



Manifestation of the Freirean Pedagogy in a Unique Pre-Service Teacher Education Programme for Ethiopian Immigrants in Israel

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Abstract: The unique pre-service teacher education programme for Ethiopian immigrants implemented in the Achva Academic College integrates two key approached to value-oriented education, the pluralistic approach and the particularistic approach. The fundamental assumption underpinning the planning of a unique pre-service teacher education programme for Ethiopian immigrants is providing a response and equal opportunity to a population that comes from a different culture and socioeconomic status: to learn, acquire a profession, be integrated in the labour market and constitute an example to Ethiopian pupils at school. This paper presents the perception of the Freirean pedagogy and the manifestation of its characteristics in the unique programme. In order to demonstrate the principles of the critical-Freirean pedagogy embodied in the programme, we adopted a method of content analysis of interviews and documents which accompanied the programme. The case study illustrates the applied and practical components of the Freirean pedagogy principles, which facilitated the implementation of the programme and the success thereof. The insights derived from the study can benefit any educational initiative of designing a unique education programme for a minority group that experiences difficulties.

Key words: Freirean pedagogy, empowerment, Freireandialogue, Ethiopian immigrants, teacher education programme, case study

Introduction

The unique pre-service teacher education programme for Ethiopian immigrants was grounded in the principles of Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy. Implementation of these principles allows the minority to express themselves, come out of the margins and be integrated in society. This paper comprises five chapters. Chapter 1 describes the programme, Chapter 2 presents the Freirean pedagogy, Chapter 3 deals with the methodology, Chapter 4 illustrates the findings and the manifestation of the Freirean theory in the programme and Chapter 5 summarises the study.

1. The unique pre-service teacher education programme for Ethiopian immigrants

The unique pre-service teacher education programme for Ethiopian immigrants at the Achva Academic College was conceived out of needs emerging from the field. The programme is designed to train Ethiopian pre-service teachers [hereafter – "students"] so that they can work in the education system. These students have unique needs. Hence it is necessary to build a unique education programme whose objective is to nurture, empower and grow Ethiopian pre-service teachers, being sensitive to the various collective and personal needs (Millet, 2001).

The main goal of the programme was to offer members of the Ethiopian community an opportunity to be integrated in the Israeli society by acquiring a profession. Moreover, the programme aimed to respond to the unique needs of students who immigrated from Ethiopia and encountered absorption problems in Israel.

The programme was essentially based on learning in a flexible education pathway in two study frameworks: a separate group of Ethiopian immigrants (according to the particularistic approach) and an integrated group with all the other students (according to the pluralistic approach). Furthermore, unique admission requirements were defined and an emphasis was put on developing the self-professional image and on an individual and group support. Contents and sources

taken from the heritage of the Ethiopian immigrants were included in the various courses of the programme. This was done in order to make the students feel close to their heritage, expose new aspects of their life being, create identification with their heritage, be proud of it, hoping they would inculcate it to the pupils of the education system.

Members of the teaching staff involved in the education programme were meticulously chosen. They were aware of the multicultural perception in education and of the differentiation of the college students. The programme lecturers underscored the need for changing and adapting the teaching methods to Ethiopian students. Unique courses and exclusive initiatives were introduced in the syllabus, e.g. a trip to Ethiopia at the end of the studies. A "Heritage of Ethiopian Jewry" Learning Centre was set up as part of the multicultural discourse at the college. Its objective was to organise workshops, educational activities and focused activities designed to expose the legacy of the community (Millet and Gilad, 2004).

Ten years after its initiation, the programme has now about 150 graduates. Among them 65% have been well integrated within the formal and informal education system and approximately 5% continued their studies towards an M.Ed. degree (Achva Academic College, 2010, 2013).

2. The Freirean Pedagogy

In his paper, Guber (2008) discusses the pedagogical theory of Freire. He shows how the Freirean dialogue which highlights empowerment, liberation, political literacy and social solidarity can constitute a scaffold for educational processes. As part of his critical arguments and claim for equality, Guber (2008: 211) formulates the following rhetorical question: **'Don't the Ethiopian immigrants have anything to teach us? Are the Israelis the only ones who have something to teach them?'** We embrace this question as a basis for exploring the programme for Ethiopian immigrants through the prism of the Freirean pedagogy known also as critical pedagogy. Although the programme does not adopt the Freirean dialogue in full, it encompasses concepts and fundamentals of the Freirean pedagogy. These attribute

to the programme the hue of pioneering as we strive generate a social, value-oriented and educational change.

Paulo Freire (1921-1997) is considered one of the most influential educators of our time. Freire was born and died in Brazil; however, he acted as a researcher and an educator also in the United States and Switzerland. He studied law and had degrees in psychology and philosophy. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, he developed a career in the field of education. After managing educational projects in different places around the globe, Freire returned to Brazil in 1980 and joined the Workers' Party in Sao Paulo. In 1986 he was appointed Secretary of Education of the city. In this capacity he devoted himself to teaching the illiterate poor how to read and write and developed the fundamentals of the 'Pedagogy of Liberation'. According to Freire, the 'oppressed' will not be liberated unless they liberate themselves. 'The educator cannot liberate them but rather help them to liberate themselves' (Guber, 2008: 198). With time, the Pedagogy of Liberation has turned into an educational school of 'critical pedagogy', 'a pedagogy which advocates radical educational thinking, purify reality of oppression, exploitation, discrimination and injustice, allocating education as a tool for that purpose' (Guber, 2008: 197).

At the beginning of the 1960s, Freire's teaching approach became common and was implemented in Brazil in frameworks entitled 'Culture Circles'. These are circles formed by the dialogical interaction between teachers and their pupils, perceiving the teaching of language as part of political education. Following the military coup in Brazil in 1964, Freire was incarcerated. He was deported to Bolivia and from there he moved to Chile, where he dedicated himself to the education of illiterate peasants.

In 1970 the English version of Freire's famous book '**Pedagogy of the Oppressed**' was published in England and in 1981 it was printed in Hebrew (Freire, 1981). It reverberated strongly in Israel and around the world, opening various options for Freire. Since then he wrote several books which inspired many educational movements, the most familiar being 'The Critical Pedagogy'. These

books affected also the unique pre-service teacher education programme for Ethiopian immigrants.

Guber (2008) argues that Freire exerts considerable efforts in his writing in order to strengthen the approach which advocates the actualisation of dialogical pedagogy. That is, an educational discourse whereby the voices of different culture are expressed while showing respect for these culture. Zahor (2007) emphasises the essence of the academic framework as a framework which evokes doubts. The discussion conducted in class should educate for critical reflection, acceptance and respect for other people's opinions and culture.

Fundamental principles of the Pedagogy of Liberation (Freire, 1997)

The fundamental principles of the liberating-critical pedagogy are related simultaneously with theory and practice. Implementation of the perceptions is associated with the perceptions themselves. The prominent principle is **dialogism**. Freire strives to create a new type of learning, whereby both teachers and learners become a learning community. Teachers do not view themselves as knowledgeable individuals and do not maintain that their knowledge is superior to that of others in the learning community. Learning is done through a dialogue whose objective is to set the goals and attribute a meaning to the process.

The second principle is **empowerment**. Teachers' role is to empower their pupils from a conceptual, cognitive, cultural and linguistic point of view. They should instill in their pupils the courage to consolidate an independent opinion and the resolution to believe in an informed way. Teachers should inculcate in their pupils learning competences, judgment and criticism. Thus, when they are outside the classroom, learners would be able to undermine the existing situation, the macro-cosmos. The empowerment process under the leadership of the teachers highlights pupils' development and is extensively described by Sadan (2008). She highlights the psychological-sociological aspect of empowerment and the fact that it is a prerequisite for personal growth.

The principle associated with teachers' figure relates to the desirable figure of **inquiring teachers** who penetrate the conceptual, linguistic and value-oriented world of their pupils. These teachers have to be constantly present in their pupils' lives and expand their cultural world, namely 'nurturing' in the language of education. However, Freire professes that one should not lead to dichotomy between the pupils' culture and the normative culture. He draws a path of **system and commitment** and a figure of most responsible educators who protect the boundaries, are professionals and researchers who study their pupils in depth. According to Freire, teachers should demonstrate the highest intellectual responsibility and prevent a tolerant dialogue which might lead to anarchy. They should be competent in conducting a dialogue with their pupils in order to bring about shared learning and attain new insights, not necessarily agree but avoid shortcuts in the communication.

One of Freire's unique principles is connected to the shared knowledge created by teachers and pupils. This is the 'Circle of Knowledge'. In his writings, Freire (1997) instructs how to work through to the circle of knowledge process, presenting considerable achievements. Every dialogue in class begins with the pupils' problems, their world. Their problems are existential and should be the key to each formation of knowledge. Both teachers and learners create the knowledge without hierarchy. The educators have to enter the pupils' world for the purpose of building a fruitful and promoting dialogue. The educators are not fixated but are open to changes in their knowledge. They build it through a discussion with their pupils. Hence, this knowledge is in fact a mix of teachers' academic knowledge and the pupils' practical knowledge. This is a knowledge formed by a synthesis through a dialogue.

A further principle is connected to the **consolidation of a critical position**. Educators must lead their learners to critical reflection and encourage them to do so. When pupils disagree about a point they have to present good arguments. This is a social and economic liberation, in addition to being political. Teachers should uncover the

disguise, the ambiguity of reality. They should expose the lie and demonstrate that the elite groups that govern the country are interested in continuing the state of poverty in order to have a cheap labour force and so on. Freire, who believed that the poor and oppressed will manage to liberate themselves by means of education, viewed the teachers-educators as followers of his revolution. The dialogue and circles of knowledge are the mechanism which will allow the poor to abandon the oppressed class and be liberated. Leaving the negative-social-economic-political circle where they are now requires courage and guidance.

Teachers' mission then is **illumination of reality**. They must display the gaps, exploitation and oppression, identify the reasons for the existing situation and adhere to the truth. Freire considers teachers as people with **motivation**, capable of bringing the people facing them to a state of active search and evoke their motivation. Following teachers' education according to the pedagogy of liberation, learners will want to know, inquire and discover. Their sense of inquisitiveness will lead them to uncover reality and investigate it. Thus, they would be able to generate a change in themselves and their life. Moreover, Freire presents an original position regarding **rewards**, the outcomes of the learning products. In a conventional school the outcomes are measured by means of tests, score sheets and punishments whereas Freire believes that the real outcome is the learning process itself (Freire, 1981).

Principles of the pedagogy of liberation presented here result in an educational perception which has affected in the past and is affecting at present many educational frameworks, including the unique pre-service teacher education programme for Ethiopian immigrants at the college. In order to succeed, the Ethiopian students must be liberated from the oppressing reality, believe in themselves and aspire to make a change. The teachers-educators of this programme have led these important processes (Achva Academic College, 2006a, 2006b, 2008).

3. Methodology

The study was conducted according to the qualitative-interpretive approach of a case study. A case study enables in-depth comprehension of what transpires in a small group (Shkedi, 2012). The research participants were eight lecturers who taught in the programme and four college functionaries who were partners to the building and leading of the programme. The study included interviews of the 12 lecturers and programme leaders and analysis of 11 documents such as position papers, minutes of the steering committee meeting, programme assessment reports and annual summary documents. The interviews and the documents were content analysed. The categories were defined based on previous studies which investigated pedagogical perceptions (ETIC) and on the collected data (EMIC) (Sabar Ben-Yehoshua, 1990). The categories were finalised only after the researchers agreed on no less than 67% of the categories. The analysis was performed at the following levels: the individual interview level, the group level, the single document and the entirety of the documents (Shkedi, 2012).

4. Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the principles of the Freirean pedagogy manifested in the unique pre-service teacher education programme for Ethiopian immigrants.

4.1 Critique of the reality

The critical education or the 'liberating education', critically exposes the dominant reality and ideologies. In addition to the exposure, it strives to re-organise society in a more equalitarian and just way. The dominant ideologies entail a purposeful ambiguity whereas the liberating education focuses, enhances and facilitates critical interpretation of reality. Disguising reality is done by varied methods (Freire, 1981; May, 2007). One common method is by myths. As example which was investigated and published was the IQ myth (Blum, 1987). This 'diagnostic' tool has been serving as one of the powerful classification tools of the

education system and all its stages. It is perceived as 'objective' but in fact it has been found as a tool which is culturally, ethnically and economically biased. A historical analysis of the way the IQ test was used showed that different dominant groups used it for strengthening their dominance and preventing other groups from ruling and holding power positions (Blum, 1987). Challenging the myths means challenging the governing power in the society (ShorandFreire, 1990). Acknowledging the need to confront them reflects the developing awareness of the required change processes. Thus, identifying the myths indicates critical interpretation of reality.

Developing the awareness of the need for an Ethiopian pre-service teachers pathway of education in the college stemmed from a critical interpretation of reality. There is a very small, almost non-existent number of Ethiopian teachers in the pre-service teachers education programmes and at schools. Criticism of this prevalent reality was the motivation for writing position papers on this issue and for exerting efforts in order to change this bleak picture. Another motive which led to the consolidation of the unique pre-service teacher education programme for Ethiopian immigrants at the college was observation of the students who complied with the requirements of admission to the college. No Ethiopians were among the students who were accepted to colleges. At the same time, schools in the cities in the vicinity of the college were densely populated with Ethiopian pupils, but did not have even one Ethiopian teacher. In the best case scenario, the pupils encountered a figure of an Ethiopian grownup who acted as a mediator (Achva Academic College, 2005, 2007).

College admission requirements include succeeding in the SAT exams and holding a matriculation certificate with high mean scores. Reality illustrated that the myth associated with these admission requirements myth is culturally and ethnically unsuitable to the Ethiopian immigrant population. The biased diagnosis tools entailed distortion and misrepresentation and hence prevented students belonging to this community from being accepted to the training system. The first obstacle which had to be overcome was changing the college admission requirements. In

order to pass the SAT exams and cope with other culturally-ethnically-economically biased hurdles, new diagnoses were determined, enabling the acceptance of students for a moratorium period. During that period they acquired academic competences allowing them to comply with the requirements of admission to a teaching pathway. The term 'admission requirements' was assigned new parameters and other interpretations. The documents written every year about the unique pre-service teacher education programme for Ethiopian immigrants, explained and specified processes by a new interpretation of existing terms (Kalnitzki, 2008a, 2008b; Achva Academic College, 2010).

The process of critical interpretation of the reality prevalent in the Israeli education system entails the formation of a new interpretation of existing terms (Guber, 2008). Developing awareness of the critical interpretation of reality was facilitated by believing in the ability to change; setting down every pupils' personal experience in the supportive and accompanying system; handling pupils' personal problems; identifying insights about reality and mainly comprehending the personal activity of change and viewing it as part of the social change.

Developing the awareness is a parallel process of both teachers and learners and it is done through a dialogue. Such a process constitutes a social change mechanism. The joint process whereby the students and the lecturers acted in order to succeed in the new determined system, entailed a challenge to and a mechanism of changing the bleak picture, i.e. not even a single Ethiopian teacher in any of the schools in the region.

4.2 Dialogue

The dialogue in Freire's critical pedagogy is the methodological means of the approach as well as its moral basis. According to Freire (1981), the dialogue is a way of seeing and experiencing the world. The dialogue consists of respect, love, cultural acquaintance and hope (Shor, 1987). It brings about a democratic model of social relationships and constitutes the foundation for teachers' authority which is not

grounded in formal authority. The dialogue creates reciprocity (Gur, 2007; Guber, 2008), whereby teachers believe they have important things to learn from the pupils to the same extent that they [teachers] have something to teach the pupils. Within the framework of the dialogical process teachers learn every topic again, since they learn it with the pupils (Shor and Freire, 1990). By means of this dialogue, teachers get acquainted with the pupils' lives and with the things which are meaningful for them. Moreover, they do not assume that one knowledge is better than another knowledge. Teachers rely on the learners' cultural world. Cultural acquaintance is part of the Freirean dialogue. Society comprises many cultures which are grounded in origin, age, geographic area, socioeconomic status and so on. The cultural acquaintance and the acknowledgement of the differentiation and legitimisation of each culture are necessary in the dialogical relationships established between individuals and groups in society. Respect as part of the equalitarian dialogue is a mutual respect (Freire, 1981; Guber, 2008).

Learning through a dialogue is based on the perception that the starting point for learning and developing is previous knowledge and discourse which show respect to the learners (Gur, 2007; May, 2007). One can identify here a liberating learning which transpires through a dialogue. Such a learning requires that teachers are extremely observant of what is happening. They should be attentive and sensitive, change roles according to the development of the learning situation and relate emotionally to pupils' condition (Shor, 1992).

The unique pre-service teacher education programme for Ethiopian immigrants has undergone changes and transformations throughout the years as a result of a continuous dialogue with the students. The findings of the documents analysis and the interviews with the lecturers facilitate identification of elements of the Freirean dialogue in the programme. The programme included unique courses studied following the dialogical process which shows respect for the students, attempts to get acquainted with the other culture, displays sensitivity and is

conducted with a hope for possible change processes (Achva Academic College, 2006a, 2008a):

- 'Ethiopian culture': An elective course as part of the Department of History studies. The course has an important added value for the empowerment of the Ethiopian culture and its enhancement for the Ethiopian students themselves, members of the Ethiopian community and pre-service teachers in general.
- 'Leaders and leadership': A unique course delivered by all the lecturers of the Department of History. It included reference in the culture of peoples and the culture of the People of Israel from Ancient Times until today.
- 'Ethiopian Jewry heritage': The course comprised a series of lectures about the Ethiopian Jewry heritage and it was attended by both students and lecturers.
- 'Multiculturalism in education': A holistic course about psychological, social and cultural elements which characterise pupils and teachers in Israeli classrooms.
- Examples of lectures delivered during the course: 1. A tenured Ethiopian teacher in the education system lectured about 'Adjustment of new Ethiopian teachers to the education system'; 2. Deputy Minister of Infrastructures and former head of a local authority lectured on 'Social stigmas and handling thereof at a municipal level'; 3. Former Israeli consul in Ethiopia who is now active in various organisations which take care of the Ethiopian community lectured about 'Identity components of Ethiopian Jews'.

4.3 Authority and responsibility

The liberating authority is a dynamic process in which teachers plan the gradual delegation of authority to their pupils. They function systematically and meticulously through acquaintance with their pupils, and the teachers can build a structured process whereby they play a crucial role (Rosenow, 1997; Guber, 2008). They form a collaborative authority or a democratic authority through a dialogue with their pupils regarding the pupils' ability and wish to take part in consolidating the learning process (Shor, 1992). Teachers' ability to use their authority

proportionately without being too strict is connected to the structure of authority in the education system within which they work. Furthermore, the authority of the liberating teachers is manifested by the degree of responsibility for the learning process. This responsibility is unequally shared between the teachers and their pupils. Teachers assume responsibility for the process, thus turning the pupil from an object (one anonymous pupil among many others) activated by someone into a subject (a unique pupil at the personal acquaintance level), active and critical (Giroux, 1988). If at the beginning of the way teachers assume great responsibility for the dialogue and the structure of the process, then later on the pupils' sense of responsibility develops and the teachers' commitments decrease (ShorandFreire, 1990).

In the unique pre-service teacher education programme for Ethiopian immigrants, the authority of lecturers and programme leaders was a liberating authority. All along the way the students were aware of their great responsibility for learning, professional promotion and coping with the personal difficulties. The lecturers undertook to lead them to achievements so that they can comply with the special admission requirements and pass from one academic year to the next without the burden of academic duties. One of the documents stated:

The responsibility for succeeding in the academic attainments, the practical achievements shift during the learning process to the students. They are aware of their abilities and see to it that they get tutorials, scholarships or any other support according to their needs (Achva Academic College, 2013).

4.4 Empowerment

Empowerment is the basic liberating process in Freire's critical pedagogy. Empowering people has a political-educational meaning. As a liberating process it is always a social rather than an individual experience and as such it is usually a status empowerment (ShorandFreire, 1990). The empowerment process is

implemented through a dialogue and reference to the involved pupils as subjects. The empowerment process places pupils at the centre and relates to multiculturalism at school and in society. It refers to the individual's growth as an active, collaborative and social process since the individual and society create each other (Shor, 1992). Sadan (2008) views empowerment as a psychological-sociological process which personally and professionally promotes the individuals while developing their self-confidence. This point of view constitutes a complementary view of the empowerment processes of the students in the unique pre-service teacher education programme for Ethiopian immigrants, processes which were actualised from theory to practice.

Most of the documents regarding the unique pre-service teacher education programme for Ethiopian immigrants reiterate and emphasise the issue of empowerment. It is indicated in the vision, the position paper which discusses the programme objectives and structure, the assessment reports and the annual summary documents. Empowerment is mentioned by the lecturers and the programme designers and leaders.

One of the prominent examples of the empowerment process of the programme and its contribution to the personal, professional and cultural identity is the trips to Ethiopia (Gilad, 2006; Achva Academic College, 2008b). The students described the trips in these words: '*The trip and the visit to the villages, the synagogues and the Jewish cemeteries proved the existence of "Beta Israel" [Ethiopian House of Israel], namely the ancient Jewish existence of the community; the trip confronted us with the long way we had passed, turning from shepherds to people with academic education. We are capable, we can, we have done it; In Ethiopia we considered poverty a learning, pedagogical thinking in class and mainly good manners, serenity and respect for teachers; ... and then we thought a lot about the essence of education*' (Achva Academic College, 2008a, 2008b).

From an educational point of view, the learning process is negotiated and led by the teachers, based on a teacher-pupil joint authority. This process enables pupils to grasp the meaning of critical knowledge which is outside their immediate experience. At the same time, they establish connections between the personal understanding of themselves, of the world and of the options of changing what is obvious and evident in our life. Empowerment signifies granting an ability, allowing, facilitating. It means enabling those who are prevented from speaking to voice their opinion; allowing those who were economically and socially pushed to the margins to claim a status of full partners of society from these two aspects (Giroux, 1988).

Analysis of the annual summary documents of the programme illustrates that over the years Ethiopian students attending the programme were appointed to representative functions: scholarship coordinator, resource centre coordinator, Ethiopian trips assistant and employee of the college information and registration department. *'The students experienced an empowerment process and became the spokespeople of the group'; 'In addition, an activity was initiated for increasing the chances of integration in the labour market as well as collaborations with the Karev Fund and Pact in neighbouring cities and placement at work with a specialised institute'* (Achva Academic College, 2007: 5).

All along the way, the programme leaders and the lecturers were meticulous in their efforts to empower the students, challenge them and allow them to lead. They enabled the students to express themselves in a critical way, think about their culture, learn about it, prepare works, present them and be proud of their heritage. Moreover, the programme leaders and the lecturers taught the students to acknowledge the problems facing them and provided them with tools for coping with the difficulties. The empowerment transpired at the group level and not only at the individual level. It was manifested by attributing a status and identity as a group. Consolidation of empowerment processes, observed in the unique programme during ten years, might constitute a basis for creating social change mechanisms (Achva Academic College, 2007).

The empowerment process is also manifested by personal summaries of several Ethiopian participants regarding the unique activity whereby the Ethiopian immigrants were requested to teach and present to the excelling students the 'Hag Hasigad' (takes place 50 days after the Day of Atonement - the Ethiopians fast and pray for the building of the Holy Temple and the right to immigrate to Israel), its essence and its relation to the Ethiopian Jewry heritage.

A.: 'At first I thought that the other students from the excelling pathway will not relate seriously to our culture but post factum I felt relief. They simply enjoyed the activity and it made me feel good. It strengthened me and I myself wanted to learn more about the culture of the Ethiopian Jews. I thought about it, namely that the students who participated in the activity told their friends that those who did not come missed something important... we teach everyone about us... we have something to teach!'

B.: 'I was glad I had an opportunity to share my heritage and culture with friends. I was very excited and prepared myself as best as I could. I asked my mother many questions in order to know more about my culture. After the activity I felt very satisfied and happy. I could not have expected something better. The students were very interested. We stimulated their inquisitiveness through all the senses. During the activity the friends collaborated with us and responded to the assignments, asked important questions which made me want to know more about my culture. The learning discourse with the second group was not conducted with a group of strangers but with partners-friends. This encourages us to organise more meetings' (Achva Academic College, 2007, 2008a).

Let's go back to the question raised by Guber (2008: 211) in the article discussing the theory of Freire, with which we opened this paper: **'Don't the Ethiopian immigrants have anything to teach us?'** Now we can answer that this is not merely a rhetorical question. Rather it is a question which can certainly start many debates

dealing with the acceptance of others in general and with attitude towards others in all the stages of the education system in particular.

5. Summary

The narrative of the changes in the unique pre-service teacher education programme for Ethiopian immigrants through the lens of the Freirean pedagogy, highlights the reciprocal learning processes transpiring in the Ethiopian students' pathway, while showing respect for the latter's culture and heritage. The empowering and continuous dialogue which have become the teaching and conduct pattern in the pathway, gave rise to new academic courses, unique integration of the Department of History and the Ethiopian pathway. Moreover, it entailed original and far-reaching initiatives such as the graduates' trips to Ethiopia or the establishment of a resource centre, managed by the Ethiopian students, for learning about the heritage of Ethiopian Jews.

The fundamentals of Freire's critical pedagogy are embodied in the unique programme and incorporated in its credo and daily conduct. They attest to the relevance of the powerful ideas and acknowledgement of the importance of their implementation as a condition for shaping a society which aspires to achieve social justice and changed reality. The teaching, learning and assessment processes underscore a learning process which is designed not only for acquiring knowledge but also for developing the learners' ability and motivation to change their life reality by themselves.

In a wider view, after more than a decade of the programme's implementation, it is apparent that it actualises the need for a curricular reform and aspiration for equalitarian pedagogy. The programme encompasses values of exhausting personal and collective capabilities as well as increasing the value of social equalitarianism. These values are essential for promoting and nurturing a unique social-cultural group. The contribution and significance of the programme reside in raising

society's awareness of values of social justice, equality and democracy (Banks, 1995, 1996; Freire, 1997; Cochran-Smith, 2000b).

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