavery and racial prejudice, marginalized social groups can be observed in the country. Usually with black skin, poor, with Africans’ religions etc. Consequently, by being marginalized, people migrate and move to peripheral regions of the cities. Normally, by being poor, with bad access to public services, it can be noticed that the citizen is removed from society, and this may create a social environment that leads to violence. (Brugnerotto, s.d., p. 121).

**The approach of juvenile offences**

To deal with juvenile offenders there are two ways of approaching the situation, namely the repressive and preventive approach. The one that has been used for a long time is the **repressive approach**. This means intervening when adolescents are already involved in criminal. Also, here, there are two possibilities. The adolescent as victim or as offender. Of course, it’s not always that black and white, but this is only to make it easier to explain.

For the **adolescent as a victim** there is the Program for the Protection of Children and Adolescents Threatened with Death (Programa de Proteção a Crianças e Adolescentes Ameaçados de Morte – PPCAAM) (da Silva, 2017, para 1). The name of this program refers to the objective it has. The program wants to protect adolescents who are at risk of getting involved in criminal activities or being threatened by criminal groups. Therefore, the final objective is to prevent further murders since the homicide rate on children and adolescents is high. According to a specialist in youth law, Ariel de Castro Alves, the program is effective. However, there’s a lack of resources and staff and due to that the program effectivity of the program can be improved.

When the adolescent is the offender **or perpetrator**, the judicial procedure regulated according The Statute of Children and Adolescents (ECA) (1990). This Statute is the national translation of the Beijing Rules and Declaration of Children’s Rights (Brugnerotto, s.d., p. 120). It stresses the best interest of the child and therefore protection is a keyword here. Moreover, they claim the status of the child as ‘untouchable’. ECA contains the most fundamental rights such as (Pare, 2004, p. 226);

* the right to life and health;
* the right to freedom, respect and dignity;
* the right to family and community life;
* the right to education, culture, sports practice and leisure;
* the right to vocational training and protection at work.

The **preventive approach** has mostly the focus to keep children and adolescent away from the street. It’s usually handled as approaching them and trying to motivate them to follow a programme. There are many programs that focus on empowerment of the adolescent by offering education ([Pare, 2004](https://brill-com.kuleuven.ezproxy.kuleuven.be/view/journals/chil/12/3/article-p217_2.xml), p. 238).

**Restorative justice in the Brazilian Juvenile Justice system**

Restorative justice and restorative practices are rising approaches on international level. The main difference between these two concepts is that restorative justice always is situated in a criminal context, whereas restorative practices covers a broader context and varies from preventing offences by stimulating social inclusion and giving a voice towards minority groups (e.g. foreigners, poor communities,) to the aftercare when a criminal case has been to court (e.g. mediation).

In 2005 Restorative Justice (RJ) started to emerge in the Brazilian Juvenile Justice system as a reaction on the loss of trust in the Justice system. As a consequence of this development, Brazil started to implement projects such as 'Promoting Restorative Practices in the Brazilian Justice System' and "Project Justice and Education: A Partnership for Citizenship" (Achutti & Pallamolla, 2012). In this last project the focus lies on justice, education and community. The project existed out of three phases. In the first one the focus was on RJ in schools and in the Court. It means that if possible, the conflict needed to be solved in their own environment, the school, and if not than it was better to opt for the restorative circles model. The restorative circles model is a broader variant on the Victim-Offender Mediation model. Whereas in mediation it usually is the two parties with a mediator, the restorative circles model includes these parties, there significant others and important institutions such as the school or the family context. In the second phase, it was necessary to apply this method in the community. Here the focus was creating a plan of action for the community. In the third and last phase, the objective was to realise a restorative approach on the levels of the juvenile justice system, the school and the community. They need to find a way to work together and to enhance the impact.

Thus, the question about the approach is whether to speak of crime prevention or positive youth development. If it is that last one, education has a key role. In the next part, the Brazilian education system will be discussed.

### Education system

The education system is an important part of society since it functions as reproduction and/ or as mean to change the society. It helps people to develop new skills and can be seen as the motor of the labour market. Therefore it’s the fourth of the 17 SDG’s is about ‘Quality education’ and is defined as followed:

**“Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.”** (‘Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development .:. Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform’, n.d.; ‘SDGS’, n.d.).

***Education in numbers***

The recent Human Development Reports (2018) shows that Brazil has a score of 0.689 on the **education index**. Which means that the expected years and actual mean vary, and it’s not in a positive way. When looking closer, it seems that children are expected to go to school until for 15 years this varies depending on gender. With an expectation of 15,8 years for women and 15 years for men, there’s a difference of almost a year in favour of women (Human Development Reports, 2018). However, when looking at the actual situation it shows that the actual mean years of schooling is 7,8 and therefore almost half the amount of the expected years of schooling (Human Development Reports, 2018). For women the average is 8, 1 years and for men 7,6 years.

The **literacy rate** of Brazil is 92% (Human Development Reports, 2018). This number is high. However, it only shows how many people are able to read, but doesn’t say whether these capacities are of a low or rather high level. Therefore the score on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is consulted. This test makes it possible to compare the level of students on an international level. When looking at the score on reading, it says that Brazil is ranked on the 79th place with a score of 407 which is below the average score of 493 (Human Development Reports, 2018). Statistics also show that 24,2% of adolescents (15 – 24 years) is not in school or employed (Human Development Reports, 2018).

***Regulation of education***

Besides the differences of quality, there’s also the difficulty of access. To come up with a structural solution, it’s necessary to know what causes these inequalities.

Education is regulated by the State and there are two kinds of education, public and private. Public education accounts for 91 % of primary education (educação fundamental). The functioning of the primary level of private schools is managed by the State Education Council (Conselho Estadual de Educação) and that of public schools is managed by the municipalities. Secondary education (educação médio) refers to high school and/or vocational training. This level is the responsibility of the states. Higher education is the responsibility of the Federal Government (Pare, 2004, p. 232).

However, the distinction between public and private is one that causes many challenges. In the public schools the drop-outs and repetition rates are high. Due to this, only a minority of university students come from public schools (Amadeo et al., 1992, p. 1). In the private schools, teachers are better paid which might be the explanation that they are more motivated to teach and benefits the quality of the private education. This implies that public schools are from less quality and that students there, which are usually poor people, are disadvantaged, have less chance to go to university and will mostly end up working (Amadeo et al., 1992, p. 13).

Due to this there is a paradigm shift in Brazil towards the privatization of education (Akkari, 2013, p. 1). Moreover, the educational achievements only concern primary education. Since basic education became Brazil’s primary focus, other levels and types of education have been neglected. (Pare, 2004, p. 241). This has as a consequence that public schools either stop to exist or the quality of education reduces.

The paradigm shift causes a less equal access to education (Akkari, 2013). Besides that, there is the concern that the curriculum of public schools isn’t flexible due to that the methodology of teaching is too theoretic and abstract. This has as a consequence that it is too far from street children’s experiences, (Sergiovanni, 1994, p. 253; Pare, 2004, p. 246). Another obstacle is the decentralisation of the education system. For each phase another institution is responsible and due to this there are difficulties in coordination (Pare, 2004, p. 242). A remarkable decision of the government concerning education is to prohibit secondary schools from including critical humanities in the curriculum and to stop scholarships for vulnerable youth and indigenous minorities. This last one implies an even less accessible education system for all layers of society and causes a structural inequality. Besides that, the government of Bolsonaro has criticized the emancipating Pedagogy of Paulo Freire. This resulted in taking out several societal themes of the study curriculum and focusing on religion and patriotism.

The international report of UNICEF is very clear:

(…) there is an urgent need to expand, rethink and transform education and learning systems to provide all children and adolescents, especially those who are marginalised and in conflict and emergency settings, with quality learning opportunities that include the skills they need to succeed in school, work, and life. (Nasir, 2019, p. 1) .

## Salvador da Bahia de todos os Santos

Salvador, a capital with many stories, many faces, many dreams and challenges. In this part the history of Salvador will briefly be discussed, followed by the challenges of today.

### Colonization and slave trade

*São Salvador da Bahia de todos os Santos* – shortly called Salvador – is the capital of the fourth largest state of Brazil, Bahia. It is situated in the Northeast. Salvador was the first capital of Brazil. The reason for this was that Salvador was the epicentre of the economy due to the African slave trade. African slaves were brought into the country through Salvador and mostly worked on the plantation of sugar cane.



*Picture of Pelourinho*

One of the neighbourhoods in Salvador that still shows signs of the period of slavery is *Pelourinho*. It is situated in the historic centre. It’s a place where many tourists are taking pictures due to the colourful buildings and the lovely scene. Michael Jackson filmed there the clip of “They don’t care about us”, which makes it even more popular. However, the history of this place is a history of pain and suffer, a true tragedy in the history of Brazil and of Salvador. The name *Pelourinho* refers to the whipping by the Portuguese. This happened at this central place. African slaves, but also criminals, were collected here and received punishments for disobedience or for committing a crime.

Due to that African slaves were brought into Brazil by the Portuguese colonialists, there are many remains of this period of violence and oppression. These remains can be found in the streets of the historic centre and in the museums that reminds everyone to it. They can be found in the religion of Candomblé which is an Afro-Brazilian religion where catholic elements are combined with the African tradition of worshiping ancestors, *Orixás*. A local told me that the African slaves were separated and tribes were torn apart to avoid any form of communication. However, these people still had their faith and wanted to practise it. Since they were from different tribes, they combined the different beliefs. However, the masters didn’t like this and demanded that they would covert to Catholicism. The slaves didn’t want to deny their faith nor wanted they to get whipped. Therefore, they chose to look for similarities between their *Orixás* and the saints of Catholicism. Other cultural heritage is capoeira which is from origin a defence sport. However, due to the reaction of their master, slaves started to say it’s a dance in order for them to not feel threatened and take measurements against the slaves. Besides these physical things, this history left psychological traces in terms of feelings of insecurity, oppression and inferiority.

The people of Bahia are descendants of the African slaves who once were brought into Brazil. This seems a story of many centuries ago, but Brazil was one of the last countries to abolish slave trade, in 1888. These traces of discrimination, of polarization, of inequality are still visible today. More about this will be discussed in the next part.

### Socio-structural challenges of Bahia

*Na cidade da Bahia, coexistem duas realidades: Uma quotidiana, dramática, terrível, de miséria e oppressão: outra mágica, poética e festiva.*

*Quote from Jorge Amado, a Brazilian writer.*

This quote means that in Bahia there are two realities and one of them is a reality of everyday that is dramatic, horrible, one from misery and oppression and the other one is a magical, poetical and festive reality. He could not have been more right. The people from Bahia are conscious about their past and it resounds in daily activities, but they wear it with some kind of proud that they knew how to survive it. For an outside like me it feels that they feel empowered. As Jorge Amado said, it is something magical and it is typically Bahia. It’s something that’s only noticeable in regions were history is marked by colonization and slave trade and the atmosphere is almost impossible to describe. It’s something you need to experience yourself in order to believe it. Besides the feeling, there are also many people with magical hands.

Salvador is a city that finds cohesion in art, culture and carnival. The city is known for the music of Olodum in the streets of Pelourinho, capoeira (a defence sport combined with dancing) and Candomblé (afro-Brazilian religion derived from the different tribes of the African slaves). Salvador is a poetical and magical city, but when you look a little deeper the real challenges occur. Salvador is a city of cohesion, but also of inequalities.

The inequality in Salvador is still visible whereas the city is divided in a lower, poor part, and an upper, rich part. Besides the infrastructural motives, the city is also a combination of colourful historical buildings with a painful history (Pelourinho), hotels and poor communities, also called *favelas*. Studies have shown that **poverty** is an important factor that influences the chances in society. The lower social classes are limitated in their access to services and this affects the possibility for education (Pare, 2004, p. 242; p. 246). Besides poverty, **race** is also a factor of discrimination in this city. Since Salvador was the epicentre of the African slave trade, most people here are African descendants. Inside Salvador it means that they will recognize it immediately when someone is not from Bahia, when someone is from another state of Brazil or a ‘gringa’ (a white European). However, people here usually speak about Bahian food and culture and not of Brazilian food or culture. They make a hard distinction between those. Apparently, according to literature, the Brazilian culture is not seen as a culture that includes the one of people with origins from Africa or the indigenous people (Pare, 2004, p. 246). Moreover, statistics have shown that many violations of the human rights occur. In the most cases, the violations are towards black women and thus there is **gender inequality** (Beato, 2004).

This shows us that there are different factors problematic. There is discrimination on the level of social class, race and gender.

Concerning all these factors whereas children born in a **vulnerable community** have less means and therefore have less chances of access to **quality education** (remember 2.1.4 Education) and as a consequence less chances on the **job market**, will end up in the **same poor living conditions** as where they were born in. Poverty seems to be a vicious circle and therefore it’s necessary to break this. The most effective way according to McConville(2019, para 3) is ‘Time and again, the most effective poverty reduction methods are less about aid and more about enabling”. In other words, it’s helpful to provide people with food or a house, but it’s a temporary solution where they’re still depending on external partners. whereas by learning them a skill is a structural solution.

A wise man from Ribeira told me a variant on this vicious circle. He told me something that he calls the “coffee syndrome”. Imagine you’re walking in the street and you have 100 Reais in your pocket. You walk by a bar where there are well-dressed men and the bar looks classy. They sell cake and pies, but you want coffee. They have coffee and it costs 5 Reais, but you don’t buy one. You have 100 Reais in your pocket which is enough for that coffee, but you don’t enter the bar because you feel that you’re not allowed, you feel ‘it’s not for you’. After that he tells me about traveling by plane. It’s something very common these days and Brazilians travel a lot by bus or domestic flights, but not all Brazilians. There’s a part that only sees it on television and from whom it’s there dream to fly in an airplane and see a glimpse of the world from above. It’s the dream of many Brazilians and still it’s told to them ‘it’s not for you’. What he meant by it is that many people in Brazil are limited, not by their capacities, but by the system. Due to this, the person I talked with promotes the idea of empowerment. In the first place Brazilians should be empowered to create a plan of action and to change the current situation, to improve the Bahia of today. In the second place, or even on a shared place, they shouldn’t be limitated to what they know, but stimulated to learn and broaden their horizons. This vision is in line with what ICBIE does.

## ICBIE

**Instituto de Cultura Brasil Italia Europa** (ICBIE) is a non-profit organisation situated in Ribeira. The Institute was formed in 2003. It was made possible due to the savings of the founders Pietro Gallina and Roy Zimmerman, donations and with the sale of paintings by Ele D’Artagnan. Ele D’Artagnan was an artist, a painter and a good friend of Pietro. He inherited the paintings and organized an exhibition in New York. The money he got from these paintings, was also invested in the project, in the cultural institute.

### 2.3.1 Mission and vision

ICBIE provides educational and cultural resources for the local community of Salvador. To realise this mission, they provide a variety of language classes (English and Italian) and workshops. They also have the Leonardo da Vinci Library, that is open to the public, and the museum of the community. Occasionally exhibitions and lectures are given by visiting artists and students and they are more than welcome. The institute wants to become a place of permanent dialogue between European, Brazilian and Latin culture. What’s in a name…

The main focus of the institute is culture. This is very present in the museum where old photographs of the neighbourhood are presented. When getting a guided tour of Pietro Gallina it truly shows the passion the owners have for this neighbourhood and its’ citizens. That’s also the reason of the existence of the museum; in order to preserve a piece of the local culture. By doing so, Pietro hopes to remember the locals of the culture that’s already there, of the culture that is inherently connected to their identity. When he’s not there, he’s probably making the inventory of the library. The library Leonardo da Vinci contains books of various subjects and there is almost a book of every language. However, due to not being able to provide a librarian, it’s only possible to visit the library on appointment.

Besides the autonomous functioning they have every day, they also actively strive to build up international relations for their volunteer working. Marlene and Pietro want to offer as many opportunities as possible to the community to develop skills, but also to widen their perspective. In order to do so, international exchanges are possible at the ICBIE. Volunteers can come here for a few weeks, or months, and they will support the ongoing classes and also get the possibility to give classes themselves or to develop their own workshops. For example, when a native French speaking volunteer comes here for 4 weeks, the organization will sit together with that person to see whether they can organize a short course of French classes.

In other words, the keyword of ICBIE is empowerment. They want to empower adolescents to help shape their environment by make their voices heard and be an active participant in this change.

Since the Brazilian education system lost touch with local challenges and therefore the curriculum is too theoretical (Sergiovanni, 1994, p. 253; Pare, 2004, p. 246). NGO’s as ICBIE could support translating the theory to the community. They are situated locally and usually work in that same neighbourhood which means they are closer to the community, literally and figuratively. That’s also why the founders chose a place in the suburbs where the living conditions are not at its’ highest. They purposefully chose to be in Ribeira, in a neighbourhood where they hope to make the difference.

The functioning of NGO’s like ICBIE are regulated by some guidelines and there are (Pare, 2004, p. 229);

* Personalised treatment of children in small groups,
* Development of activities in a context of coeducation,
* Non-separation of groups of siblings,
* Avoiding the transfer of children to other shelters
* Participation in local community life,
* Participation of persons from the community in the educational process

When observing the ICBIE, it seems that they became a community into a community. They have students from across the city and past students and volunteers who see the ICBIE as their second home.

### 2.3.2 About Salvador Grafita and GeoCombateCovid19-BA

ICBIE is these days a beautiful building where dreaming is encouraged and realizing these dreams is supported. What it is today for the owners, the students, the teachers and the community started many years ago. In those years of the ICBIE, many projects were realized. and indirectly the community is affected by this, but let me tell you about certain projects The ICBIE wants to empower people and also mean something for the community. Therefore two projects, of the many projects they had, will be discussed which were explained to me by people, through books or that I observed in the context. the first one is *Salvador Grafita*, which focuses on educating children about graffiti art, and the second one, *GeoCombateCovid19 -BA* focuses on mapping data related to the pandemic in order to support various actors of society.

***Salvador grafita***

The project ***Salvador grafita*** was realized in 2005. The objective was to let youth develop graffiti skills and amongst the participants were two well-known names of the community; Julio and Bigode. Thanks to this project, they were able to travel to Italy and compare the differences of graffiti art between Italy and Brazil. There, they saw a graffiti style which illegal, but it’s everywhere. In an interview of that time comes the following fragment:

*I was impressed, because it’s an activity that’s repressed by the government and the police, but it’s everywhere! This is fantastic, it’s a form of resistance,” says Julio, and Bigode adds, “I think that graffiti culture is about just that, you can’t do it, so you do it all the same. There’s a moment when the society has to take a side: either like in the United States where they put whole police squads out to stop the graffiti, and that seems to be the route they’re taking here in Italy, too, or like in Chile, where graffiti art is supported, treated like culture, as it is in some places here, that are real open, and give some space. With total repression there will always be a kid who wants to express himself and bit by bit he’ll become a criminal, because maybe he’s involved in some shady deals, but if he had some support, he’d change in his head. There are two roads: repression, that creates criminal behavior, or encouragement, that can transform a criminal into an artist.* (‘MusiBrasil on Julio & Bigode (English) « The I.C.B.I.E. Blog’, 2007, para 8).

Besides this explicit goal, there were also various implicit goals since up until then graffiti artists were seen as people who came to devalue neighbourhoods, as criminals. Being a graffiti artist and practising this in the city was unthinkable.

**GeoCombateCovid19 -BA**

Since in March 2020 the outbreak of COVID-19 reached Brazil, the institute had to close until further notice. This has as a consequence that the unequal access to education increases. Private schools switch to distance learning, but in public schools this isn’t always possible. Due to privatization, most children out vulnerable communities go to public schools and as a consequence of the poor living conditions, 1 out of 4 seems to don’t have internet access and the financial support of the government is R$ 600 (Garcia, 2020, para 2). Since the pandemic is increasing these inequalities, ICBIE became a partner of the GeoCombateCovid19 -BA(Zimmerman, 2020, para 2). This is a partnership with various research professors from the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA), researchers from other institutions and autonomous researchers (‘GeoCombate Covid-19 BA’, n.d., para 1). They all gathered with the objective make maps related to the pandemic in order to support managers, civil society and researchers by contributing to studies (‘GeoCombate Covid-19 BA’, n.d., para 1).

# Conceptual framework

The education system in Brazil knew, knows and will know many changes due to privatization. Therefore the landscape is besides private and public schools also divided in formal institutions and informal organizations. It is within this last category that non-profit organizations are situated. These organizations have the objective to provide services to the community where there is a lack of. The ICBIE is such an organization. This institute has the objective to empower disadvantaged youth by offering various courses in order to empower youth. An approach to do this is called peer-learning.

Therefore, this dissertation focuses on ICBIE and their functioning concerning the approach of peer-learning. First of all, it is necessary to define the concept of peer-learning is. Second of all if there are different approaches of this concept and if so, how do they work? The third part will shortly discuss what the effectiveness is in qualitative terms. It will focus on how it benefits the attitude of the participants of peer-learning and also the challenges they might encounter.

## Peer-learning and approaches

This part contains a discussion considering the different terms and explanations of the concept of peer-learning.

### Different terms with a mutual vision

Imagine that you come in a foreign country with other norms and values. You don’t know how to act and interact. Maybe you read something about this country or know someone who has been here. If that’s not the case, you can always ask what the norms are to locals. Yet, it’s possible that there is a language barrier. Even then, you can still observe them and copy their behaviour. In all these options we either use experience, knowledge or skills. It is a process of learning and we are confronted with it every day (Boud, 2001, p. 7). We are confronted with learning in everyday life and in formal institutions. In the educational context, there are various methods of learning. One of those methods is peer-learning.

**Peer- learning,** also referred to as **collaborative learning,** is a method where different peers, collaborate together to learn together and from each other. More specifically Boud et al. refers to peer-learning as “the use of teaching and learning strategies in which students learn with and from each other without the immediate intervention of a teacher” (Boud, Cohen, & Sampson, 1999, pp. 413-414). Another term to refer to peer-learning is **peer-assisted learning (PAL)** (Topping & Ehly, 2001, p.113). This last one is a general term that is used to refer to the collection of different strategies of learning by non-professional teachers. PAL is a method that is characterized by stimulating others to learn and while doing it also learning themselves. It is not professional teaching, but can be an addition to professional teaching and therefore it is monitored by professional teachers. This is the case when for example people of a certain study succeeded for a course and then they help future students with processing the matter of the course. By doing so, these students with experience in the matter, become tutors and they can develop teaching skills or at least making the curriculum understandable to the students. Overall this methods has the objective to support the participants in at least one domain and everyone has the same opportunity to participate (Topping & Ehly, 2001, p.114). Therefore, PAL is a method that focuses on active stimulation of learning within a group of people who are equal or match well (Topping & Ehly, 2001, p.114).

Another specific form of peer-learning is called **reciprocal peer learning.** An example of this is a workshop given by a student (Boud et al., 1999, p. 414). It is reciprocal due to the fact that the person leading this workshop functions as a teacher and as a student. The person is teaching other people and is also learning at the same time (Boud et al., 1999, p. 414).

Thus, peer-learning is a way of learning from each other. This can be in a vertical way, from peer-teacher to student, or in a horizontal way, between two students or peers. Therefore, the target group seems to be **students**. What makes it interesting to use this way of learning is that in general students benefit from it. It supports them in processing the content. By talking with peers, it is possible to apply the abstract and theoretical content in a more concrete and practical way. According to previous studies, **minority groups** benefit from this method due to the focus on cooperation (Boud et al., 1999, p. 416). They learn from each other since they have different backgrounds. Here, it is seen as an added value instead of a possible obstacle. Because of this attitude, everyone can participate and has the same chance to learn. Since there are multiple approaches of this vision, these will be explained in the next part (3.1.2 One vision and a variety of approaches).

### One vision and a variety of approaches

The concept of peerlearning knows various methods. The theoretical background is the same, but it’s put into practice in a different manner. The different methodsare peer tutoring, peer modeling, peer education, peer counseling, peer monitoring, and peer assessment (Topping & Ehly, 2001, p.114).

**Peer tutoring** focuses on the development of certain skills (Topping & Ehly, 2001, p.115). In this method the roles are divided. One takes the role of ‘teacher’ and the others are the ‘students’. According to previous research (Topping & Ehly, 2001, p.116), this method has benefits for people with special needs, participants that are carefully selected and trained and their progress is monitored. In general, participants their interactions with partners will improve. However, there is always the criterium that this method has to be a cognitive challenge for the tutors, if not it is not a challenge for them and they will not learn from it, or at least they will not benefit significantly from it. In the literature the term tutoring and mentoring are used as synonymous whereas mentoring actually means peer learning with more experienced tutors (Topping & Ehly, 2001, pp. 116 – 117).

**Peer modelling** means that a person of the group functions as an example and the others imitate the behaviour of this person (Topping & Ehly, 2001, p.117). To stimulate the effectiveness, the peer model has to be one of them. The group has to be able to identificate themselves with the peer model. When the imitation succeeds, there are benefits linked to it in terms of improving the self-image of the peer model. On the other hand, it can also be confronting to see which behaviour others are copying. Therefore, the peer model can learn from it and improve his self-regulation.

**Peer monitoring** refers to peers checking on their partners whether they are participating in learning (Topping & Ehly, 2001, pp. 117 -118). The focus here can vary from the time spend on a task to learn how to manage workload and deadlines.

**Peer assessment** is “an arrangement for peers to consider the level, value or worth of the work, products or outcomes of learning of others” (Topping & Ehly, 2001, p. 118). This method takes place when a product is still in development. An example of this method is the written feedback on an assignment. This feedback is meant for the student to improve their skills and performance. Peer assessment is usually reciprocal (Topping & Ehly, 2001, p. 119). which means that two people, of the same group, will evaluate the work of the other one. This method improves the skills to evaluate a product and therefore in the future the participants will be better in self-assessment (Topping & Ehly, 2001, p. 119).

Each of these methods of PAL can vary on at least 13 organizational dimensions ( Topping & Ehly, 2001, pp. 119 - 121); curriculum content, contact constellation, within or between institutions, year of study, ability, role continuity, time, place, helper characteristics, characteristics of the helped, objectives, voluntary or compulsory, reinforcement.

### Research methods

Recent years, questions arose about the effectiveness of this method. The effectiveness is influenced by the way the method is enhanced. Previous research mainly focused on the effectiveness in terms of the content of the subject that has been taught while peer learning.

A **quantitative method** of peer-learning is taking a pre- and post-course questionnaire. It evaluates the possible impact of an intervention whereas here that intervention is peer-learning. In a case study of Lim (2014, p. 37) they used this method to understand how peer-learning helps students and how they use it. The two questionnaires were identical except that in the post-course questionnaire there was an additional question to give participants the opportunity to express possible comments considering the methodology. For the rest questionnaires were statements and the answer possibilities consisted out of a 6-point Likert scale whereas 1 stands for strongly disagree and 6 for strongly agree.

Another **approach** connected to this subject is the Beliefs about Peer Feedback Questionnaire (BPFQ). This questionnaire focuses on peer feedback and covers the following themes (Huisman, Saab, Van Driel, & Van Den Broek, 2019, p.5);

1. Students’ valuation of peer-feedback as an instructional method within their educational context;
2. Students’ confidence in the quality and helpfulness of the feedback they provide to (a) peer(s);
3. Students’ confidence in the quality and helpfulness of the feedback they receive from their peer(s);
4. The extent to which students regard peer-feedback skills in themselves as an important learning goal.

However, this questionnaire still needs more testing to confirm the external validity and whether the entire concept is covered (Huisman, Saab, Van Driel, & Van Den Broek, 2019, p. 8).

## Effectiveness

To understand the effectiveness of peer learning, it’s crucial to look at the mechanisms that are associated with learning and how to stimulate them. First of all, it’s important to take a look at the methods that have been used in previous research. Second, it’s interesting to make an overview of the findings of previous research in order to see what the overall trend is and where there is a gap in scientific literature.

## Previous research: benefits and challenges

“Researchers agree that cooperative learning can produce positive effects on achievement but disagree on the conditions under which the approach is effective” (Slavin, 1990, p. 52). The general tendency says that there are more points on which researchers agree than the points of discussion (Slavin, 1990, p. 52). In this part, the benefits and challenges of peer-learning will be discussed.

### Benefits

Earlier in this chapter the use of this method has been discussed. There are several benefits associated with the implementation of peer learning. First of all there are the **pragmatic reasons** whereas on one hand it reduces the workload for teachers and on the other hand it supports students by their development. These methods meet the objectives and have low costs concerning the materials (Topping & Ehly, 2001, p.122). Meeting the objectives means that they need to address the local priorities and the preferences of the peer group (Topping & Ehly, 2001, p.122). Second of all there is **no specific target group**. Therefore, they are easy to implement in a variety of contexts and situations. Due to the flexibility, effectiveness and low implementation costs, it is seen as one of the first options when looked at the balance of costs and effectiveness. Every student benefits from it, but especially minority groups as they go through the same learning process (Boud et al., 1999, p. 416). A benefit that is linked to this is that when different groups work together, they **develop respect** for each other and start to have sympathy towards the other (Slavin, 1990, p. 53). The differences disappear between peers since they have a common goal (Boud et al., 1999, p. 416). Through the interaction with each other, they are implicitly participating in an **intercultural exchange** whereas they learn with and from the other.

According to research, peer-learning contributes to the development of social and psychological needs of the students (Boud et al., 1999, p. 414; Topping & Ehly, 2001, p.114). Lim (2014, p. 36) says it “provides an atmosphere that promotes the improvement of **communication skills, encourages**”. In other words, by implementing this method of learning, students feel that the classroom is a zone where they are encouraged and stimulated to learn and also, they feel comfortable enough to communicate more about their own ideas and opinion. Students are actively involved. For the tutors, this can be interpreted as to be able to teach it to others, they need to understand it themselves on a level that they learn it to others in their own words. Here, there are two ways of learning possible. The peers learn from each other, which is a horizontal way of learning between equals. The other way is the vertical way where the tutor passes on the knowledge to the student.

When looking closer to the effect of peer-learning, studies agree that it mostly has a positive effect in terms of developing skills (Slavin, 1990, p. 52). Skills is a broad concept and can be subject-related or cross-curricular. Research shows that the developed skills are skills they otherwise wouldn’t have developed, cross-curricular skills. These skills are also named **transferable skills** or life skills. A recent report of UNICEF, that identified a framework concerning skills that are necessary for children and adolescents (Nasir, 2019, p. 1), identified four categories; foundational skills (literacy and numeracy), transferable skills, digital skills and job-specific skills. The report states that transferable skills are the most important since it gives individuals the opportunity to have a basic set of skills that will help them to adapt in life. These transferable skills include

“problem solving, negotiation, managing emotions, empathy, and communication and support crisis-affected young people to cope with trauma and build resilience in the face of adversity; transferable skills work alongside knowledge and values to connect, reinforce, and develop other skills and build further knowledge” (Nasir, 2019, p.1).

Boud et al. (1999, p. 416) says the skills are the following; the development of learning outcomes related to collaboration, teamwork, and becoming a member of a learning community; critical enquiry and reflection; communication skills; and learning to learn.

Furthermore, the realisation of the transferable skills depends on two factors; on one hand it is being influenced by the **group goals** and on the other hand **individual accountability** (Slavin, 1990, p. 52). This means that it can only be realised when the group works together to achieve the educational goals and that the success of the group is influenced by the individual learning process of all its’ members. Think about those group projects where everyone has to work together to make a presentation. Every member has to do his or her part to realize the project and the teacher only grades the presentation. In other words, every member realizes a part of the presentation and goes through a learning process in order to realize a group goal, the presentation. The grade, or the realisation of that goal, depends on every member. It’s a shared responsibility. Translated to the context of peer-learning an example is that every peer is responsible for the atmosphere in group and whether everyone feels comfortable to share their ideas or not.

### Challenges

The majority of previous studies is convinced of the positive effects. However, there are a few challenges about which **conditions** are necessary to reach these effects (Slavin, 1990, p. 53).

The first challenge is on the **organisational level**. Previous studies examined the effectiveness in senior high school and college and there are discussions if it is suitable for every level of education (Slavin, 1990, p. 53). However, the conclusion here is that more research is needed.

The second challenge is on the **cognitive level**, every method of PAL has the ultimate goal that all the participants learn something or at least grow during the process in. To learn something, it is necessary that both parties understand the topic. For this they need communication skills (Topping & Ehly, 2001, p.124). The challenge here for the tutor is to explain a concept in words that everyone can understand it. It might be possible that the use of this concept seems natural for the tutor and he has difficulties with explaining it since he never had to explain it before. Therefore, there are doubts if peer-learning is suitable for higher-order conceptual learning since in the majority of cases this method is used to achieve basic competences such as mathematics or learning a language (Slavin, 1990, p. 53).

The third challenge is on the **affective level** (Topping & Ehly, 2001, p.124), there is implicit condition that all participants need to be peers, belong to the same group or match well. if not, this can complicate the learning process. Especially when there is a big difference between the tutor and the students. The students will be less able to identificate themselves and might see the tutor as someone who is better than themselves. This attitude or vision will make it difficult to meet the objectives of the method.

Besides these three challenges there are two overall challenges. First one is the **monitoring.** The chosen method should be monitored and there should be space to explain, question and discuss the learning. Therefore, rejuvenation is necessary to keep the process up-to date. This can mean a change of participants, subject topics or activities (Topping & Ehly, 2001, p.123). The second challenge is concerning the **assessment**. This has the objective to guarantee that all peers would benefit from this method (Boud et al., 1999, p. 417). Specifically, this means that the educational outcomes of this method need to be defined, the value or the benefits of this method need to be explained in order that peers would focus on participating and recognising. The commitment of students can be an essential motivational factor for them to participate. It can be compared with an assignment that a student has to make. In order to find the motivation to make this, the student will want to know what the expectation is, what the value is of this assignment for his or her education or personal development and how it will be rated in order to be motivated to commit to making this assignment. If one of these conditions is lacking, for example it is a big assignment and only counts for 20% of the total score, it’s possible that the student lacks motivation and commitment to make the assignment. The consequence is that he or she will not benefit from using the method since the method will not been used or not in the way it’s supposed to. Therefore, it is necessary to explain the assessment to the peers in order to motivate them. Yet, there are exceptions when peer-learning can’t be justified by educational grounds (Boud et al., 1999, p. 418). Only explain the assessment when it’s necessary to engage them. Besides, Boud et al (1999, p. 419) states that “peer-learning is particularly vulnerable to being affected by inappropriate forms of assessment”. A danger here is when one activity focuses on too many things, then it’s possible that one or more will lose its’ value. It encourages students to only learn the matter superficial. In this way it has a negative effect which is called the ‘backwash effect’ in literature (Boud et al., 1999, pp. 420 – 421).

## The use of peer-learning in the academic world

The use of the method of peer-learning has increased for various reasons. First of all, there is the **pragmatic reason** (Boud et al., 1999, p. 415). In many educational institutions is an increase of students noticeable where on the other hand cuts are being made on organisational level, namely the staff and teachers. Using this method is **financially interesting**. The method is used as complementary to the classes and therefore outsourcing of the tasks is made possible.

It has been incorporated in the academic world on that level that there is even a mutual influence. Whereas courses have their course-related competences, the labour market and the educational institution expect now from students that they **develop transferable skills.** Transferable skills are generally applicable skills, key competencies or capabilities. These are skills that enables the student to a lifelong learning (Boud et al., 1999, p. 415). An example would be developing a critical attitude towards scientific articles. Not every article has the same reliability. Therefore, someone develops an attitude to evaluate an article on some parameters (year of publication, reliability of the source, methodology,) in order to conclude whether to believe what it concludes. Another example is problem solving (Nasir, 2019, p. 1) whereas a student develops a certain strategy to handle a problem and can adapt this in various situations. The condition to be a transferable skill is that the student can apply it in various contexts.

## Society and education; the missing link.

Education has an influence on microlevel since it has the objective to teach and on macrolevel since it’s part of society (Thys & Elen, 2019, p. 93). It’s important to know that a society is continuously changing and therefore the focus in the education system changes since the needs are different. However, this influence is not one-sided. The education system relates in a certain way to the society.

According to literature there are five approaches (Thys & Elen, 2019, pp. 94-127) that focus on the connection between education and society; functional-sociological approach, cultural-sociological approach, conflict-sociological approach, social- economical approach and school-pedagogical approach.

**Functional-sociological approach** starts from seeing the education in function of society. Therefore, school functions as the place where children learn societal norms. It’s the place where the socialization process takes place. The form and content of this process changes together with the changes in society. the school gets a central position that enhances the emancipation of children, which inherently means that the attachment with the family context is less prominent. Thus, from this approach education has the objective to stimulate the development of capacities to function and maintain society.

**Cultural-sociological approach** says that society is a cultural community where members share a certain culture, certain values, certain beliefs, certain habits and certain sensitivities. Identification with this culture is seen as a condition to be completely part of it and to participate (Thys & Elen, 2019, p.98). The main objective of education is passing this culture by cultivating. This means that the main focus of education is the transfer of culture which can be the transfer of general culture, which helps an individual to function in a society, or transfer of specific culture, which is the knowledge to function in a certain subcategory of society.

**Conflict-sociological approach** sees the school as a political instrument to challenge inequalities. In the first place the education system needs to focus on raising awareness about social inequalities in order to produce a new and more just society. The school is a place to be critical about what happens in society, but also where they focus on societal expectations. However, not every individual is the same and not everyone has the same background. Due to this, there will arise conflicts between what cultural capital is. More specifically the value that is being assigned to the different cultures. It’s possible that society sees A as culture and B not, but this doesn’t necessarily mean that B isn’t culture. Here arises the conflict what Pierre Bourdieu names ‘symbolic violence’. This results in the reproduction of social inequality into internal educational inequality. Therefore, education can be seen as a mean to get rid of those inequalities or as a mean to oppression according to the vision of Paulo Freire.

**Social- economical approach** sees education as a place to teach children all the skills they need to function properly on the job market.Knowledge, skills and competences or other human capacities are an important aspect in this approach (Thys, 2019 p. 106). Schultz and Becker (2019, p. 106) call this the **human capital**. According to them the lack of investing in human capital, or skills, is the reason that there is no growth in development countries. It is necessary to look at education in an economical way, he says. To know the effectiveness of this approach, it is necessary to look at the rates of return on investment. At one hand there is the added value for the student (individual rate of return) and on the other hand the added value for the society (social rate of return). This theory focuses on the employability.

**The school-pedagogical approach** starts from the vision that education the place is where adolescents can shape their future and the future society (Thys & Elen, 2019, p. 109). The fact that adolescents have an active participation, also implies that there has to be a way of monitoring. According to Hannah Arendt education is in a state of crisis (Thys & Elen, 2019, p. 111). The main problem is that students are a central focus and that they only have themselves. The role of the teachers becomes meaningless.

According to literature a balance between theory and practice is a condition for qualitative education. In other words, the courses teach students the necessary things and translate it to issues connected to the reality of the students (Pare, 2004, pp. 333 – 334). The school plays a key role in this. However, a re-occurring struggle is to translate the theory into something that fits more in their living world. A possibility to improve this is by asking for assistance of non- governmental organisations (NGO’s). They usually have a better knowledge of the needs of the children and the community, but the final responsibility still lies with government (Pare, 2004, p. 334). The NGO’s and local initiatives are mostly interesting for the education on a day-to-day basis (Pare, 2004, p. 337).

# Methodology

**Participatory action research (PAR)** is an approach to research within communities and to not see them as just subjects, but as collaborating partners (Cahill, Sultana & Pain, 2007, p. 305). This has been realised by involving them in the phase every phase. The benefits and challenges of this method are discussed in *4.3 My position as a researcher.*

The subject of this research is **peer-learning** and is chosen in consultation with my promotor, Kim Peeters, from the University Colleges Leuven-Limburg (UCLL) and my mentor, Marlene de Souza, from ICBIE. The reason for this choice is that peer-learning is a method that is used everywhere in ICBIE. Volunteers and students here who have a certain skill, will get the opportunity to organize a workshop to teach this skill to others. When observing the organization during my internship, I felt that the main focus is to give people of the community as many chances as possible in different ways. I could feel that Marlene, Pietro and everyone else who is involved in this organisation live for this vision. Besides that, I am the first one to do my internship at this organisation and therefore this is an exploratory research.

The objective of this dissertation is to explore the functioning ICBIE and the use of peer-learning. For this, a qualitative research is the most appropriate.However due to the fact that this research is realised during the pandemic of Covid-19, improvisation was needed. Therefore a **mixed method** has been used**.** For this bachelor dissertation, **participatory action research** will be used. The strength in PAR is that it makes it possible to explore local knowledge and perceptions (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995, p. 1668). It makes it possible to adapt a research to the local context and needs and local people have been involved in the entire process.

## 4.1 Research methods

The subject and research questions are more suitable for a qualitative research method. However, when being in the phase of data collection, a worldwide pandemic occurred and therefore it was necessary to revise the research methods. It was necessary to make it more suitable to the changed circumstances and the different stakeholders (Bijleveld, 2013, p. 89) with attention for the objective of this research.

The research method became a **mixed method.** In the first place the research population (staff, teachers, students) will take part in a questionnaire. This questionnaire is only made to ask about the opinion of students. This is the biggest group, and also the most difficult to reach in these times. However, it’s possible that the staff wants to participate in the questionnaire and to avoid this, one of the first questions asks about the function of the respondent. If it says ‘professor’, the respondent will skip all the other questions and will immediately see an invite for a personal interview. Concerning the other groups, the peerteachers will receive the same message at the end of the questionnaire.

Thus, since there are different groups of respondents, key figures (staff) and students, the data will be gathered by the use of two different research methods as shown in the sample matrix below.

**Table. 1 Sample matrix from the respondents differentiated over the two research methods (in-depth interviews and questionnaires)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Research method**  **Function** | **Questionnaire (quantitative method)** | **In-depth interviews (qualitative method)** |
| **Staff** |  | X |
| **Students who teach** |  | X |
| **Students** | X |  |

The respondents will be contacted by a general announcement at the organisation, the website and the WhatsApp groups. By using a **convenience sampling** (Bijleveld, 2013, p. 163) the focus lies on respondents who are available and want to take part. However, I would like to give everyone the same opportunity to be included in this research and therefore I spread the questionnaire on every medium that’s possible. As for the in-depth interviews, I will use the **convenience and** **snowball sampling** (Bijleveld, 2013, p. 167) for the in-depth interviews. In the case of a convenience sampling, it will be influenced by who lives close to the organisation and who is available to make an appointment or to have a call through WhatsApp. In the case of a snowball sampling my respondents aren’t predetermined. Due to this method it’s possible that the respondents that I would like to contact, introduce me to new key figures in the organisation that I don’t know yet. This method has the objective to have interviews until respondents are not giving any new information, until there is saturation. Here, both sampling methods are being used since this increases the chance of having more respondents than using only one of them.

### 4.1.1 Observations

The beginning of this internship, and dissertation, was a beginning of observations. I observed how the classes function and how the people here teach. I also tried to combine it with the way I have learned languages in the past. In this way I could maybe bring some new methods into the organisation. Due to this, there might be some pitfalls, risks and challenges while doing this research. There is a possibility that a research is biased due to the researcher and/or due to the respondents.

In the first case it is necessary that the researcher is aware of a possible bias. In the case of my dissertation there are a few reasons that can cause bias.

First of all, my previous degree as a criminologist and my studentjob at the project ‘Leuven restorative city’ made me aware of the presence **restorative practices**. Restorative practices are all measurements that promote inclusion of minority groups.Therefore, I need to be careful to not start from a theory, but be aware of the difference in context and start from the perspective of the subjects. Therefore, I will ask open questions in order to let their story be the centre of attention and from where my analysis will start. I might ask a few additional questions. I don’t have the intention to test everything literature says about it. I do want to see if there is room for improvement or maybe they do something new or give another implementation to an existing practice.

Second, I have been observing and participating. I have been functioning in this organisation as a student who observes the way they teach and got the chance to prepare some classes myself. In this way, I might influence the respondents since I have another method of teaching. On the other side, the fact that I also have been a participant and that I stayed there for 5 months, makes that the distance between me, as a researcher, and the students and staff of the ICBIE, the respondents, has shrinked. 100% neutrality doesn’t exist since a researcher always interacts with the context. Therefore, this research has been realized with awareness for this position and the possible bias it can cause.

### 4.1.2 Literature review

A literature review helped me to formulate my research questions in a more specific way. I was already familiar with the concept of PAL. However, I did not know there are various approaches of peer learning. The literature helped me to understand the concept and to see where there are still gaps in terms of scientific research. A literature review functions as a guiding tool to orient an empirical research (Bijleveld, 2013, p. 86).

### 4.1.3 In-depth interviews

For the key figures in the organisation the data will be gathered by the use of **in-depth interviews** due to that they have a more general overview of the organisation about possible structural problems or reoccurring difficulties in the operation of ICBIE, but also to give them the opportunity to reflect on the evolution through the years. This in-depth interview is in Portuguese, the mother tongue of most respondents. One of them has another native language and this respondent had the choice to do the interview in English.

According to these population of respondents, there is a high possibility of ***socially desirable answers*** in the interviews with key figures. In the first place it will be the teachers. They might be afraid to lose their spot here as a voluntary teacher when their answers are not in line with the mission and vision of the organisation. Therefore, I will try to formulate my questions in this way that they are about possibilities for innovative ways instead of talking about ‘problems’ in the operation of ICBIE. Also, I will inform them that I am going to analyse the data in a way that it is not possible to see which answer is connected to which interviewee. To make sure that it is anonymous, I will let them read the report before I share it with the coordinators.

In-depth interviews were done to get many data from a small amount of people. Before starting the actual interview *(see appendix 3),* the respondent received information about the aim of the Bachelor dissertation, whether it was okay to record the interview and before and after the interview the respondent was informed that he/she can consult the results before publication. By doing this, the rules of informed consent were guaranteed (Bijleveld, 2013, p. 74). Besides, anonymity is guaranteed when publishing the results. The actual interview starts with introduction questions (name, function, since when do they teach), followed by the topics “classes”, “opinion” and “ICBIE”. The first topic, classes, exists out of 6 questions concerning the structure of the class, the objectives and how they are being reached, the difficulties while teaching and how the students participate and experience the classes. The second topic, opinion, consists out of 2 questions about how the respondent would describe the concept “being a multiplier” and how the students can see the respondent as an example. The third topic, ICBIE, exists out of 3 questions about the ICBIE in general and the position within broader society.

To **analyse** this category of data, the program NVivo has been used. The objective is to come to a general theory. This process is also called *grounded theory* (Bijleveld, 2013, p. 84). This process falls apart in three phases. The first phase, **open coding,** means the interviews are imported in the program and every argument is put under the most suitable code, more codes are possible. The second phase, **axial coding**, means analysing the fragments under the same code. In this phase it’s possible to merge or split codes. Then follows the third, and last phase, **selective coding**. In this phase, the objective is to build a theory. In each code separately, all the fragments have keywords. This will help to connect fragments and to look whether there are connections.

### 4.1.4 Questionnaire

The quantitative method willbe used for the students. The choice for this research method is pragmatical. A questionnaire is used since the advantages (Bijleveld, 2013, p. 250) are that it’s easy, less time-consuming and can reach more respondents. The disadvantage however is that it’s not the most appropriate method to answer these research questions. However, this was taken into account by structuring the questionnaire. To make comparison possible between the two methods, the questionnaire exists out of the same topics.

The questionnaire is structured as followed *(see appendix 2)*; a welcome message, informed consent, the topics and a final message. First of all the respondent is being informed about the aim of the research and they receive a question concerning the informed consent since the respondent needs to know to what he/ she agrees to (Bijleveld, 2013, p. 74). The respondent needs to agree that he/ she has read the following message “I read and understood the information above and received answers to all my questions about this study. I agree to participate.” Then, the respondent receives introduction questions (name, gender, course, years of being a student at ICBIE) . In the phase of data analysis, the name will be anonymized. After these questions, the actual questionnaire starts and exists out of three topics, namely “classes”, “opinion” and “ICBIE”. The first topic exists out of 3 questions about the description of the classes and the benefits and challenges. The second topic exists out of 5 questions. on one hand they receive questions about if the students learn and from who and whether they feel that they can pass on what they learn. On the other hand they receive questions about whether they see someone at the ICBIE as an example and why. The third, and last, topic exists out of 5 questions. The students are first being questioned whether they feel stimulated and if so, how they experience this. Then, they receive questions if they feel that they can position themselves in the classes and if they can teach others. After all the classes and teaching related questions, they receive a question about which possibilities they see for the institute in the community and whether they still want to say something about the ICBIE. After this, they receive a final message to thank them for their participation and are being reminded that they can always contact the researcher if they have questions about the research.

In general, the questions are formulated as **yes/no questions** that are followed by **open questions** where the respondent can give his or her personal answer. The possible obstacle here are these open questions since the respondent might feel that it takes too long, stops in the middle of the questionnaire or gives short answers. To prevent that the respondent finds the duration too long, a progress bar is used instead of numbering the questions. To prevent that the respondent gives short answers, it’s possible to set a minimum length for the open questions. However, in this research it was worth to take the risk since it gives more useful data concerning the experience of the students. It’s possible that some of these answers were given to fill in the space that was left and aren’t the first things that come to their mind.

## 4.2 Research limitations

During the research there were a few limitations and challenges. First of all, the accessibility of the respondents became difficult. The academic year at the ICBIE starts after carnival with the language classes and during the year, workshops and other classes are being added such as theatre or graffiti workshops. When in the phase of data collection there were only language classes at the ICBIE and then the epidemic COVID-19 started manifesting in Brazil. As a result, the ICBIE needed to close the 17th of march. In order to reach the students, the questions got adjusted and were spread as a questionnaire with more open questions than usual in order to still give space for their opinion and were coded in different categories. The students were contacted through WhatsApp groups. However, not of all courses, we had the contacts. As a result, the response is rather low and it can’t be guaranteed that it’s representative for the student population. Therefore, the results of the questionnaire need to be seen as additional information.

The second challenge was the outbreak of a pandemic (COVID-19) which made it more difficult to collect the data. Therefore, some of the respondents are interviewed through WhatsApp. For this, it’s necessary to have a stable internet connection and also to both have an environment without distractions. This last criterium seemed to be a challenge at times and therefore some interviews were filled in with a document. Nevertheless, the respondents could ask questions at all times and they did use this opportunity to ask explanations about some questions or about the research in general.

The third challenge was the language of the in-depth interviews. Most of the interviews, except one, was done in Portuguese. This is not the mother tongue of the researcher. However no difficulties were experienced during the interviews but during the phase of transcribing it was difficult to write it out verbatim. However, the researcher did try to do this and otherwise was noted wat the answer of the respondent was and the used citations are exactly what the respondent said.

The fourth challenge was the comparison of data that has been collected through different methods. The students were questioned by a questionnaire, a quantitative method, and the teachers and staff were interviewed, a qualitative method. One has the objective to collect data of many people while the other one has the objective to collect many data of a small group of respondents. Here, a little bit of creativity was necessary since this mixed method wasn’t the most suitable method for the research objectives. However, both methods were applied with attention for the methodological aspects that are specific to that method. Some more creativity, or better flexibility was necessary when analysing both methods and discussing the findings connected to each group of respondents.

## 4.3 My position as a researcher

**Participatory action research (PAR)** refers to the two most important elements “on the one hand, observing, so data is collected by observation, on the other hand participating, participating in what is being observed” (Bijleveld, 2013, p. 212). The belief of this approach is that participation in the context, helps to better understand certain things (Bijleveld, 2013, p. 212). Therefore the researcher needs to live for a certain period of time with and as the research subjects in order to get their trust (Bijleveld, 2013, p. 213). Making contact with a “gatekeeper”, someone who the research subjects already trust, can help by making a connection with the research subjects (Bijleveld, 2013, p. 214). Applied to the ICBIE, this means that Marlene de Souza, owner and my mentor, is the gatekeeper to make this connection. She introduced me gradually by first letting me observe the English classes, then do co-teaching where she is the professional and I’m the assistant and finally letting me give a few classes on my own. By doing this, she gradually gave me more access to the students, one group of the research subjects and also showed them, maybe implicitly, that she trusted me and therefore they could trust me too. I started as an observator and gradually became a participant. My degree of participation was changing.

My relation as a researcher towards the research subjects was changing. According to literature there are four possibilities (Bijleveld, 2013, p. 213). The first one is the researcher as a **full observator.** Here the researcher is unknown for the research subjects. The second one is the **observator as a participant.** Here the main focus is observing and this has as a consequence that the research subjects see him/her as an outsider. The connection will be more superficial, but this can be compensated by spending enough time with the research subjects. The third one is the **participant as observator.** Here the focus lies more on participation, but the researcher is communicates openly on what he/ she is doing. This degree of participation has advantages and disadvantages since it’s an added value to have the trust of the research subjects and have access to “inside information”, but to maintain a balance between participation and observation is a challenge. The fourth, and last one, is the researcher as a **covert participant**. In this degree of participation, the researcher becomes one of them. He/ she connects with the specific context on the deepest level as possible. By doing so, a higher risk exists of “going native” (Bijleveld, 2013, pp. 213-214) when the researcher doesn’t maintain a balance between becoming an insider and staying an outsider. In this position it’s difficult to make fieldnotes and this makes it less controllable (Bijleveld, 2013, p. 214).

In my situation, I would describe myself as the participant as observator since from the beginning Marlene and I communicated openly about my assignments there. The students could ask questions at all times and by discussing openly that I was going to do a research, it was made possible to discuss a possible subject with the students and the staff of the ICBIE. That was my aim, to interact with people at the ICBIE and to identify the needs in order to create something that is of use for them. The best way to do that is by functioning as a researcher, as an observator, a participant and as someone who wants to learn and give something back to the research subjects.

# Data analysis

The research method of this Bachelor dissertation is a **mixed method**. The **quantitative method** is an online questionnaire. For this Qualtrics was used which makes data cleaning easier and export it to **SPSS**. SPSS is a statistical software program which makes it easier to apply statistical tests on the data. The **qualitative method** are the in-depth interviews and they’re all transcribed according to the principle of Verbatim. After that they were imported to the qualitative software program **NVivo**.

The data analysis will be divided into findings of the perception of the staff and the perception of the students on peer learning. These findings will be discussed per topic and are therefore still close to the original data. In the next part (*see* 6. Discussion: comparing the perception of students and tutors) they will be compared with each other and the findings from the literature.

## Qualitative method: perception of peer learning at the ICBIE according the staff.

The ‘staff’ includes the owners, teachers and volunteers. For this category, 9 people were interviewed (4 women, 5 men). Out of these 9 people, four of them started at the ICBIE as a student.

### Classes

The structure of the classes varies depending on the matter that’s being taught. The graffiti workshops start with putting the theory into practice. The singing classes are subdivided into stretching, relaxation and vocal exercises. The organisation of the language classes focuses on interaction since the teachers of these courses are convinced that this is how to learn a language.

Nevertheless, the matter or the objective of the course, all respondents agree that it’s necessary to support the student in their learning process by creating a safe and comfortable classroom and by giving them the opportunity to ask questions. Where most of them teach and give later the chance to the students to ask questions, some orient their classes starting from these questions. Here two respondents say that the experiences are mixed. During the years they noticed that the students want to learn, but lack perseverance. One of them tells students to come earlier for a class so they can work on the difficulties the student is experiencing.

### Benefits and challenges

The majority of the respondents talked about teaching specific **skills** (e.g. graffiti art, English, Italian, singing, playing an instrument,…). One respondent in particular said to strive for simply pass on knowledge about a certain workshop and **stimulating** the student in such a way that they love what they do and maybe want to pass it on. Another respondent agrees with this, but strives explicitly to **pass the skill on to a new generation** in order for them to do the same someday. Considering the subject-related skills of the language courses, the tutors who give these courses, experience a difficulty of a lack of knowledge about the mother tongue. One of them says the following:

In general, there’s a lack of knowledge of the grammar. Even the Portuguese grammar is a problem. Grammar is something you love or hate, I think. First of all, there are the limitations they have concerning the home situation. It’s possible that the education level of the parents is low and therefore the children learn on their own or at school. If they go to a public school, they have less basic knowledge. So, if you don’t know your own language perfectly, you’ll have difficulties with learning another one. When I say ‘the adjectives are before the substantive’ in English, they first need to know what an adjective and a substantive are. I need to compare so many times I have to teach them first in Portuguese and translate it into English.

Two respondents address difficulties with subject-related skills by talking about the pronunciation in the language courses. Since most Brazilians struggle with the pronunciation, it’s better to stimulate them and give positive feedback. For example, by saying ‘It is good, I understand you but I know you can do better’. By pointing out the mistakes they make, tutors’ risk of reinforcing the fear Brazilians have to try and make mistakes. Another less explicit way on focusing on communication skills is that each respondent explicitly stimulates students to ask questions. Four respondents point out the lack of communication with students and participation of the students in the Brazilian education system.

Each respondent talks about **critical reflection** as seeing the limitations and talents of each student and thus doing an individual assessment to adapt the classes to individual needs. Whereas only one of them addresses it as stimulating self-knowledge.

What is remarkable is that 8 out of 9 respondents talked about skills that are not subject-related, but are transcending. What is even more remarkable is that they were very specific and exhaustive in talking about them. One tutor focuses explicitly on making students **work together** and show them this can be fun. He said the following ‘It’s building, building something. Before there was nothing. Get people together to form a group. Create enthusiasm and **group spirit** and, in the same time, learning (…) skills.’ The goal is to let them discover the joy of being with other people, with different ages and backgrounds and all with the same objective. However, most respondents almost preach using an individual approach and making an informal evaluating of each student with their specific talents, limitations and background. According to one respondent there is an upcoming trend considering relationships. More and more people seem to be less interested in social contacts. Translated to learning this results that they even prefer to learn alone by using what they find on the internet. This is also being referred to as building on a team spirit.

However, the biggest challenge is that most of the students are taught to reproduce instead of understanding something and applying this. Therefore, all respondents, without any exception, teach them how to learn. One respondent says to have positive experiences where children want to learn and he says;

Over my whole career I’ve had kids they had great difficulty but they want to learn and I make them continue want to learn. In the end they get further ahead than the people with natural born talent because they, because I have motivated them and encouraged them to continue.

This skill knows various approaches, but in general all respondents start from sharing their experience. They explain to the students that at a certain point, they also were students. Then, they offer the tools to start learning. Whereas most of the tutors start from theory and put this into practice, one handles a problem-oriented approach and another one simply let them try. This last approach is being used out of belief that students have to conquer their fear by simply starting to do it. One tutor states the following:

Life is difficult, you have to learn how to continue to learn and learn how to learn often times. Those are things a curriculum plan and a chart a school gives you that says ‘teach this’, that doesn’t take that into account and I think that’s a tragedy.

Also, the link with the educational system is made. According to this respondent, the educational system lacks in supporting children in developing a skill which is the basics of all, learning to learn. One respondent noticed that students are more occupied with writing and copying everything from the blackboard than listening or speaking. This is a trend that all the respondents try to break, some more explicitly than others.

**EXCHANGE**

Within the own community all tutors focus on the exchange of knowledge by passing on their experiences. Exchange of knowledge can also be within the students who learn from each other’s differences.

In a broader context, the ICBIE focuses on intercultural exchange by trying to connect with different international organisations and making it possible to volunteer. Working with volunteers has its benefits and challenges. In the first place, a volunteer doesn’t simply teach a course. They aren’t just seen as the tutor of that course. One tutor explained that people want to know more about the background and culture of the volunteer. They see this person as an example because he/she is traveling, learning languages and can give them information about many other things. Two tutors, who both started as students, said that the ICBIE was and is their connection with the world. One said that without these international volunteers, many students, and even the community, would not get in touch with these cultures. Even when a volunteer is just walking around in the neighbourhood, they’re realising intercultural exchange since locals are not used to people who look differently and by interacting with them, they learn. However, working with volunteers also has its challenges. One respondent pointed out that volunteers are useful and enriching. The problem is the short period that they’re staying. ICBIE wants to create opportunities, but the problem is that when this person starts classes, they have to start with a new class group and when he/she leaves there is nobody who follows it up. On organizational level It creates difficulties of continuity since the students of this volunteer than maybe need to start over or repeat a part to see for the new teacher what their level is. It’s also possible that they can’t continue since the ICBIE has a lack of staff to organize this.

Thus, concerning the development of skills, the main problem is a lack of knowledge of the mother tongue and that many Brazilians didn’t learn how to study and have fear of making mistakes and therefore barely participate in class. Concerning the exchange, there is an exchange of knowledge between tutor and students, between students and between volunteers and students. This last one has the main benefit that an intercultural exchange takes place, but has the challenge to realize classes while they mostly stay for only a short period.

### Relation between students and with the teacher

The hypothesis here is that in order to make the method of peer learning work, students need to match and belong to the same category of people. However, one of the respondents says that within one class group the levels are different and this complicates teaching. The respondent says this is due to the infrastructural limitation. The institute has various locations with different functions. However, there is only one classroom which makes it impossible to give different classes at the same time. This is an obstacle according to two respondents. Besides, the classes, and especially the language classes, are scheduled at certain times and students choose the time that fits them the best. Therefore the classes are in the first place matched based on flexibility of the students.

A minority of the respondents saw this as an obstacle and even though they said it, they all agreed to focus on an individual approach whereas they work with the talents of people and not focusing on their limitations. The students usually come from a vulnerable community and it’s the objective of the ICBIE to offer them the opportunity to broaden their horizon, according to the majority of the respondents. One of the respondents described it as followed;

Because we work with the class of people who normally do not have a lot of economic conditions, they did not have a good school. So, I, as a Brazilian, know these problems and I work with it a lot. So many times, the teacher explains, explains ... the student say they understood, but actually they didn’t. The reasons for this are that they don’t know what a verb, a subject or a preposition is. The student doesn't even know this in Portuguese. Seeing these difficulties, I started to become interested in my own course and I never called it an English course. I called it a preparatory course.

In other words, the students benefit from it when the tutor has the same background as them and therefore knows more about their talents and limitations. From this point of view, almost all respondents say to adapt their courses and methods to the individual needs of the students. Due to this “You can slow down until people understand what they need to understand or you can move forward if things are going quickly. You don’t have… the way schools, specially recently…” according to a respondent. This is the flexibility of the institute and also an important strength. This respondent sees this as a strength of the ICBIE, one that isn’t applied in the educational system where there is one approach for the whole school or class group. All respondents agree that students benefit from a tutor that has attention for their background. What’s remarkable here is that one respondent said that even though, it’s better to learn a foreign language from someone who has that language as their mother tongue due to that they’ll speak it flawless and the accent is right, but the Brazilian students won’t benefit from this, because when the tutor has a perfect pronunciation, the students see this person as an example and it also feeds their fear to speak and to fail. One respondent said the following ‘The Brazilian, he wants to learn without making mistakes and there is no such thing’. This implies that teaching is more than passing on experience and knowledge. In the Brazilian context, in the first place a psychological work is necessary. Students need to conquer their fear of speaking and according to all respondents this goes further than teaching them a language. They need to be triggered, but the respondents don’t seem to agree on the way how they need to be triggered. Three say that the teachers can teach, but it depends on the students what they do with it. Two say that they need to be taken out of their comfort zone by for example changing the teaching methods frequently. Two don’t experience any difficulties. One says to approach this by respecting their limitations and if they don’t feel secure enough, they can redo the course.

A remarkable answer is that one of the respondents said the following:

Now there are difficulties in the more advanced classes because I don't feel so safe for the more advanced classes, but I have students who don't want to stop. So, I'm continuing but with a classmate.

This respondent addresses that the fear of making mistakes is not only something amongst students. Since the respondent is an autodidact, and not a qualified teacher, this respondent is feeling insecure to give advanced classes and finds a solution in the way of being accompanied by a volunteer who can correct and support the classes. The contrary is also possible. Two respondents say to be involved at the ICBIE as a student, grew in a certain skill at a level where they feel comfortable enough, to conquer their fear of speaking in front of a group to give classes.

Another remarkable thing is that the approach of adapting the way of teaching to the individual goes this far that four respondents explicitly said to make an individual assessment before they start teaching. Two of them go even further by saying the following:

We’re not here to turn these kids into well-functioning European American style academic students. We’re instead trying to give them new skills so that they can be what they already are, even better. It’s an enrichment to give them extra tools to develop their own culture, and to be proud of it.

Most respondents agree but refer to it implicitly by saying that they respect the limitations or by taken into account the situational context of the students.

*In general, the possible challenges are mostly psychological and the most used way at the ICBIE is by handling an individual approach and not a ‘one-size-fits-all’. An important factor in stimulating students to conquer their limitations is the relation between students and the tutor. It is a strength if the tutor has the same background or at least has knowledge about the limitations, but the most important thing is that the tutor is approachable according to the students.*

### Position teacher and passing on experience

Only one respondents has a qualification as a teacher. The others respondents are autodidacts or can be considered as the ‘second generation’ at the ICBIE. Two of them are autodidacts and have previous experiences in giving language classes to foreigners. While others came in touch with the ICBIE as students, followed classes, developed skills and were able to pass on this skills. Here the student became the teacher, literally.

However the motivation to pass on their skills varies. Whereas one respondent says to pass on experience and do use the material they used to like when learning this skill, another one says wanting to be an example for the students in a way that it stimulates them to go out of their comfort zone and look up their boundaries. Moreover, this respondent believes that ignorance and a lack of literacy are related with being dominated by politics and economics. According to this ‘knowledge is power’ and therefore students need to be stimulated to become critical towards what they see and hear.

To realize all this, the owners of the organization use the concept of *‘ser multiplicator’* which literally translated means ‘being a multiplier’. According to most respondents this concept refers to passing on knowledge and experience without having to do it. A few respondents say that the condition to be a multiplier is to be a multiplier is to be love what you are doing and pass on that love or passion. According to two of them, being a multiplier is to ‘pass on life, passion, love’. Only one of the respondents fills this concept in differently. This respondent sees it as a process of building where you start from nothing and the objective is to form a group that feels united and love what they are doing. Passion is also an important key factor. Another one focuses in the description of this concept on something completely different. He describes the concept as followed: ‘(…) making them explore their knowledge capacity and externalize it, thinking about the way that each one can do it individually’. This respondent doesn’t focus on the position of the teacher as an example, but as an additional and supporting role.

*In other words, the position of the teacher is an ambiguous position. On one hand the teacher has the role of being an example by showing how the students can develop their skills and maybe also teach within the ICBIE or somewhere else, on the other hand it is a good thing if both parties are finding themselves in the same circles. That students don’t see the teacher as unreachable and will find it easy to ask questions and address difficulties concerning the classes.*

### ICBIE

The majority of the respondents says the ICBIE is a necessary institute since they offer the community, and especially adolescents, chances that they otherwise wouldn’t have had. According to one respondent the idea is to teach people who are in need or disadvantaged and to empower them by creating opportunities. Another one states that the ICBIE follows the vision of Paulo Freire. The majority also stresses that the ICBIE made social change possible by the variety of courses, workshops and the possibility to get in contact with native speakers of the foreign languages that are offered. All respondents agree that the ICBIE fulfils an important social role and is even complementary to the governal structures as one of the teachers says the following;

I believe that reaching as many people as possible who have never had the opportunity to experience not only in the field of art, but also in foreign languages. It is to offer the community, an access that should be the duty of the state, because education transforms lives.

A minority of the respondents talked about the project ‘Salvador Grafita’ which took place in 2005. The objective was to give a number of adolescents the opportunity to develop skills of graffiti art. During this project, they went to different places in the city to make their art public. According to the respondents, this was a breakthrough since it was the first time, this was done publicly since for a long time it was illegal. They said there is this group, which is called *pichadores* and they make a certain graffiti art which is still illegal. This was not the target group of the project. However, the main changemaker according to them is the fact that it felt they were doing something against the law and that their skills got a little bit more valued by the society.

A few respondents point out that however the ICBIE offers opportunities to the citizens of Salvador, there are some limitations considering the infrastructural and financial resources. Concerning the **infrastructural resources**, the ICBIE has one room which is equipped as a classroom. This makes it difficult to organise different classes at the same time. Concerning the **financial resources**, almost each respondent said that there are difficulties partly from the society that has restricted means to be able to pay classes, and therefore it is an opportunity to be able to follow it here, but a bigger part is attributed to the state structures. One respondent pointed out that there is no lack of creativity to organize projects. The difficulty is to receive support from the state. She says that they make a document for one project, which ask for a lot effort, and they have to wait until the state (*prefeitura*) receives it and gives an answer. Most of the time it might be declined. Besides this, there is also a lack of staff. The dream of the owners is to be able to pay two social assistants to examine the local needs in order to offer a course which enacts on this. For now, they work with volunteers which has its benefits and challenges. For instance, to work with volunteers benefits the community since they don’t just follow the classes, but they also get in touch with the cultural background of that individual. One of the respondents described the objective of the ICBIE as followed

Teaching at ICBIE has the main objective of training conscientious citizens, stimulating curiosity and socio-cultural growth among young people in the community. It is not just getting to know a language, but getting in touch with a different culture, studying the art, the history of that culture and thus enriching the cultural background of young people to show them new opportunities for knowledge.

Furthermore, almost all respondents said the objective is to simply pass knowledge and to pass culture. However, one said that it’s not just teaching, but that it’s peculiar to the community that people with different backgrounds unite and work together. Talking about this, some pointed out that however the ICBIE creates opportunities, it’s up to the community whether they grab this opportunity or not. A minority refers to this when they talk about the ICBIE. They explain that it’s up to the people to study what has been offered. According to one of the respondents this is easier said than done. She says that it is something typical Bahian to be motivated and willing to learn something, but quit after maybe a month. The biggest challenge here is motivating them to continue since they lack organisational skills and perseverance.

## 5.2 Quantitative method: perception of peerlearning at the ICBIE according the students

The students were questioned through a questionnaire. This resulted in 12 complete responses and 3 uncompleted. The uncompleted responses were insufficient and therefore they were not taken into account for the analysis.

First of all, some demographic factors of the respondents were asked. According to the data, 8 out of 12 respondents are female and the other 4 are male. All the respondents only have the status of being a student at the ICBIE. The 12 students are divided over the courses as followed: 9 follow the English classes, 1 follows Italian and 2 follow another class, but didn’t specify which one. The respondents followed classes at the ICBIE for minimum a year and maximum 5 years.

### 5.2.1 Classes

Concerning the classes, the respondents were asked to give their opinion about the classes through the open question *‘How would you describe the classes?’*.

***Figure 1*. Description of classes according to the students**

The answers could be coded as the next categories ‘opinion classes’, ‘dynamics’, ‘methods’, ‘method + teacher or ‘dynamic + teacher’. 33% or 4 out of the 12 respondents gave their opinion about the classes by saying they are ‘great’, ‘exceptional’, ‘efficient’ or ‘excellent’. According to 25% of all respondents the dynamic in the classes is a strength. 17% says the methods are what they notice the most and another 17% says it are the methods and the teacher. The rest, 8% says it are the dynamics and the attitude the teacher has. 67 % or 8 respondents said something about the structure and/ or style of the classes. The methods were answered by 4 respondents, the dynamics by 4 and the teachers 3.

When looking at the content of the answers, one said that the classes reinforce the skills they already have. Amongst the four who talked about the teaching 3 used the word ‘great’, 1 used the word ‘excellent’ and 1 used the word ‘exceptional’ to describe the classes. Two others said the didactics are good and four said the dynamics that are used in the classes help to learn in a fun way. One of them explains that they use projections of images and also audios that support the class activities. Three of the 12 respondents talked about the skills of the teacher. One respondent answered that there is a lot of interaction and another one said that the teacher has a good knowledge of the content. The third one answered that there is direct interaction between the teacher and the student.

### 5.2.2 Benefits and challenges

The experience of the students concerning the classes exist out of the opportunities/ benefits the students feel by following these classes and the difficulties they experience during them. The first question about this topic was *‘Which possibilities the classes offer you?’*. This was asked through and open question. By analysing these answers, they are put into general categories that were close to the original data. In general, the answers were put under ‘knowledge’, ‘career’ and ‘knowledge and career’.

***Figure 2*. Benefits of the classes from the perspective of the students (n= 12)**

Amongst the respondents (*see* figure 2) 83% said to benefit from the classes through expanding their knowledge while 9% says to benefit from the classes by having a better position on the job market. The other 8% says to benefit from the classes on both levels, knowledge and career possibilities.

The biggest part of the respondents says to gain more knowledge. When looking closer, it seems that the kind of knowledge is different.

***Figure 3.* Various forms of knowledge according to the students**

46% of the respondents (*see* figure 3) said to be gaining more knowledge through the classes by learning new things. 36% specified that they develop better communication skills through learning a new language or through interaction. 9% said the knowledge is divided into learning and communication, while 9% said it is divided into learning and also cultural knowledge.

Out of these data seems the majority to benefit from the classes by expanding their knowledge and communication skills. Most of them say the knowledge is about one of the two and only a minority talks about the cultural knowledge they gain. This can be explained that most respondents are from the language classes.

**CHALLENGES**

When the respondents received the question ‘*Which difficulties do you experience during the classes*?’, the answers could be divided into three categories, namely ‘none’, ‘language’ and ‘organizational challenges’.

***Figure 4.* Challenges of the classes according to the students**

23% experiences no difficulties during the classes and another 23% experiences organizational challenges. The majority, 54%, says to experience mostly difficulties concerning the activity of the class, learning the language. They mostly seem to experience difficulties with the pronunciation and the different vocabulary. According to these data, it seems that most students experience difficulties with the subject-related skills.

### 5.2.3 Relation between students and with the teacher

All respondents were asked whether they learn from other students during the activities in the institute. Amongst the 12 respondents, only one answered with no. When asking further from who they learn they had four answer possibilities; ‘**the teacher’, ‘other students’, ‘teacher and other students’** and ‘**other’**. 75% or nine out of twelve respondents answered that they learn the most from the teacher. While the other 25% said to learn the most from the teacher and from other students. The other answer possibilities ‘other students’ and ‘other’ were not chosen. According to this question it seemed that all of them learn from the teacher and a few also from other students.

When later asked if there are persons at the institute that can be seen as an example, 11 respondents or 92% said yes. When asked who these persons are, the answers varied. In these answers, five categories could be observed namely; ‘teacher’, ‘other students’, ‘volunteers’, ‘teacher & volunteers’, and ‘teacher & volunteers & other students.

***Figure 5.* Different kind of people who are an example according to the students (N=11)**

According to the data (*see* figure 5) 37% sees only the **teacher** as an example. 9% sees only the **volunteers** as an example. 18% says to see other students as an example. 27% sees the **teacher and the volunteers** as an example and 9% sees the **teacher, volunteers and other students** as an example.

From these data follows that 73% of the respondents seem learn from at least the teacher and in 36% of this also from other people. Taken together all the categories with ‘volunteers’, it seems that 45% of the respondents says to learn from the volunteers. Out of these data seem that, according to the students, in the first place the teacher is an important example and in the second place the volunteers.

### 5.2.4 Position teacher and passing on knowledge

On the question ‘*Do you feel stimulated by the institute to learn?’* all 12 respondents said yes. By this question the respondents are implicitly being asked whether they feel stimulated to develop their skills. When asked how they felt stimulated through an open question. When analysing this open question, the answers could be divided in the category ‘attitude teacher’, ‘communicate opinions’ and ‘teaching methods.

***Figure 6.* In which way the students feel stimulated by the ICBIE**

In general, they all feel believed in, but notice this in a different way (*see* figure 6). 8 out of 12 respondents feels stimulated by the attitude of the teacher, 2 feel stimulated by the teaching methods and 2 feel stimulated by being able to give their opinion. This means that 67% attributed this feeling to the attitude and the encouragement of the institute. While 17% says it is due to the methodology that is used in the classes and the other 17% feels stimulated by the room the teacher creates for their opinions.

When looking closer to the attitude of the teacher, it shows that out of the 8 students, who says it’s due to the attitude of the teacher they feel stimulated, 6 say it is because they feel encouraged or believed in to achieve their goals. The other two say this too, but also point out that they experience difficulties, e.g. financially, and they continue because the teacher encourages them.

The respondents were asked whether they feel if they can pass on their knowledge. 8 out of 12 respondents said ‘yes’ and the other 4 said ‘no’. The respondent who answered yes, received an open question about how they can pass on their knowledge. This resulted in the next answers;

* Through workshops, classes, conversations and texts
* Through detailed explanations orally. The "student" learns and I, as a teacher, establish even more knowledge of the subjects for myself.
* For children
* Helping them who know less than me.
* Interaction x conversation with the English I learned
* Teaching others what I have learned
* Trying to explain the expert.

Amongst these 8 respondents, 1 said to pass on the knowledge by trying to explain what he/she has learned to the teacher. 2 said they pass it on by applying it outside the classes by interacting with others and foreigners. The other 5 say to pass it on by teaching others what they have been taught to them. Out of the answers here, it seems that the ones who feel they can pass it on, see themselves passing it on as teaching it someone else, as the student who becomes the teacher.

### 5.2.5 ICBIE

The students were asked whether they feel like ICBIE allows them to position themselves in class and whether they feel like ICBIE stimulates them to teach others. Both questions are closed questions and are dichotomous variables. This means that only two answers were possible. In this case the answer options were yes or no. The findings of the questionnaire were that all 12 respondents said yes. This means that 100% of the respondents feel that the ICBIE is a place where they can position themselves in class and even teach others what they have learned.

On the open question which possibilities they see for the ICBIE in the society, the answers were the following,

* Great opportunity to learn for a very affordable price
* A great teaching institution
* I believe that the ICBIE can be an essential environment for cultural, educational and sports activities
* Provide educational and cultural education for low-income people
* I see the possibility of ICBIE gradually growing and becoming one of the big names in its area of ​​activity, always maintaining a humble and clear character in its proposals.
* Help in the community
* Growth
* Encourage, educate
* Add cultural and artistic knowledge to the least favoured.
* Great opportunity to learn courses and languages
* A very cool organ with a lot of activity in daily life like graffiti among others
* Great possibility to help us to grow culturally, as well as people

When looking at these answers 11 people find that the most important possibility of the ICBIE lies in the mission to help the community and the people. According to 6 of those people the strength of the ICBIE lies in that they provide cultural courses and of those 5 of them answered that the educational courses also are helping them to grow. Three of the respondents say that the ICBIE helps them to grow in the amount of knowledge, but also as a person. Summing up the different answers, the respondents seem to see the ICBIE as an institute that provides a variety of activities and creates opportunities for the community and this for a low price.

Therefore, the answers to this open question were coded as the following 7 categories; ‘education’, ‘culture’, ‘low cost’, ‘education + culture’, education + low cost’, ‘culture + low cost’ and ‘education + culture + low budget’.

***Figure 7.* Possibilities of the ICBIE according to the students**

When asked what kind of possibilities the students see for the ICBIE (*see* figure 7), 5 out of 12 respondents said the possibilities they see are mostly through the educational courses and 1 through the cultural courses that are offered. 3 respondents said the possibilities of the ICBIE are both, the educational and cultural courses. While the other 3 say it is education and/ or culture but also the low cost to follow them which will create more opportunities for various people to follow them.

Furthermore, 5 respondents said yes to the question whether they wanted to tell something about the ICBIE. Their answers were the following;

* ICBIE carries out several activities. I believe that if there is more dissemination there will be a larger audience and the region will value this Institute even more.
* A place of comfort and help, especially for low-income young people, to obtain learning and preparation opportunities in foreign languages ​​and the arts in general.
* Congratulate ICBIE for providing learning of free courses and languages ​​/ low prices
* Congratulations
* I would like it to be more and better publicized, so that other people have access. Congratulations ICBIE and its creators.

Among these 5 respondents, 3 of them says that the functioning of the ICBIE is good and 2 of them even want to congratulate the institute. The other 2 are of opinion that there is room for improvement and more specifically considering the access to the institute. They give the recommendation to publish for a larger audience in order that more people find their way to the institute.

# Discussion: comparing the perception of students and tutors

The vision of the ICBIE is “to empower the disadvantaged youth of Salvador, giving them education and artistic skills that will permit them to obtain meaningful employment, to escape from the vicious circle of poverty, ignorance and violence.” (<https://www.icbie.net/#vision>). To realize this, they use a teaching method which is based on peerlearning. Therefore, the research questions were the following:

* + How is peer learning embedded in the organisation?
  + Which are benefits and limitations of the functioning of peer learning?
  + Which possibilities are there for a more structural anchoring of these practices?

In the next part, these questions are being compared and the similarities and differences will be discussed with in the background the findings of the literature. Due to limitations, the perspective of the students’ needs to be seen as additional information and not as leading part.

## How is peer learning embedded in the organisation?

Peerlearning ‘the use of teaching and learning strategies in which students learn with and from each other without the immediate intervention of a teacher” (Boud et al., 1999, pp. 413-414). This implies that there are two dimensions of teaching and learning. The first one is a horizontal direction which takes place between peers who learn from one another. The second one is a hierarchical one where students learn from the teacher or tutor. When asked to the **tutors**, the majority said to be an autodidact and by teaching mostly focusing on passing their experience to others. While teaching, the tutors leave space for questions and even explicitly mention this. A minority gives direction to the classes starting from these difficulties. Besides the teaching, tutors mentioned to teach with attention for the background of the students which implies in an individual approach. When asking the **students** from who they learn the most. 73% of all respondents learns from the teacher, 45% from the volunteers and 27% from the students. According to literature, the learning process benefits when students and teacher have the same background, otherwise challenges on the affective level (Topping & Ehly, 2001, p.124), which focuses on the relation between teacher and students, occur. In terms of the ICBIE this results in teaching with attention for the diversity.

Furthermore, the literature says that **minority groups in particular** benefit from peerlearning (Boud et al., 1999, p. 416). This would be a good thing since an issue in the Brazilian education system is that it is too abstract and far from street children’s experiences, (Sergiovanni, 1994, p. 253; Pare, 2004, p. 246). Through peerlearning the children would not only learn from the tutor, the vertical way, but also from each other (the horizontal way). When looking at the results of the questionnaire, it seems that a minority of the respondents says to learn from other students, but not as much as from the tutor, which can be the teacher of a volunteer. However, it can be that they learn from the volunteer due to that this person is their ‘connection to the world’ as said by a few tutors during the interviews. According to one of them, a volunteer brings his or her cultural background in the ICBIE and the students learn more than what this person does there. They learn to know someone with all the intercultural knowledge this person brings. In this way, it might be that they learn from each other in a horizontal way when talking about cultural knowledge.

***Different methods***

The different methods of **peerlearning** are peer tutoring, peer modeling, peer education, peer counseling, peer monitoring, and peer assessment (Topping & Ehly, 2001, p.114). Three of these approaches are explicit or implicit integrated or not integrated in the functioning of peerlearning at the ICBIE.

**Peer tutoring** focuses on the development of certain skills (Topping & Ehly, 2001, p.115). This is not explicitly addressed during the empirical research. However, students do say to be learning from each other.

**Peer modelling** means that a person of the group functions as an example and the others imitate the behaviour of this person (Topping & Ehly, 2001, p.117). In terms of the ICBIE this approach of peerlearning is being realized by teachers who are autodidacts or are former students of the institute.

**Peer assessment** focuses on evaluating the progress someone makes in certain skills” (Topping & Ehly, 2001, p. 118). In the ICBIE, they’ve chosen explicitly to not do this since it only reinforces the fear of the Brazilian students to fail. It would work contraproductive for the process of learning.

***Classes and the way they function***

The structure of the classes depends on the subject of the course. In general, there are three ways possible of learning. The first, and most used, is giving classes of theory and then put them into practice. The second one is to let students try and let them learn by practice. The third one is to orient the classes starting from the difficulties of the students. 33% of the students described the classes as ‘good’ and ‘efficient’, while the other 67% says to mostly focus on the methods being used, the dynamics and the teacher.

Besides the structure, all tutors try to create a place where students feel secure enough to interact and ask questions, where they dare to try and fail. When asking the students, it seems the tutors are succeeding in this since 100% of the respondents said to feel stimulated to learn.

## Which are benefits and limitations of the functioning of peer learning?

The functioning of any method is associated with benefits and challenges. Therefore, both parties were asked whether benefits and challenges they experience while teaching. Overall, the learning **encourages** (Lin, 2014, p. 36) says 67% of the students explicitly and amongst the; 17%, said to be encouraged to continue, even when they experience difficulties. The other 33% says to be motivated by the methods used or by the attitude of the teacher in terms of having room to share their ideas. This is something that the teachers confirm, to be always have room to answer questions and student participation.

***Knowledge***

Knowledge can be divided into learning subject-related skills or cross-curricular skills (Topping & Ehly, 2001, p.124). In both types of skills, communication skills are important in terms that something needs to be explained in understandable terms According to the tutors, difficulties are being experienced when language is a subject-related skill. The difficulty here is mostly a lack of grammatical knowledge of the own mother tongue which are the basics to learn any language. This results into an adaptive course with special attention for these difficulties. When asked to the students, 57% said indeed to experience difficulties concerning the language, but mostly with the pronunciation and vocabulary. The other 43% of the respondents said to experience no difficulties or to experience organizational difficulties.

The *cross-curricular skills* are also named ‘transferable skills’ (Boud et al., 1999, p. 416) which are; **the development of learning outcomes related to collaboration, teamwork, and becoming a member of a learning community; critical enquiry and reflection; communication skills; and learning to learn.**

First of all, working *in a group, or teamwork,* is only being discussed by one of the **tutors** and says the goal is to let them discover the joy of being with other people, with different ages and backgrounds and all with the same objective. However, most tutors almost preach using an individual approach and making an informal evaluation of each student with their specific talents, limitations and background. According to one respondent there is an upcoming trend considering relationships. More and more people seem to be less interested in social contacts. Translated to learning this results that they even prefer to learn alone by using what they find on the internet. When asked to the **students**, none of the respondents answered this skill as a benefit.

The second skill is *becoming a member of a learning community*. This is also being referred to as building on a team spirit. One of the **tutors** said the following ‘It’s building, building something. Before there was nothing. Get people together to form a group and create a feeling of togetherness and connectedness. When asked to the **students**, none of the respondents talked about this skill as a benefit.

The third skill is *critical reflection.* Remarkable here is that each respondent does talk about critical reflection as seeing the limitations and talents of each student and thus doing an individual assessment. Whereas only one of them addresses it as stimulating self-knowledge. When asked to the **students**, none of the respondents talked about this skill as a benefit.

The fourth skill are the *communication skills*. The **tutors** address this by talking about the pronunciation in the language courses. Since most Brazilians struggle with the pronunciation, it’s better to stimulate them and give positive feedback. By pointing out the mistakes they make, tutors’ risk of reinforcing the fear Brazilians have to try and make mistakes. Another less explicit way on focusing on communication skills is that each respondent explicitly stimulates students to ask questions. A few respondents point out the lack of communication with students and participation of the students in the Brazilian education system. Brazilians are being taught to copy everything from the blackboard instead of listening or speaking. This results in that one can perfectly write in another language, but can’t speak a word in it. The focus is less on understanding and applying it. This is a trend that all the respondents try to break, some more explicitly than others. When asked to the **students** what the benefits are according to them, 45% of the respondents said that they develop communication skills.

The fifth, and last skill, is *learning to learn*. Referring to the previous skill, most of the students are taught to reproduce instead of understanding and applying. This skill knows various approaches, but in general all **tutors** start from sharing their experience that they had to learn too and even more, they usually use the material they used too. The approach varies. It’s possible that they start with the theory and put it into practice, handle a problem-oriented approach or simply choose for ‘trial&error’. This last approach is being used out of belief that students have to conquer their fear by simply starting to do it. When asked to the students, 55% said that they’re learning. Amongst them, 9% specifies to learn about culture. It seems they approach it as a process and not just gaining knowledge. Here, further research is necessary to see whether their approach of knowledge changed due to the methods used at the ICBIE. This can be examined by a questionnaire before and after they have followed a course.

***Exchange***

The other category refers to the exchange of that knowledge. It can be seen as participating in **‘intercultural exchange’** between people with different backgrounds, and in some cases a different culture such as with the international volunteers. Within the own community all tutors focus on the exchange of knowledge by passing on their experiences. Some of them let this guide their way of teaching by using material which helped them or which they find motivating and interesting to use. Exchange of knowledge can also be within the students who learn from each other’s differences.

In a broader context, the ICBIE focuses on intercultural exchange by trying to connect with different international organisations and making it possible to volunteer. Working with volunteers has its benefits and challenges. The tutors stress that the ICBIE is seen as a connection with the world. One said that without these international volunteers, many students, and even the community, would not get in touch with these cultures. Even when a volunteer is just walking around in the neighbourhood, they’re realising intercultural exchange since locals are not used to people who look differently and by interacting with them, they learn. However, working with volunteers also has its challenges. Volunteers are useful and enriching. The problem is the short period that they’re staying. ICBIE wants to create opportunities, but the problem is that when this person starts classes, they have to start with a new class group and when he/she leaves there is nobody who follows it up. On organizational level It creates difficulties of continuity since the students of this volunteer than maybe need to start over or repeat a part to see for the new teacher what their level is. It’s also possible that they can’t continue since the ICBIE has a lack of staff to organize this.

Despite, the challenges of working it volunteers on organizational level, they do seem to have an impact. When asked to the students from who they learn, 45% respondents said to learn from the volunteers. For future research it would be interesting to investigate what they exactly learn from them or how the international volunteers enrich them on the level of culture.

## Which possibilities are there for a more structural anchoring of these practices?

To answer this question, it’s necessary to identify the vision and mission of the ICBIE and how the institute relates itself to the society. When having mapped out the position of the ICBIE, it’s useful to examine the areas for improvement and giving recommendations.

***Vision and mission of the ICBIE***

The ICBIE strives “to empower the disadvantaged youth of Salvador, giving them education and artistic skills that will permit them to obtain meaningful employment, to escape from the vicious circle of poverty, ignorance and violence.” (<https://www.icbie.net/#vision>). The t**utors** were asked what the objectives are from the ICBIE. Almost all of the tutors said that the institute creates opportunities for minority groups and people who have less money than others. Besides this, it also creates opportunities for more knowledge whether it be a specific skill or intercultural exchange amongst locals or with international volunteers. According to the **students**, the possibilities of the ICBIE seem to be mostly the educational and cultural courses, but a minority, 25 %, said that the institute is accessible due to low prices to follow the courses.

***Relation of the ICBIE to the society***

According to literature there are five approaches (Thys & Elen, 2019, pp. 94-127) that focus on the connection between education and society; functional-sociological approach, cultural-sociological approach, conflict-sociological approach, social- economical approach and school-pedagogical approach.

According to the **functional-sociological approach** the institute would function as a place to socialize the students. This is not a main goal, but through following certain courses, the students develop transferable skills which can help them in a broader context.

According to the **cultural-sociological approach** the ICBIE would function as an institute to pass on the cultural beliefs of the society. according to the majority of the tutors, the ICBIE enriches the people of the community by making intercultural exchange an important part of their activities. Besides, a minority of the **tutors** says that the ICBIE wants to focus on bringing the people of the community in touch with their own culture.

According to the vision of the **conflict-sociological approach,** the institute functions as a place to raise awareness of the inequalities in the society. This results in a mission to give the target group, in this case minority groups, the tools to change their future and the society.When asking the **tutors**, they all agreed that the ICBIE creates opportunities for everyone, but mostly for least-favored people in Salvador. In terms of Brazil, and more specifically Bahia, can be stated that there is case of what is called ‘symbolic violence’ since Brazilian culture is not defined as including the culture of people with origins from Africa or the indigenous people (Pare, 2004, p. 246). One of the tutors seemed to try to break this by following the vision of Paulo Freire, who was a key figure in this approach. Amongst the **students** who filled in the questionnaire, 83% said that the institute helped them expanding their knowledge. Concrete, the project ***‘Salvador Grafita’*** fits perfectly in this approach since it wanted to give adolescents the opportunity to develop new skills, but moreover it wanted to change the perception of society on the image of graffiti.

According to the **social- economical approach**, the ICBIE is a place where people develop skills to raise the chance of employment. This is also something that is said in their vision. However, nobody of the tutors said this explicitly. When asked to the students 17% said the courses seem to give them more career possibilities. According to literature, the lack of focusing on this approach causes lack of growth in development countries.

According to the vision of the **school-pedagogical approach,** the students are adolescents who can shape the future of themselves and from the society (Thys & Elen, 2019, p. 109). This also implies active participation. However, the role of the teachers would be minimal and in the case of the ICBIE, the position of the teacher or tutor is very important according to 73% of the respondents, who seems to see the teacher as the main source where they learn from.

***The future of the ICBIE***

With the vision to develop further anchoring into society, both parties were asked which possibilities they see for the future. Tutors and students experience some difficulties in terms of means and infrastructure.

In terms of **means**, the tutors say it’s difficult to receive support of the state for the projects and the procedure takes several months. The institute has this long-term dream of wanting to have enough means to be able to pay two social assistants who can examine the community and so the ICBIE can offer new courses which fulfil the local needs. In the future, the ICBIE so can have a better anchoring and bigger impact on community level, but also on individual level.

Concerning the **infrastructure,** the institute has one room that’s equipped for a classroom. Therefore, it’s not possible to give more classes at the same time which results in less possible options for students to follow a certain course. This got also confirmed by the students. When asking them whether they experience difficulties, 25 % said to experience difficulties concerning the organization of the classes and combining it with their job.

# Conclusion and recommendations

The objective of this bachelor dissertation was to examine the functioning of peerlearning inside the context of ICBIE, an NGO in Brazil. Therefore, an analysis was made of the context, concept and both parties were questioned to have an overview of this phenomenon. This resulted in the next research questions:

## How is peerlearning embedded in the organisation?

Peerlearning is mostly defined as learning together and from each other. It appears to be present in the ICBIE in different approaches. The first one is **peer modelling** which means students learn from the tutor, which can be a teacher or volunteer, and also from each other. The second one is **peer tutoring.** In the context of the ICBIE this means that most tutors seem to once be students at the ICBIE or are autodidacts. Being an autodidact means that once they had to learn the matter too and now want to pass it on.

This also influences their method since they use what they like or what has been useful for them. Concerning the teaching style, it seems most of the tutors handle an individual approach. They adapt the courses to the personal needs of the students in order to motivate them the most to make progress. However, the keyword here seems to be to pass on experience with passion and love.

## Which are benefits and limitations of the functioning of peerlearning?

Overall, it seems that the students feel to be stimulated and encouraged to learn. Just the content they learn varies. Peerlearning seems to be divided into intercultural exchange and skills.

Intercultural exchange has an important role in the functioning of the ICBIE since it creates possibilities to develop various courses. Working with volunteers can be a support during the advanced classes. However, working with international volunteers also has the challenge that most of them stay for a short period of time which makes it difficult to give them the autonomy and freedom to start their own course. According to this, it seems that they are not that useful but the opposite seems to be true.

The students say to learn most from the teacher and from the volunteers. This can be explained that volunteers are being seen as ‘their connection to the world’. They don’t have the perception of a volunteer being only someone who helps in that class. They see the volunteer in all the aspects with attention for the cultural background and language this person brings with them. They might not be able to travel, but they sure can get to know intercultural knowledge through the volunteers. People at the institute seem curious and want to learn and not only about their own cultural background. For future research it would be interesting to do a qualitative research about the perception of people at the ICBIE of international volunteers and how it enriches them.

Concerning the skills, they learn subject-related skills and here students say to experience difficulties. Most students who follow a language course seem to be struggling with the vocabulary and pronunciation. It can also be that there is an additional difficulty concerning the grammar. Sometimes this is not sufficient in the mother tongue and the tutors develop a class to explain certain grammatical rules and translate it to the context of the other language. This way it creates more student participation to not only let them ask questions, but also give problem-oriented classes.

Besides the subject-related skills, there are also the transferable skills. These are teamwork, becoming a member of a learning community; critical enquiry and reflection; communication skills; and learning to learn. The ones who are most present in the ICBIE are the development of communication skills, of course by learning a new language, but also by conquering the fear to dare to speak, to dare to make mistakes. Here it seems that teaching is in the first place something psychological in the Brazilian context. The other, and probably most important transferable skill is learning to learn. The concerns concerning the actual education system were at times very present in this research. Some concerns were that students are not being stimulated to think critically, to learn. This mostly is due to that they don’t develop a learning method since in school they usually only have to copy from the blackboard. It’s also possible their personal limitations. Most students, who were questioned, said they learn at the ICBIE. It seems the tutors are succeeding in their intentions. Besides this definition of transferable skills, there is also the global framework on transferable skills of UNICEF (Nasir, 2019, p.1). Further research about these transferable skills is useful and necessary. An option would be to see in which way this framework can be implemented in NGO’s,

## Which possibilities are there for a more structural anchoring of these practices?

The overall objective of the ICBIE is to provide educational and cultural courses to the people of the community with special attention for the minority groups and the less-favoured people. They want to offer opportunities to people to learn and change their own future. This is their objective on microlevel. However, they also seem to have an objective, even a mission, on macrolevel. On macrolevel, the ICBIE seems to relate to broader society as an institute who wants to raise awareness concerning inequalities and giving people the tools to change those inequalities. This is also called the conflict-sociological approach where Paulo Freire is a key figure.

This can be derived from their mission and position in society, but also from a specific project which is called *Salvador* *Grafita*. This project dates from 2005 and gave various adolescents the opportunity to develop skills of graffiti art. Besides this explicit reason, the project also had an implicit and even bigger mission, namely the societal image of graffiti. However, Bahia seems to be a rather cultural and artistic state, graffiti still seems to be undervalued. This is something the ICBIE wanted to change, and succeeded in it since the participants could spread their art through the city of Salvador, where it was illegal at first. Therefore, a dream of the owners is to have the means to organize a research within the community in order to identify the local needs and to answer to these needs by developing new courses.

Since the ICBIE is known and respected in the community, the students were asked on which aspects they see more possibilities for the ICBIE to be structurally anchored in the community. This resulted in recommendations concerning infrastructural reorganization to be able to realize more courses, publish information about them and the courses they offer on a larger scale to reach more people who can benefit from these courses. Out of this recommendation follows that more staff will be needed. Therefore, the ICBIE can expand their volunteer working by networking with various countries.

Thus, the possibilities to be more structurally anchored in the society are focused on having a bigger reach concerning the target group by more publications and identify the needs of the community through research in order to develop new courses. More intercultural exchange through volunteer working can help realizing these courses and functions as passing on intercultural knowledge.

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# Appendix 1: Management summary

Let us remember: One book, one pen, one child, and one teacher can change the world

- Malala Yousafzai.

This describes the vision of the Instituto de Cultura Brasil Itália Europa (ICBIE) in the neighbourhood of Ribeira of Salvador, Brazil. The organization was created in 2005 by the founders Pietro Gallina and Marlene de Souza to create opportunities for the adolescents by offering various courses.

During my internship within this organization for 5 months, which ended earlier due to the outbreak of a pandemic, I had the chance to get to know the soul of the ICBIE. I learned what ICBIE means to the staff, the volunteers, the students and the entire community. I even had the chance to observe how many students made progress in a certain area. Furthermore, I noticed that many volunteers and tutors once started as a student. They became a role model for future students they became a multiplier. Due to this I saw that they worked a lot with what the literature calls ‘peer-learning’. Therefore, I decided to focus in my research on the functioning of learning in the ICBIE with attention for all the benefits and challenges. Furthermore, I wanted to explore what the interaction is between the system, the society, the target group and which role the ICBIE plays in this.

My research questions are the following:

1. How is peer learning embedded in the organisation?
2. Which are benefits and limitations of the functioning of peer learning?
3. Which possibilities are there for a more structural anchoring of these practices?

These research questions were examined through an empirical research. However due to the fact that this research is realised during the pandemic of Covid-19, the research method needed to be adapted. Therefore the preference goes to a **mixed method.** **In-depth interviews** were used to gather information from 9 key figures of the ICBIE. A **questionnaire** was used to gather information from the students. There the response rate was rather low (N= 12).

Next, the main findings for each research question will be discussed. Each of them will be discussed from the perspective of the staff, which are the teachers and volunteers, and from the perspective of the students. Out of this will follow possible recommendations for the future of the institute .

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **How is peer learning embedded in the organisation?** |

Peerlearning is a method that’s been gaining field in the education system due to the reason that both parties, tutors and students, benefit from it. It’s defined as learning with each other and from each other and knows various approaches (peer tutoring, peer modeling, peer education, peer counseling, peer monitoring, and peer assessment). In the ICBIE two of them are explicitly present. The first one is peer tutoring which means the teachers function as an example and at the ICBIE this sometimes is already the second generation. Some tutors got connected to the ICBIE as a student and later they became a tutors in that specific field. The second approach is peer tutoring present where students learn from the teacher, volunteers and other students.

All the tutors believe in peerlearning, but they still use their own teaching style. This can be starting with the theory and then making exercises or immediately try and learn from the mistakes or even a problem-oriented approach. In this last one the tutor asks what the students want to learn and with which they experience difficulties and then structures the classes.

A reason for these different approaches is that the tutors teach with attention to the limitations of the students and thus they prefer a more individual approach. This gives the opportunity to learn at their rhythm.

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **Which are benefits and limitations of the functioning of peer learning?** |

The method of peerlearning brings many benefits, but also limitations or challenges. First, the positive thing, the benefits. In the first place the students feel encouraged and stimulated. In the second place it helps to develop transferable skills. these skills are not bounded to a specific course, but it are lifeskills. In the third place the method provides intercultural exchange between the students with a different background, but also with the volunteers of the ICBIE. Working with volunteers has its’ benefits since it enriches the students culturally. However, most volunteers stay for a short period of time which makes it difficult so start up their own course. In other words, they do transfer knowledge, but in another way it can complicate things.

The challenges of peerlearning can be on various levels. In the first place there can be a lack of knowledge of the mother tongue. This makes it difficult to teach a language since there’s a lack of grammatical knowledge which can cause differences within the classgroup. These differences can on one side be due to the lack of knowledge of the mother tongue, but on the other side it can be due to that the schedules for the class are not so flexible due to a lack of staff and lack of financial means. Therefore classes are matched in the first place on whether the student is available. In other words, in a class from the same level of the course, the differences of knowledge the students have can differ.

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **Which possibilities are there for a more structural anchoring of these practices?** |

The official mission and vision of the ICBIE is to empower disadvantaged youth by offering educational and cultural courses. They offer various courses for a low price or free. By doing so, they want to compensate for the unequal access to education in Brazil.

Brazil is a country with various socio-structural challenges and the ICBIE wants to break this trend. They want to bring awareness about these inequalities and give the community the tools to change their position and the entire society by breaking the circle of poverty. The circle of poverty means that when people from poor living conditions, don’t have the opportunity to have an education, their job possibilities decline and will stay in that vulnerably neighbourhood. In Brazil these neighbourhoods are called favelas. In other words, ICBIE follows the vision of Paulo Freire. This is a conflict-sociological approach of education where education functions as the place to change the injustice in society. An important project that impacted society was *Salvador Grafita* (2005) where graffiti workshops were given and they made art in the streets. Before this, it was impossible to do that because nobody respected graffiti except the artist themselves. These days with the pandemic caused by COVID-19, ICBIE became a partner of the project *GeoCombateCovid-19- BA* where researchers gather data related to the pandemic and support managers, civil society and researchers by contributing to studies.

Since this vision needs to be widespread, there are various recommendations to do so. The first one if infrastructural reorganization. The second one is promoting volunteer working at the institute. The third one is advertising on a larger scale and as a consequence have more students and volunteers. The fourth and final recommendation is doing research withing the community to identify the local needs and offer a new course which answers to a certain need.

# Appendix 2: Questionnaire

1. Peer-learning

1.1 Mensagem de boas vindas

Prezado entrevistado,

Como parte do meu estágio no Instituto de cultura Brasil Itália Europa, eu investigo como o ICBIE funciona. O preenchimento do questionário levará aproximadamente **10 - 15 minutos** do seu tempo.

Os dados são confidenciais e apenas os pesquisadores têm acesso a eles. O processamento dos resultados também é feito anonimamente. Sua participação neste estudo é voluntária. Você tem o direito de cancelar sua participação a qualquer momento, sem precisar fornecer um motivo.

Se você tiver alguma dúvida ou quiser obter mais informações sobre os resultados após a pesquisa, sempre poderá enviar um e-mail (sharon.huysmans@hotmail.com).

Agradecemos antecipadamente,

Sharon Huysmans

* 1. Informed consent

Li e compreendi as informações acima e recebi respostas para todas as minhas perguntas sobre este estudo. Eu concordo em participar.

* 1. Fatores sociodemográficos

A primeira parte do questionário contém algumas perguntas sobre seus dados pessoais. Aqui é lembrado que os dados são processados ​​completamente anonimamente e apenas para fins de pesquisa.

1. Qual é o seu nome?
2. Qual é o seu sexo?

* Masculino
* Feminino

1. Qual é a sua função no ICBIE?

* Aluno
* Professor
* Professor e aluno
* Professor: encaminhamento direto à demanda

digite seu whatsapp ou endereço de e-mail se eu puder contatá-lo para uma entrevista pessoal

1. Quais cursos você segue ou você seguiu?

* A oficina do canto
* A oficina do grafite
* A oficina os instrumentos do sopro
* Inglês
* Italiano
* Outro: ....

1. Há quanto tempo você segue os cursos aqui (numero em anos)

Numero 1 – 15.

* 1. As aulas

Nesta parte, seguem algumas perguntas sobre as aulas.

1. Como você descreveria as aulas?
2. Que possibilidades as aulas lhe oferecem?
3. Que dificuldades você experimenta durante as aulas?
   1. Opinião

Nesta parte, seguem algumas perguntas sobre sua opinião.

1. Você sente que aprendeu coisas aqui no ICBIE de outros alunos?

* Sim
* Não

1. De quem você aprendeu mais?

* O professor
* Outros alunos
* O professor e outros alunos

1. Você sente que pode passar seu conhecimento

* Sim
* Não
  1. Como?

1. Existem pessoas aqui que você pode ver como um exemplo?

* Sim
* Não
  1. Quem?
  2. ICBIE

Nesta parte, seguem algumas perguntas sobre o ICBIE.

1. Você sente que o ICBIE acredita em você?
   1. Como?
2. ICBIE permite que você se posicione na classe?
3. ICBIE permite que você ensine aos outros?
4. Que possibilidades você vê para o ICBIE na sociedade?
5. Há mais alguma coisa que você queira dizer sobre o ICBIE?

* Não
* Sim 🡪 consulte a caixa de texto

1. professor e aluno:

Digite seu whatsapp ou endereço de e-mail se eu puder contatá-lo para uma entrevista pessoal

* 1. Mensagem final

Obrigada por participar deste estudo. Se você estiver interessado nos resultados ou tiver alguma dúvida. Não hesite em me enviar um email (sharon.huysmans@hotmail.com)

# Appendix 3: Interview

Boa tarde, sou Sharon Huysmans, estudante cooperação internacional Norte - Sul da UCLL. Quero agradecer novamente por participar desta entrevista. Como você já leu no meu questionário, estou pesquisando a maneira de ensinar o ICBIE. Eu gostaria de gravar a entrevista. No entanto, esta gravação é confidencial e será excluída após a investigação. A gravação serve apenas como uma verificação para que eu possa escrever a entrevista da maneira mais sincera possível. Você tem alguma objeção a isso?

Se você estiver interessado nos resultados de nossa pesquisa, teremos prazer em encaminhá-los mais tarde. Você tem alguma pergunta? Gostaria agora de começar a entrevista.

Primeiro de tudo, existem algumas questões introdutórias. Depois, farei algumas perguntas sobre as aulas, sua opinião é o ICBIE. Não há respostas erradas ou corretas. Sua opinião conta.

1. Perguntas introdutórias
2. Qual é o seu nome?
3. Qual é o seu trabalho no ICBIE?
4. Como você descreveria sua função?
5. Desde quando você dá aulas aqui?
6. As aulas

Nesta parte, seguem algumas perguntas sobre as aulas.

1. Qual é a estrutura das aulas?
2. Quais são os objetivos da sua tarefa?
3. Como você tenta atingir esses objetivos?
4. Que dificuldades você experimenta durante o ensino?
5. Como os alunos têm voz no ensino?
6. Quais são as experiências dos alunos sobre suas aulas?
7. Opinião

Nesta parte, seguem algumas perguntas sobre sua opinião.

1. Como você se descreveria como ser multiplicador?
2. Como os alunos podem vê-lo como um exemplo?
3. ICBIE

Nesta parte, seguem algumas perguntas sobre o ICBIE.

1. Como você descreveria o ensino no ICBIE?
2. Qual é a visão no icbie sobre o ensino?
3. Que possibilidades você vê para o icbie na sociedade?

Eu também gostaria de concluir com esta pergunta. Você acha que eu esqueci de explicar um assunto? Ou você tem algum comentário? Gostaria de agradecer desde já sua contribuição à minha pesquisa.

# Appendix 4: Code tree

Experiences with Peer-learning at ICBIE

* Demographic factors
* Classes
* Position teacher (identification with tutor)
* Connection teacher x student (peer-learning)
* Benefits and challenges (intercultural exchange, transferable skills)
* ICBIE (society, functioning)

1. The *Programa Bolsa Família* (PBF) is a social program that originates from 2003 under the presidency of Lula. This program exists out of five governmental programs and has the objective to give financial support to vulnerable families on the condition that the children go to school and get all the vaccinations. They want to give an incentive to stimulate education and thus break the circle of poverty. The program is economized under the presidency of Temer (2016 – 2018) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)