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Artículos científicos

Estudiando la importancia de las mujeres maestras del Paraguay desde la educación artística

***Studying the Importance of Female Teachers in Paraguay from Art
Education***

***Estudando a importância das professoras no Paraguai a partir da
educação artística***

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Resumen

El proyecto Mujeres Maestras es un homenaje a las docentes. Es una investigación educativa y artística que tiene como objetivo abordar la identidad de las mujeres que se dedican a la enseñanza. Utilizamos una metodología plural que combina estudios de caso, narraciones personales y *artography*. Se trata de un trabajo cualitativo y artístico. El proyecto busca unir intereses entre la universidad, los centros educativos y los museos. En Mujeres Maestras del Paraguay se destacan las diferencias experimentadas por las docentes en las escuelas públicas y privadas, aunque los resultados artísticos de la propuesta han generado intersecciones entre ambas realidades. Particularidades como el uso del guaraní, el interés por el trabajo bien hecho, o la atracción por la naturaleza, están relacionadas íntimamente con estas maestras y con la tradición de las artesanas del país. Como parte de los resultados, se presenta una selección de piezas de arte que se realizaron con motivo del proyecto y que se unen a las narrativas de las propias historias de las maestras.

Palabras clave: arte, docencia, educación, investigación, narrativas, Paraguay.

Abstract

Women Teacher Project is a tribute to teachers. It is an educational and artistic research that aims to approach the identity of women who are dedicated to teaching. A plural methodology combines case studies, personal narratives and artography. This work is qualitative and artistic. The project seeks to unite interests between the university, educational centers and museums. In Women Teacher of Paraguay the differences experienced by teachers in public and private schools are highlighted, although the art results of the proposal have generated intersections between these realities. Particularities such as the use of Guarani, a job well done or the attraction to nature are related to these teachers with the artisans of the country. As part of the results, a selection of art pieces of the project and stories of the teachers is presented.

Keywords: art, teaching, education, research, narratives, Paraguay.

Resumo

O projeto Mulheres Professoras é uma homenagem aos professores. É uma pesquisa educacional e artística que visa abordar a identidade de mulheres dedicadas ao ensino. Utilizamos uma metodologia plural que combina estudos de caso, histórias pessoais e *artography*. Nosso trabalho é qualitativo e artístico. O projeto busca unir interesses entre a universidade, os centros educacionais e os museus. Nas professoras do Paraguai, destacamos as diferenças vivenciadas pelas professoras de escolas públicas e privadas, embora os resultados artísticos da proposta tenham gerado interseções entre as duas realidades. Particularidades como o uso do guarani, o grande interesse em um trabalho bem feito ou a atração pela natureza estão intimamente relacionadas a esses professores e à tradição dos artesãos do país. Apresentamos uma seleção de peças de arte que foram feitas para o projeto e que se juntam às narrativas das histórias dos próprios professores.

Palavras chave: arte, ensino, educação, pesquisa, narrativas, Paraguai.

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Introduction

The Women Teachers project raises questions of teacher identity, in such a way that it brings us closer to the opinions of the teachers while demanding greater interaction between the different types of institutions (university, school and museum). The research is part of the International Project Women Teachers, generated by the Creari Research Group in Cultural Pedagogies (GIUV2013-103) of the University of Valencia (Spain). We initially propose a data collection, from the investigative perspective of personal narratives, through interviews and participant observation. The contribution in images is solved in a creative way through participatory artistic installations. After passing through countries such as Chile, Uruguay, Belgium, Spain, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, Cuba, Brazil, Portugal and Argentina, the project falls to Paraguay by the hand of the Columbia University of Paraguay and the Los Laureles Educational Center (CEL), a university center and a school with primary school students. By approaching the educational realities of Paraguay, using educational research based on the arts, we offer a tribute to the teachers and delve into the reality of the broad group of female teachers in this country. We incorporate artistic actions, creation of images and visual poetics, with references that come from the fields of the arts, education, aesthetics and ethnography. This type of research can serve to improve the practice of arts education in primary school, and also to reinforce the role of teachers in the educational setting.

The international trajectory of the project continues, it has been alive for 15 years, so that the project has been growing, enriching and updating itself. This tribute to women who are dedicated to teaching offers us the opinions of artists, students and teachers. Initially, extensive data collection work is carried out, from an academic perspective. In the interviews we discover fascinating stories. They surprise us with their ideas, we share their desire to have a greater presence as professionals involved, and we support them to achieve dignified social recognition as teachers, as education professionals (Kunhardt, 2020). We demand a critical spirit and promote reflection on teachers as intellectuals, given the delicate situation they suffer in many places with various problems, depending on each country. Henry Giroux proposed the redefinition of the role of the teacher as a public intellectual, while denouncing the growing number of people who suffer difficulties, suffering and even exclusion. Educators face important social problems, which forces them to defend education as a democratic sphere of public importance (Giroux, 2015), something in which we firmly believe.

The project was presented at the Espace Atrium Hall of the European Parliament in Brussels under the title of Women Teachers of Europe. The idea was to bring the voice of teachers to the forum of the largest representative entity on the European continent, thus making those responsible for educational policies aware of the need to listen to this very important and invisible group (Donaire, 2012). It represented a novelty, in the case of Brussels, to be able to listen to the European parliamentarians, who were involved in the defense of all women educators, taking into account that in many cases teachers have to face really painful situations of precariousness (Zafra, 2017).

Methodology

In this line of work and reflection, we feel very close to the proposal that we currently know as artography, which has been disseminated as a methodology by Rita Irwin. It is a research model that unites the processes of the arts without losing sight of our facet as educators or our vision as researchers. The term artography implies feeling, at the same time, an artist, educator and researcher, since the three initial letters combine the three elements that are integrated in it: a for artist, r for researcher and t for teacher (Irwin, 2013).

The study is based on our personal and professional participation from different related fields, such as artistic practice, teacher training and pedagogy for museums and heritage environments. We propose a research model that allows us to better understand the group of educators, by being able to listen to their problems (Giroux, 2013). Participant observation and personal narratives are our main sources of information. We conducted semi-structured interviews and recorded them on video (Rivas, Hernández and Sancho, 2012). These recordings are later published in audiovisual format, as a documentary element that will serve to incorporate it into the exhibition as a whole. An example of these documentaries can be seen at the link <https://vimeo.com/215170718> where we hear the voices of the women interviewed in Peru. The methodology that we follow is based on the case studies, and is specified in the personal narratives. It is a qualitative cut scheme (Stake, 1995) combined with educational research based on the arts.

We elaborate artistic results linked to the experience of teaching identities from artistic education (Huerta, 2012). We are aware of the complexity of integrating educational reflection and artistic creation, but among our most powerful arguments are

images (Duncum, 2015). The images approach the world of teachers from their own visual representations, which means generating an adequate framework for different geographical realities (Huerta, 2018). In the case of Paraguay, the decisive role of women in the successive reconstructions of the country is something that for anyone from another continent has an enormous impact (Secretaría Nacional de Cultura, 2016).

This research is presented as a case study, in which the data collection is based on the information obtained through interviews and participant observation. We also bring an important component of meaning by incorporating arts-based inquiry as a creative strategy. The artistic results that are achieved, and that are subsequently exposed to the public in a museum, allow us to conceive an idea of research much closer to artistic creation, and thus extend the notion of research to the territory of creativity, involving concepts whose meanings come from performances and experiences of artistic depth. The approach is also ethnographic, since the purpose is to know social phenomena from the perspective of those who experience these events (Lucas, Trabajo and Borghi, 2020). Political and social involvement is essential in order to address burning issues (Hamlin and Fusaro, 2018). We take the qualitative methodology as a frame of reference, taking into account the phenomenon as a whole, from flexible epistemological approaches, using different techniques to obtain the data (interviews, surveys, photographs) and subsequently generate images.

We consider narratives as an inspiring source, especially those centered on the human being, on their intentions, desires and needs. The research allows us to assemble three paradigms (interpretive, empiricist and critical), since we start from the experiences of the teachers themselves, we investigate social problems (Hernández, Pacheco, Liranzo and Jiménez, 2018) and express through works of art what they transmit with your opinions. Dialogue, observation and participant observation give an account of the lived experience (Stake, 1995). We use the arts as a method, as a form of analysis within qualitative research; we investigate from our own artistic experience (Dewey, 2008); we inquire about creativity and its interpretation, which, needless to say, strengthens the relationship between teachers and students; From specific situations, we use personal and collective elements of the cultural experience, since the arts bring “doing” to the field of research, and transform feelings, thoughts and images into aesthetic forms. Arts-based inquiry seeks other ways of looking at and representing experience. That is why the use of artistic representations of a visual nature constitutes one of its main references (Hernández, 2008).

In this article we use texts and images that interact; in both cases they play a decisive role. It is not about explaining the images through the texts, but about talking about the images based on them, as happens when in autoethnography we say that “it is not about talking about me, but from me”. In this way, the works make it possible to systematically study the memories of cooperative work, in a contemporary social and political context, through educational reflection and research with artistic methods. Research based on the arts gives us reflexivity: it shortens the distances between the self and the us. It is also memorable, since it cannot be easily ignored, so it demands our attention. As Fernando Hernández (2008, p. 108) says: "Art is an experience, which simultaneously attracts our senses, emotions and intellect".

We use creative approaches and elaborate artistic representations to promote innovative processes through experimentation, with educational practices in which art has a fundamental presence (Huerta, 2019). The representations facilitate empathy and allow us to see through the gaze of research in the arts and incorporate the lived experience as a transgressive element. Reflecting on the power of the image, vindicating groups that have been silenced throughout history, we turn the ordinary into the extraordinary.

Results

This article develops especially the experience of the project in Paraguay. Before, however, we do a brief initial review of what the trajectory of Mujeres Maestras has been. This is to show that, although the project maintains a similar intention, there are particularities in each country where it is carried out.

Santiago de Chile is a fascinating city. We had the opportunity to present the project Mujeres Maestras de Chile at the Artequin Museum, an entity very concerned with arts education.

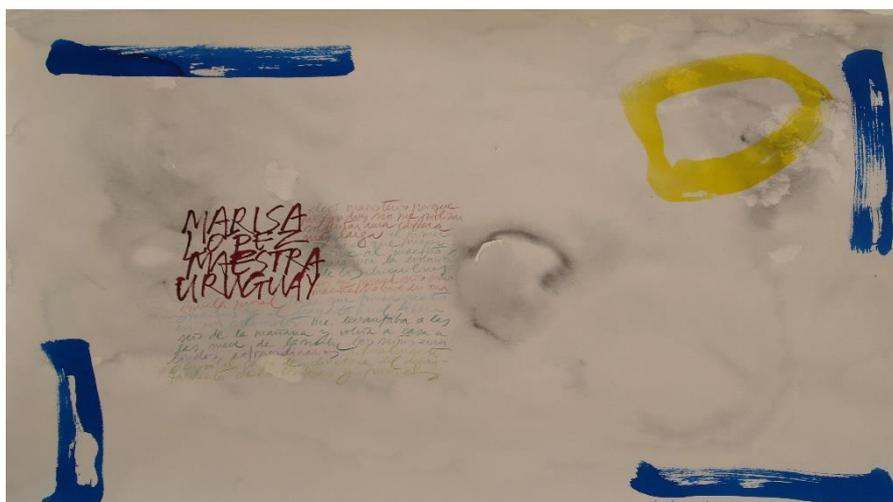
Figura 1. Pintura dedicada a Paola Guerrero. Serie *Mujeres Maestras de Chile*



Fuente: Mujeres Maestras de Chile

The statements of the Chilean teachers are very emotional, considering the historical validity of the bloody episode of the dictatorship, a drama that still weighs on the collective memory. Many women suffered persecution by the military regime. Some lost their relatives: “My father was held in the National Stadium for being a supporter of the Allende government. Then he disappeared and the army declared they had thrown him into the sea”, a Chilean teacher tells us with pain. Others are aware of their essential role as educators: “I once thought that through education I could transform the world and that is why I became a teacher, but today I believe that education can help transform people and that these people, Maybe they can transform society”, a teacher who has had responsibilities in the Ministry of Education tells us.

Figura 2. Pintura dedicada a Marisa Lopez. Serie *Mujeres Maestras del Uruguay*



Fuente: Mujeres Maestras de Uruguay

When carrying out the project in the city of Montevideo, we were able to verify the specific weight that the group of teachers acquires in a country like Uruguay, small in size, but with a great tradition both in social achievements and in the defense of rights humans. Numerous educational and cultural entities participated. We were able to attend concerts, conferences, movie shows and other activities in which the essential role of female teachers was defended in particular, and in general that of the public educational system. Students of all levels came to participate actively in the events: they drew their teachers and commented on how they perceived the work of the teachers. In Montevideo there is a library and an education museum, both institutions run exclusively by female teachers. The teachers are surprised that we are interested in their problems (Alonso, 2016). And they tell us that they had never before used art as a strategy to claim the collective.

When reviewing the results of the project in Spain, we detect the shortcomings and encourage new drifts (Albero and Arriaga, 2018). In the Museum of the University of Alicante (MUA), the boys and girls were the ones who installed their drawings on the walls and commented on each one of them. We were able to see how important it was for these students that their drawings were prominently displayed. Students are evolving towards more participatory positions, which makes even the little ones want to give their opinions and defend their criteria. It is the students who encourage their parents and relatives to visit the exhibition. Having exhibited their work in an institution, such as the MUA exhibition hall, they want to be able to explain to their elders how they have lived the experience (Álvarez, 2019). The success of the public at exhibitions is closely related to this factor. Family and friends go to the museum so that each boy or girl shows them and explains their drawing.

Figura 3. Pintura dedicada a Jan Morris. Serie *Alfabeto de las Mujeres Maestras*



Fuente: Alfabeto de las Mujeres Maestras

We inquire about teacher identities from personal narratives (Rivas et al., 2012). We look for references in the voices of the teachers themselves, something that we later analyze and describe from the visual culture as a paradigm. Regarding the perspective of life stories, Fernando Hernández (2008) affirms that it is a field of study that poses challenges, that it cannot be applied as a formula to the intention of the researcher, and that it is an option linked to the who took research in humanities and social sciences since 1970. We spoke with people from different educational centers, and exchanged activities and interests with these women during the process, through artistic practices and aesthetic reflection (Costa, 2018). We maintain a close relationship with the teachers while the data collection process lasts, which allows us to know their opinions and have information from close by. We access their problems by observing factors such as emotional repercussions or feelings, elements that acquire a relevant presence in many daily aspects of the teaching profession (Rolling, 2017).

By using artistic creation as an expressive medium, we generate an activity of a social, political and cultural nature. We establish personal participation as a criterion, which helps us maintain a living contact with the reality that surrounds us. However, since educational research based on the arts has the use of images as the most obvious resource, we must know how to handle this visual discourse, while exploring the problems of vulnerable groups (Huerta, Domínguez and Barbosa, 2017). The visual poetics here become creative effervescences and vindication (Monterroza, Buelvas and Urango, 2019).

In Colombia, the cruelty caused by poverty, together with the stigma of machismo, is compounded by gun violence. Being a teacher in a disadvantaged environment requires

a lot of involvement, and courage, especially in insecure environments and with vulnerable populations (Freire, 2015).

Figura 4. Pintura dedicada a Diana Marcela. Serie *Mujeres Maestras de Colombia*



Fuente: Mujeres Maestras de Colombia

Being a teacher in Colombia is a very difficult task. Pilar Méndez Rivera (2016) warns about the teachers that “their participation in public life, closely related to other implications, forces them to position themselves in the complex network of power relations that are intertwined in the confluence of the political and educational fields and social ”(p. 18). Added to the group's labor problems are elements that hinder professional practice, such as the precarious situation of the students' families, or even the poor condition of the facilities where they work.

The majority of education professionals serving early childhood and primary school students are women. In this sense, the visual aspect of the teachers includes numerous questions to be evaluated, for example, the “image” of the teachers themselves: how do we see them? How do the students see them? How do they see themselves? How would they like to be seen? (Greteman, 2017). Among the objectives of the project, we highlight the intention to strengthen artistic education by reflecting on the identities of teaching through a creative spirit, with social drift; drawing, painting, taking photographs and videos, and exhibiting the results in a museum, we adapt these identities to new rhythms. We make visible the problem of female teachers who are dedicated to teaching, incorporating issues such as the role of women's work and family reconciliation (Alonso, Jardón and Lifante, 2019). The portrait of each teacher is constructed from the letters of her name. In this way, we break from the beginning with the established schemes and prejudices in relation to feminine beauty and the usual canons.

Figura 5. Pintura dedicada a Nora Cepeda. Serie *Mujeres Maestras del Perú*

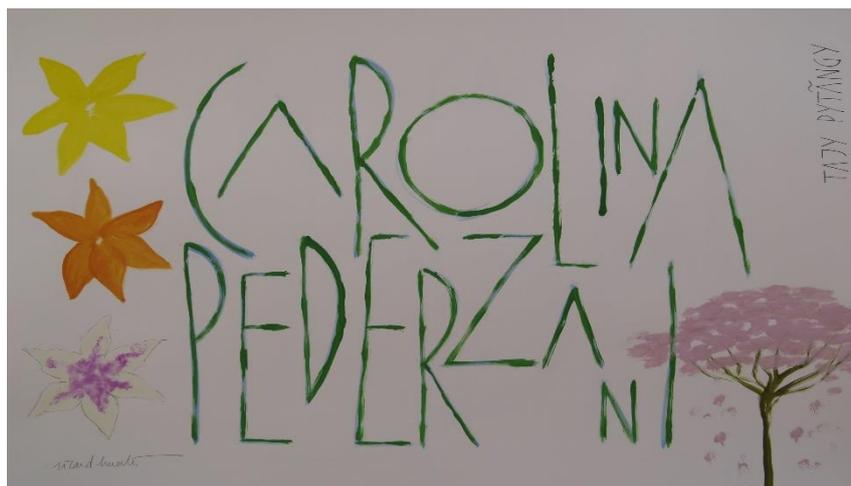


Fuente: Mujeres Maestras del Paraguay

Creative encounters with the female teachers of Paraguay

The teachers inform us about their circumstances as teachers through their personal narratives, through their experiences and opinions. The artistic research process is nourished by the gaze and participant observation, patiently listening to the experience of those who are actually investigating their own concerns and needs, since we also want to learn from the experience of these women. We speak with teachers who represent different social and economic sectors. We make them the protagonists of the exhibition discourse. The colors and graphics are part of a framework capable of creating, from visual culture, a new look towards teachers, and renewing the perception of groups of professionals who are dedicated to education.

Figura 6. Trabajo dedicado a Carolina Pederzani. Serie *Mujeres Maestras del Paraguay*



Fuente: Mujeres Maestras del Paraguay

We hear stories from older teachers, and also from professionals who, despite their youth, have long experience. We try to bring the arts and artistic education closer to activities through actions that encourage union and collaboration between teachers, schools and museums. With these actions, we highlight the realities in which we move and contribute ideas to improve our ways of educating. In the portraits of the masters we use their names: graphic symbols, letters of the alphabet, which to some extent define them. And while the alphabet shapes the uniqueness of each teacher based on the typographic composition, the hands of the boys and girls interpret them with their plastic compositions that reflect the enormous affection they express for these professional teachers (Eustáquio, 2017). The portraits of the teachers are a means to convey our respect and admiration for the efforts of these women who are cultural workers (Ramon, 2019). Involving their students in the tribute reinforces the admiration and respect of the little ones for their teachers.

Figura 7. Pintura dedicada a Eva Quevedo. Serie *Mujeres Maestras del Paraguay*



Fuente: Mujeres Maestras del Paraguay

The project takes a different profile in each country. In the case of Paraguay, due to the overwhelming presence of nature in the landscape, we asked each teacher to tell us what their favorite flower, plant, tree or natural element was (Capdevila, 2016). Laura Maldonado chose the flower of Santa Rita (bougainvillea), so this flower works as a motif for the composition of the portrait. Laura directs the initial level of the CEL, where she has worked for 24 years, the time she has dedicated to teaching. Some teachers chose animals (cat, owl, ladybug, bee), while others opted for conceptual elements linked to the territory (land, horizon, sand). Olga Molina taught us her predilection for the horizon line, the one that joins the sea and the sky. As in the Guaraní language the concept of sea is not translatable, “great water” (yguasu) was chosen. Paraguay has no access to the sea, it is a country surrounded by land on all its borders.

In each drawing, the concept chosen in the Guaraní language is expressed on one side. One of the decisive characteristics of Paraguayan culture is the Guaraní, which is why we wanted to record this powerful idiosyncrasy in each painting in the series. The tree with the most followers and preferred by the teachers is the tajý (lapacho), although Edit Vera and others opted for the pink flower *tajý* (*tajý pytāngy*).

Figure 8. Composición dedicada a la maestra Beatriz Martínez. Serie *Mujeres Maestras del Paraguay*



Fuente: Mujeres Maestras del Paraguay

The artistic interpretation of each teacher is supported by the information they offered us during the interview and through their written texts. After having been able to share experiences and conversations at CEL for several weeks, we had the opportunity to get to know them better, since the workshop where the paintings were executed was located precisely at the CEL facilities, which also allowed us to broaden the dialogue with students and with the service and administration staff of the center.

For the selection of the teachers, the background and age were taken into account. It is also necessary to mention that three educational centers participated: one private, one public, and one alternative. Olga Molina, Claudia Saldívar, Susana Ortega, Margarita Vega, Laura Olivera, Delsy Cristaldo, Beatriz Martínez, Eva Quevedo and Laura Maldonado participated in the CEL. Teachers Mariana Villalba, Ofelia Peralta, Edit Elizabeth Vera, Lilian Rosana Escobar, Rosana María Elena and Amalia Pamela Aquino participated from the Public School of the Republic of Panama, who were highly motivated and involved in the experience. On behalf of the Kunumí Areté de Areguá school, Julia María Pineda, Lourdes Benítez, Cinthia Karina López, Ana Caballero, Carolina Pederzani and Noelia Buttice participated.

The opinions of the Paraguayan teachers were captured in the video *Mujeres Maestras de Paraguay*, a documentary in audiovisual format that collects the interviews and part of the work process. In addition to having this audiovisual document published, a participatory seminar was held, in which we asked the teachers to relate personal experiences. For Laura Maldonado, being a teacher means, "first of all, transmitting love for learning, showing happiness at all times and sharing daily life." Eva Quevedo wanted

to highlight "the strength and courage that she acquired when she was dismissed from her position as general director of the last institution where she worked," after which she decided to create and direct her own educational center. In this lies the idea of the artisan exposed by the American pragmatist philosophy: to be a craftsman is to want to do things well (Sennett, 2008).

Figura 9. La maestra Ofelia Peralta junto a su retrato tipográfico en la exposición



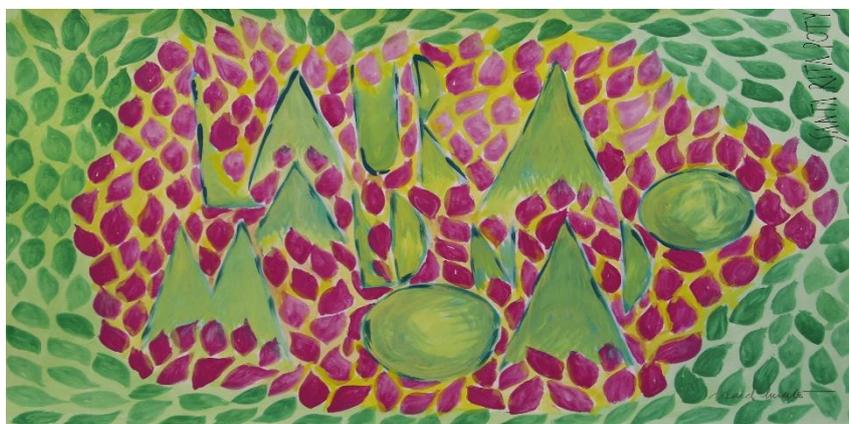
Fuente: Mujeres Maestras del Paraguay

Claudia Saldívar is the only teacher in her family. For her, teaching is "a fascinating profession, because it allows me to pass on what I know to children and learn from them". Laura Olivera felt "the vocation of teaching as a child, when she played to be a teacher with her sisters." She always wanted to work with students with special needs and with specific curricularities. This vocational option can be carried out now, since the CEL is an inclusive center, where diversity is the key to balance. Since Beatriz Martínez was a child, her father instilled in her the idea of being a teacher, and she pretended to be it "improvising a blackboard and writing lessons for my friends on that blackboard." Amalia Pamela Aquino, teacher and graduate in Psychology, highlights "the sincerity of children to show their love." She has worked for 20 years in different public and private institutions, and considers that in public education more importance should be given to the initial level (Melo de Lima Santos, 2017). Lourdes Benítez was trained in communication and is dedicated to creative writing, literature. After having lived the educational experience at Kunumí Areté as the mother of a student, she teaches communication workshops there. Kunumí Areté is a cooperative school in which the parents of the students actively participate.

We have verified the different sensitivities and proposals that characterize these three Paraguayan educational entities, since each one has a very particular orientation (Escobar, 2011). Noelia Buttice explains that they created the Kunumí Areté school to "accompany our sons and daughters in their growth, because we wanted to think and feel in the community what was important to us." Ana Caballero, also from Kunumí Areté, who studied graphic design and is dedicated to visual arts, tells us: "My inspiration for the work is an art school from when I was a child, the Municipal School of Art of Asunción, where I met very interesting people, innovative teachers, who worked art in a playful, very inspiring way". This inspiration and experience from her childhood is now transferred to her educational task through stories and common elements of the community.

For Delsy Cristaldo, from CEL, it is very inspiring to be able to teach Communication (Spanish) to students with functional diversity, such is the case of a blind student with whom she feels very close, as well as to the rest of the children, whom she describes as "A little box of surprises"; appreciates the friendly atmosphere of the center. Lilian Rosana Escobar Caballero, from the School of the Republic of Panama, a teacher and a graduate in Education, from a very young age had already seriously considered accessing a teaching position as a state official. She first spent 12 years working in private institutions, which allowed her to achieve the required score. Lilian reminds us of the importance of critical theory of teaching, especially when it comes to receiving significant support from the educational authority, encouraging parents to accompany them, or increasing the values of society. (Carr y Kemmis, 2009).

Figura 10. Pintura dedicada a la maestra Laura Maldonado. Serie *Mujeres Maestras del Paraguay*



Fuente: Mujeres Maestras del Paraguay

Some teachers demand greater recognition, both in terms of salary and financial security, as well as in the evaluation of qualifications, as well as constant training to update knowledge. They are aware of the role that technology has acquired, and they want this aspect to be taken into account in teacher training processes (Huerta, Alonso and Ramon, 2018). Rosana Esquivel, after 20 years of teaching experience, recognizes that the physical and emotional exhaustion is great, and she feels very lonely as an initial level teacher; explains that the teacher must do a lot on her part, since children arrive with many problems. It demands more support from parents and more interest from the state, especially in cases of burnout and mental health.

Karina López, a dancer specialized in contemporary dance, transfers her knowledge about the expressive possibilities of the body to Kunumí Areté students. Olga Molina has been a teacher for 25 years and has focused on teaching artistic workshops, especially plastic arts, something that she could develop as a teacher at the CEL, where she was encouraged to study the arts career. Laura Olivera trained as a chemist, and has previously had to work in chemical companies and companies to be able to take care of her children when they were younger. But she has finally returned to teaching, something that, for her, is like her world, something that she feels very closely. Laura chose jasmine as the natural element that represented her.

Susana Ortega transmits her impressions through the Guaraní language. In this regard, she explains that it is very difficult to translate into Spanish when talking about concepts or feelings of this culture. Her passion for teaching and literature have pushed her to transmit her ideas through books and publications, editions where she strives to dignify the presence of her language. In the drawings of her students we recognize the affection with which they interpret the way in which she transmits the knowledge of the Guaraní language and philosophy, a culture native to the lands of Paraguay.

Figura 11. La maestra Susana Ortega interpretada por su alumnado



Fuente: Mujeres Maestras del Paraguay

We detect in Susana a high involvement in everything she believes in, since she also conveys feelings and vehemently describes ideas, shapes and words with which the world can be transformed. Her joy is contagious, her eloquent gestures and her way of spreading the Guaraní cultural space is emotional. She chose land (yvy avevo) as a determining reason for her preference in relation to the natural environment (El Haddad et al., 2018).

The opinions of the artist and the students join the opinions of the teachers, which we hear through the videos. In the interviews, open questions are asked, based on ideas such as the following: the reason why they decided to be a teacher, the problems that concern them both personally and at work, as well as how to reconcile their family life with the tasks of the teaching. The reflection extends to a conceptual facet, considering the theoretical aspect from the artistic reality itself. Mujeres Maestras del Paraguay allows a reflection composed of ideas, feelings, images and texts, and thus generates action and theoretical reflection (Elliott, 1991).

For Carolina Pederzani, a kindergarten teacher at Kunumí Areté, it is important to “become one more girl with them”, referring to the students, since “we all have our son inside” to create a “beautiful little world”. Julia Pineda, also from Kunumí Areté, positively values “being able to be with children outdoors, listening to them to learn from them, that anything can be learning”. For her part, Ofelia Peralta, the daughter of a teacher, works in the third grade of primary school (here they call her basic) at the School of the Republic of Panama. Although she thinks that “she learns by playing”, she considers that “the profession of educator should be exercised as a vocation”, since “if

you do not love that profession, and more so in Paraguay, it is very sacrificed", because "society does not recognize our work".

For Claudia Saldívar, one of the key issues is inclusion, precisely because all students benefit from having and listening to the experiences of classmates who need specific attention. She even tells us that Álvaro Martínez, who works at Telethon, has been her student. Margarita Vega, on the other hand, as a Bachelor of Science in Education, explains the enormous difference that working in a public center or in a private school means, since she, for more than 15 years, has been able to know both realities. A peculiar case is that of the artisan Rosa Segovia, a 60-wire poncho weaver (one of the few remaining professionals), who also decided to study pedagogy and is now a licensed teacher.

Discussion

The weight that the women from whom we learn, from whom we receive important contributions, acquire in our lives is invaluable; In our artistic investigations we bring the recognition that this vital and educational task deserves. The time shared in Paraguay with the group of women teachers from different educational centers has allowed us to get closer to their realities, analyze their experiences and their daily routines, check to what extent they are involved in their teaching tasks. They offer us their opinions and transmit their ideas to us. We prepare documents, and prepare an exhibition in which the paintings made, portraits of the protagonists, and the drawings that the students of these teachers have made are exhibited. Thus, an approach to their image, to what they are, was achieved through the visual arts. The recordings of the teachers when they share with us their particular vision of the world in which they live speak, together, edited and mounted, of Paraguay from the perspective of their teachers. All these artistic results (children's drawings, paintings, documentary video with interviews) are presented in an exhibition, a show in which the Columbia University of Paraguay participates as host.

The exhibition and the rest of the activities try to generate an approach to the world of the teachers, to their identities, to their concerns, from different points of view. Different views are brought together here: that of the artist, that of the students and the opinion of the teachers themselves who explain their vision of the world in which they are involved. The academic reflection is carried out by a multidisciplinary team of specialists, a group

of professionals who articulate all these elements to present them to the public in the exhibition hall.

Knowing personally the dynamics of a group of teachers in Paraguay has allowed us to establish our own criteria on the educational models of the country, as well as to generate an enriching experience by interviewing them and representing them through paintings of a typographic nature. The time shared during the stay in Paraguay has resulted in the editing of an audiovisual document with 21 interviews, the realization of 21 paintings, typographic portraits, and the collection of hundreds of portraits that the boys and girls of Paraguay have made of their teachers.

We highlight the complaints and claims of the teachers, which coincide with the demands of the country's artisan women, investigated by Germán Navarro Espinach (2019) in a parallel action, who request to receive more attention, both financially and labor, and also recognition for her contribution to education and the arts. Paraguayan cultural background is tremendously linked to crafts, which brings us closer to aesthetic, cultural, economic, historical and political reflections. We are in time to celebrate the diversities, both of the teachers and the artisans of this little-known country that is Paraguay, and it will be the public authorities who will have the final decision to support both the one and the other, the teachers and the women. the artisans. Ultimately, it is about women, an essential element of our society.

Conclusions

In this research we start from the idea that has always accompanied us in the Women Teachers project: to give visibility to the group of teachers. This objective is common to the entire trajectory of the project, but has had its own peculiarities in each of the countries where it has been carried out. In previous studies we had indicated the achievements made, but this time the challenge was greater, since Paraguay is a little-known reality, unlike other countries whose presence is relevant at the media, political and economic level.

Paraguay has been reborn from the ashes thanks to women at least twice in history: after the War of the Triple Alliance and after the Chaco War. In both cases, it was women who caused this rebirth. The women of this country are the most responsible for this double rebirth, since in both cases the vast majority of adult men died in battles or were exterminated. Without idealizing them, although without eliminating their important role

in public space, what we can do is recognize their effort, honor them for their work and transmit these teachings to boys and girls through this type of artistic and exhibition activities.

This is what we are trying to do with the Women Teachers of Paraguay project: to make people aware of the importance of women who are dedicated to teaching. We do it through artistic expressions, paintings, videos and drawings that are made by artists, students and always with the active participation of the teachers themselves. We want to make women's work visible, dignify it and support it. We also continue the investigations based on the analysis of the drawings made by the students, who portray their teachers. These works are studied as the palpable reality of the image they generate of their teachers. The results of the project, both from the point of view of the exhibition and from the collection of drawings and interviews with teachers, are disseminated through articles in specialized magazines and books on the subject, so that we continue to attend to reality with interest. attractive and highly recommended of the chore and the constant work of the teachers.

We close this contribution by thanking the enormous hospitality and affection with which we have been received in this country of contrasts and nature. We transmit vindictive and cultural poetics, something that is very necessary if we want to achieve a more just and equitable society, more respectful and freer.

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