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AMAZONIAN COMMUNITY ARTS EDUCATION

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## AMAZONIAN COMMUNITY ARTS EDUCATION

Dan Baron Cohen

Community University of the Rivers

### Abstract

*This article narrates the performance pedagogies created by the Rivers of Meeting project in the Afro-Indigenous fishing community of Cabelo Seco, Marabá, in the Brazilian Amazon. Performed on the thresholds between paradigms of "good living" and industrial development, three short stories show how young arts educators contribute to the project's independent Community University of the Rivers. The article is based on oral and written reflections by the young performers, and reveals the challenges and potentials that shape their community's future. Set on the edge of the River Tocantins—about to be deformed into a river highway for transporting iron from the largest mines and refineries in the world, powered by a vast hydroelectric dam—the interventions on this Amazonian threshold acquire a compelling resonance.*

### Résumé

*Cet article décrit les pédagogies de performance créées par le projet Rivers of Meeting au sein de la communauté de pêche africaine autochtone de Cabelo Seco (Marabá) dans l'Amazonie brésilienne. Présentées sur la frontière entre les paradigmes du « bien vivre » et du développement industriel, trois courts récits démontrent les contributions des jeunes enseignantes et enseignants d'art au projet de l'établissement indépendant Community University of the Rivers. L'article est basé sur les réflexions orales et écrites des jeunes interprètes et révèle le potentiel et les défis qui façonnent l'avenir de leur communauté. Situées sur le bord de la rivière Tocantins, qui sera bientôt déformée afin de créer une grande voie navigable pour transporter le fer provenant des plus grandes mines et raffineries au monde alimentées par un immense barrage hydroélectrique, les interventions effectuées dans cet espace transitionnel résonnent de manière convaincante.*

### Introduction

The Rivers of Meeting project emerged from a national Aesthetic Interactions award I received from the Ministry of Culture in Brazil, 2008. My purpose was to develop a five-month storytelling workshop that would culminate in a monument of the community's Afro-Indigenous culture threatened by the Ministry of Development's Accelerated Growth

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Program. In its second year, the project won a second Ministry of Culture award and a UNICEF award for its youth-led pedagogy to revive and reinvent Cabelo Seco's "sleeping" Afro-Amazonian cultural roots. In 2018, with the project in its 10th year, the children from our first evening street workshop coordinate our Community University of the Rivers,<sup>1</sup> home to our Afro-contemporary dance, percussion, audio-visual, library, cinema, women's rights and medicinal garden collectives, summer and winter festivals, annual forums, international residencies, and city-wide solar energy project. The youth coordinators sustain their scholarships through awards and crowdfunding. In 2011, they refused to accept funding from any mining companies or their political allies.

I am a community arts educator, born in London, England, of Quebeccois-Welsh descent. My first sister had acute special needs; she taught us all to listen for voices within silence, to nurture empathy as self-determination, and to transform through performance. My doctoral research at Oxford University was of Edward Bond's *Rational Theatre* as performed pedagogy. In my "quest for a map, not a blueprint, of change" (Bond, 1978), I dedicated 10 years to sustained collaborations with young people in conflicted communities in Greater Manchester, North of Ireland, and South Wales. In 1994, I became a tenured theatre lecturer at the University of Glamorgan, but a one-year professorship at Brazil's Santa Catarina State University inspired me to leave South Wales to collaborate with landless, Indigenous, trade union, and university communities. Over the past 20 years, Manoela Souza (my partner-collaborator) and I have adapted our "transformance" techniques to develop community policing, health and teacher education, and youth-led advocacy for social justice. As president of the International Drama Theatre and Education Association (2004–2010), I developed collaborations with arts-education networks in every region of the world. As co-founder and first president of the World Alliance for Arts Education, I saw the need for sustained community collaborations and stories to prove and advocate for arts education as essential to a new paradigm of education for transformation. I wish to acknowledge the collaboration of Camylla Alves, Elisa Neves, Évany Valente, Carol Souza, Rerivaldo Mendes, and Manoela Souza in the development of this article. They have given permission to be identified as part of a policy of naming and authenticating all that needs to be transformed in the Amazon and Brazil.

### More Culture in School

The packed auditorium is a tense mixture of authoritarian threat and shy adolescent admiration. Teachers police pupils, parents threaten children, but today, a new project is being born. Camylla stands in one corner, elegant, poised, her Senegalese costume glowing on the over-lit school assembly stage. It highlights her sculpted features, poise, and pride. Her body records the meeting of enslaved African warrior and silent Indigenous planter; her light complexion and Portuguese surname register the plantation where these three cultures met. The same rich fabric gathers her voluminous braided hair in an intuitive celebration of African femininity.

But this Camylla is not just a reinvention of traditional African aesthetics, viscerally studied through videos found on the Internet, interpellated into her body. She embodies

1 Our Community University of the Rivers was founded in 2013 to value local Afro-Indigenous knowledges produced and exchanged in every space in Cabelo Seco.

an impossible dream: that a young *cabocla*<sup>2</sup> woman can emerge from a wooden home without water, toilet, or fridge, sustained by little more than rice and bean sauce, to create choreographies of hope, be respected for her intelligence and resilience, and become a new symbol of a vital, autonomous, sustainable Amazon. Everyone in the auditorium read the photo and the caption that accompanied the interview in yesterday's newspaper, or saw Camylla on TV. She has just won a national award to research the silent, invisible Indigenous narratives of her *cabocla* history. Her dance is a radical metaphor for the violation of the rivers and forests of the Amazon, crafted through workshops with Butoh and Maori dancers from the most advanced Indigenous urbanized cultures in the world.



Figure 1. AfroMundi imagines the rebirth of the dead River Tocantins in “Life-Source on Fire.” Author photograph.

Camylla looks out at the upturned faces. She recognizes children and adults from her AfroMundi dance school. She looks across at Reris, ready to film. She turns now to Elisa, Carol, and Évany across the stage, also in African costume, their Drums of Freedom poised between their legs, ready to perform. She looks at the teachers seated at the end of each row in the auditorium. Gradually, they have come to recognize and understand their everyday aggression in the classroom, submission at home, and compulsive eating as the performance of hidden, unresolved dramas of the feminine Amazon that Camylla also suffered in the everyday beatings from her mother.

The teachers know that today, they will see how Camylla has transformed their dramas into a grammar and vocabulary of self-liberating Afro-Amazonian community dance. All recognize in the celebrated Afro-contemporary dancer their own gestures, silences, and desires. But do they know that the tension that runs deep within her self-confident onstage identity, that ache deep within her diaphragm, the very energy of her poise and steely determination, threatens to fracture her very life?

The children from AfroMundi dance school feel her tension, but Camylla knows the Drums of Freedom understand it. The drummers know her as the glamorous 21-year-

2 *Cabocla* is the term given to Afro-Indigenous people in Brazil. It conceals their Indigenous matrices and sustains a national amnesia at the core of “Brazilian” identity, mystifying the truth of how these matrices met and meet and the psycho-emotional and socioeconomic consequences.

old who, beneath the costume and braids, compulsively straightens and tints her hair and dedicates hours each day to perfecting another virtual and Saturday-night performance to attracting male desire and the unconditional love of an absent father, and to healing a stolen, violated childhood.

Camylla nods at *Reis*. He starts his video. She glances at *Évany*, *Elisa*, and *Carol*, dressed in vibrant Senegalese fabrics of green and orange prints, *djembes* between their legs, and smiles.



Figure 2. *Carol*, *Évany*, and *Elisa* play their *Drums of Freedom* inside a school performance of “*Let Our River Pass!*” Author photograph.

The percussionists are experimenting with lesbian sexuality, which threatens to flood rehearsals and subvert the weekly collective formation<sup>3</sup> processes. But now, Camylla remembers them all on the opening night of the project, 10 years earlier, all seated in the same positions, when she and two other 11-year-olds gyrated above upturned beer bottles in unconscious complicit celebration of the child prostitution that plagues *Pará* state. She nods at the percussionists, and they begin a powerful Guinean rhythm. The entire school auditorium, even the teachers, erupts in adulation and appreciation. Some instantly stand up and dance.

The live drumming intensifies Camylla’s solo, and the audience’s collective, empathetic response generates another synergy, which inspires the percussionists. The school is transformed and the morning exceeds all expectations. Camylla sits, exhilarated, and recovers her breath. The percussionists caress bruised palms, exchanging smiles. *Nilva*, the head teacher, laughs out loud and takes the mic. “This is so much more than a celebration of black awareness or the launch of our new project collaboration, *More Culture in School*,<sup>4</sup> with our *Community University of the Rivers*.” She smiles at her teachers, animated, already sharing clips of the performance between mobile phones. She is dealing with chronic teacher

3 *Formation* refers to the forming of the full human being, central to Latin-American cultures, as opposed to the Western concept of *training*.

4 The *More Culture in School* program was developed in 2013 by Brazil’s Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Education to value artistic and popular cultures as knowledges and pedagogies for nurturing social inclusion, human rights, citizenship, and transformation.

absenteeism, her own ill health and that of her most motivated, experienced teachers, and an apathy that permeates so many schools in Marabá. “This is more than a performance of our human rights. It is a performance that heals and transforms the *imaginário* of each of us, those of us that carry the wounds of Araguaia<sup>5</sup> and the threats of Belo Monte.<sup>6</sup> You give us hope that the Amazon will revive!”

Camylla smiles, but I recognize the tension that now hunches her shoulders and is spreading to the Drums of Freedom. All our young artists are desperate to recover their mobile phones in Manoela’s bag, to read the few hundred messages of the early morning.<sup>7</sup> In all her years of pedagogical coordination, this one responsibility tests Manoela’s capacity to avoid turning a collective agreement into terse command. Nilva calls me to the stage, and I embrace her and Camylla and present the percussionists by name.

“Thanks everyone for your focused energy and generosity! After the interval, we will work with all the teachers, and in the coming weeks with you all, class by class, to transform the school into a huge workshop of dance, percussion, song, theatre, and video, to create a festival of transformation through performance. Agreed?” Sustained applause.

I continue: “But let me ask you one question. You know these performers. You know Reris. You have seen them all grow into arts educators. Is it fair that they, that you, are failed again and again, just because the pen, only one of our languages, just one of our intelligences, just one door into our imagination, is all that’s valued? And that the knowledge of our ancestors, that comes from our hands, our bodies, our land, forests and rivers, has no place in school?”

The auditorium is silent, reflexive, open. Two of the scores of young mothers present, who danced with Camylla in the Backyards of Culture band seven years ago, feel a rush of indignation. Their young sons sit beside them, already practised in the armed poses of Toím, Douglinho, and Renan.<sup>8</sup> I can feel their alert, collective intelligence. “Please leave with this in your mind,” I continue. “You created this stage where we performed another kind of education, without walls, rooted in the culture of Cabelo Seco, past, present, and future, and the celebration of our full intelligence!”

I look at Camylla. Her eyes brim with tears. She learned yesterday that she failed Portuguese and mathematics and is condemned to repeat her final year.

5 The River Araguaia and its surroundings border the River Tocantins. Its name is synonymous with armed resistance to the military dictatorship in the late 1970s and the still-unacknowledged and uncompensated state torture and disappearance of young people within the gaze of Cabelo Seco.

6 Belo Monte is the third-largest hydroelectric dam in the world, based in Altamira, northern Pará. Revived during the first mandate of President Lula and inaugurated during the first mandate of President Dilma, it symbolizes political and economic corruption; violation of Indigenous, river-dweller, and constitutional rights; and environmental catastrophe.

7 Culture in Network is a program developed by Brazil’s Ministry of Culture in 2015. The Rivers of Meeting project, co-founder of the Brazilian Network of Arteducators, created this national project to transform the mobile phone from an addictive medium of compulsive, alienated, and narcissistic self-isolating youth consumerism into a creative medium of cultural production for social transformation. At present, pupils are forbidden to use their cell phones and must leave them with the teacher.

8 Three teenagers from Cabelo Seco were assassinated in 2013 and 2014 in drug-related disputes, in a region where Afro-descendent youth are 12 times more likely to be murdered than in any other region in Brazil.

### Teacher Education

Carol passes out drumsticks, while Elisa places 30 chairs in a circle. They are not lovers, but Carol gazes with unconditional love for Elisa, whose "no" at 14 did not prevent her from becoming pregnant, and at 15 giving birth to Pedro and suffering the wounding judgment of two powerful women in Cabelo Seco who tried to use Elisa's pregnancy as evidence of our project's immorality, to destroy it. Instead, the two young women formed Clothes to the Wind, a percussion-based, songwriting micro-project for children, young girls, and women, to turn their experiences of violation into a human rights project. Carol hands out the final drumsticks as Elisa completes the introduction. She then picks up her guitar, and the two sing and drum the song "Cabelo Seco" to present who they are. They follow with a funk version, just with drumsticks. Amazed applause. "I taught you for five years," a senior pedagogue exclaims. "I never knew you had so much culture!"

Carol also co-coordinates the children's library Leaves of Life and the community cinema Owl Cine, and writes excellent poetry and short stories, but she rarely speaks in public except to tell truths no one can bear to hear. Even at seven years of age, the youngest in the project, she was searing in her honesty. But back then, she had to overcome hysterical laughter just to speak the truth. In a community and country that seeks refuge in saying "yes" to avoid punishment, exclusion, execution, and closing doors, and to survive starvation and rape, Carol's courage is rare. "Were the lovers active or passive, in that first summer of love?" Carol had asked when she first read the poem that she now takes from her folder. Her uninhibited question opened pathways for our Community University of the Rivers to talk about sexuality and for Elisa to deny the rumour that she had exchanged her virginity for the braces on her teeth.

The audience of teachers listen to the two girls with respect, and Elisa asks them to turn to one another in pairs. It is the first time all 30 teachers are present in a formation session, joined by other professionals who know Rivers of Meeting and are curious to see how teenagers teach adults. Carol reads the poem, and now that an environment of care, sensitivity, and confidence has been defined, Elisa explains the structure of the workshop. She invites the teachers to form into seated pairs, turn their chairs toward one another, and each tell a story about the human right that defines their needs today. Within seconds, the circle is a polyphony of dialogues.<sup>9</sup> Carol and Elisa check that no one is excluded, self-excluding, or touching an unresolved, painful story.

After seven minutes, Elisa beats the agogô<sup>10</sup> and reminds everyone that she will call them together in a few minutes to share their dialogic time with care. When she judges the banter has almost subsided, she asks the taller teacher in each pair to stand. She and Carol demonstrate the second step of the process. Carol creates a human sculpture of the human rights story Elisa has shared with her. Elisa then reads herself in Carol's sculpture and adds emotional, psychological, and narrative detail. The pair inverts, each actor now becoming the active audience of the other.

9 Trialogue is the interaction between two simultaneous intimate dialogues—set in motion when two people meet in a historical and actual place of possible narratives—and the interaction between narrator/author, questioner, and focalizing listener (audience) (see Baron & Voices of the Land, 2011).

10 The agogô, a percussion instrument made from two husks of the Brazil-nut tree, is now almost extinct in the southeast of Pará, the world's largest producer until the 1990s.



All the teachers carry out the process, sculpting, laughing in recognition, rapt in reflexive expression and discovery. Elisa invites each storyteller to read her or himself in the other, and then finally, for each pair to thank one another. An explosion of exchanges as the pairs embrace.

“Now take your drumsticks, and accompany each of these rhythms,”<sup>11</sup> says Elisa. Carol beats out a rhythm of funk, and the teachers find the rhythm, the generational differences appearing with laughter. Elisa beats out a samba, and the teachers find the rhythm with more confidence. Carol creates a carimbó, and once the teachers find the rhythm, Elisa creates a boi. With each new rhythm, the pleasure visibly increases, the relationships between the teachers are being transformed, and the respect for two teenage arts educators deepens. Manoela is supporting them invisibly as one of the pedagogues. I am photographing. Reris is filming. But the pedagogic culture comes from Elisa and Carol’s mutual respect, artistic confidence, and thorough preparation.

“Now please return to your pairs,” Elisa says with a smile. She can feel the workshop is going well and risks a smile to Carol. “I’m really enjoying this!” Carol laughs aloud. Elisa continues: “We invite you to create a lyric, based in your stories, and to choose a rhythm, to guide the improvisation and structure its...well, just to structure its rhythm!” Both laugh and the entire workshop laughs with them.

Twenty minutes later, we listen to 15 raps, each using a mixture of Amazonian rhythms. Carol and Elisa are stunned, but less so than the teachers. In the circle of reflection that concludes this first of twenty-four 80-minute workshops, apart from the candour and quality of the lyrics and collective self-confidence of the teachers, two insights stand out. “I’ve always condemned funk as violent, macho, irrelevant to the educational process,” says the pedagogical coordinator of the school. “This workshop has sensitized me to start from where my pupils are, culturally, and to work from their energy, their life experience, their pleasure. And frankly, I thought I had no rhythm!”

Carol offers her reflection on what the pedagogic coordinator has just shared. “As far as I can see, the relations of power, between the *senhora* [all laugh] and the different generations of teachers, have also become more aware, more equal and horizontal.” There is a hushed awe as the teachers listen to the youngest pedagogue in the circle. Carol continues: “It starts from a mutual confidence, the sharing of intimate stories. But it’s also the decision to experiment with the unknown, in public. And it’s the rhythm itself. It creates more than a unity—how do you say, a synchrony? It creates the desire to walk together, to integrate, to support. And it’s free of words!”

Everyone applauds, and a younger teacher risks the second insight that will appear in the report passed to the Ministries of Culture and of Education. “Carol has demonstrated what I have seen today: the capacity of young people to collaborate with us, as co-researchers, as co-pedagogues, as partners in the educational process. And this completely changes not just how we see young people, but how we all see education. And because their priority is on ethics, human rights, and justice, the drama of becoming and determining the self, Carol and Elisa remind me of why I chose to become a teacher.”

And she cries.

11 Funk, carimbó, and boi are popular rhythms from the north of Brazil. The second and third rhythms are of rural African and Indigenous origin.



### Good Living

Scrambled eggs, sausage, toast, and baked beans in the Community University of Hong Kong is a far cry from beans, rice, and beef. But for Camylla, it's rain in the desert. She has been struggling with Chinese food for three days—indeed has been unable to hold any food down from the moment she boarded the plane in Dubai.<sup>12</sup> She is not afraid to taste the unknown. In her first international trip, at 15 years old, on a 10-day residency in Medellín, she closed her eyes and put chicharrón and arepas<sup>13</sup> in her mouth, identifying and classifying each taste. She gave brave Afro-dance workshops and received questions from Spanish speakers. It was not just about receiving recognition as a dancer. "I see our project 20 years from now," she said in her community slideshow when we returned to Cabelo Seco. "The arts can transform drug abuse into projects and drug wars into community cooperatives."

Smelling everything before risking to taste it, she astonished our hosts in her first visit to Washington, at 17, spitting out quality vegetarian food, even forcing herself to vomit, before performing her solo "Roots and Antennas" to an international audience at a congress on climate change in memory of Chico Mendes. Camylla shone in the healing warmth of recognition. She was creating international confidence in her hosts to later invite all the young coordinators. And she was performing the humanity of the Amazon, inspiring international solidarity and protection. But she was risking illness and living in a permanent, tense state of distress.

"Why have you chosen dance as your language?" asks Professor Oscar Ho. He smiles at his academic guests from Taiwan and Hong Kong, inviting them with his eyes to join the breakfast conversation. Camylla is keen to find a new answer to a question she has received in so many interviews and roundtables. "I have always been more lucid, more analytical using my body." She pauses and I translate. "I always let others speak." He smiles. "You seem extremely lucid to me." The Taiwan academic and post-doctoral Umbrella Movement<sup>14</sup> activists from Hong Kong are fascinated. The rhythm of translation gives Camylla the opportunity to select her words with great precision. "There's inherited ancestral knowledge, and more lived community intelligence in my body. I mean to say, in my visceral memory."<sup>15</sup>

She checks the new word with me. I'm astonished by her bravery. She has never risked this explanation, even in her reflexive reports. I remember to translate and explain my pause. Camylla picks a piece of chicken from my plate, unaware of the intimacy of her gesture and of its Cabelo Seco community reflex. The Taiwanese academic is enchanted. "What do you mean 'visceral memory'?" Camylla pauses again to reflect. The professor has forgotten to eat. She speaks with clarity and detachment.

"As a child, we went hungry many nights, even days at a time. When my mother came home from partying, drunk, she would beat me till she collapsed, exhausted. She forbade

12 Rivers of Meeting hosts three international residencies and three international collaborations in other continents as part of its artistic and pedagogic formation for and advocacy by its youth performers.

13 Popular and typical Colombian potato-based dishes.

14 The popular university student-led pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong that flourished in 2015–2016.

15 The *deep time* that transfixes survivors of genocide and massacre and is etched into the stare of their descendants (Baron & Alfabetização Cultural, 2004).

me to cry. I even had to thank her. Before the Rivers of Meeting project, I didn't even know I was the descendent of an enslaved African herbal doctor and of a raped Indigenous planter. I carry so many silences in my conscious memory. But these...legacies." She turns to me to confirm the word. "In my experience, it's more precise to research and narrate these legacies through dance."

She gives me space to translate. "They pass from generation to generation, through compulsive emotions,<sup>16</sup> muscular tensions, that bind my chest in knots." The post-doctoral student at the table is making notes. "If they inhabit the body, maybe these legacies can only be transformed through dance. Like massage. Loosening and restructuring history." The Dean smiles. "Remember to eat!"

Camylla is suddenly crying. A respectful silence. I look again at her, still just 21, remembering the emotional and physical falls she has suffered to be here. I'm stunned at what she has learned from the creative research we completed together. Respiration as memory and echoes of undocumented histories. Respiration as narrative, passing through her resilient but marked, aching body. Now I know that the deep massage she received during our research created knowledge. I glimpse how she translates that into her dance performance.

"It's one of my thresholds"—she looks to confirm the word—"I am struggling to cross. I cannot keep any vegetables or unknown tastes down." The tears fall again. "My stomach knots. I feel nausea. But at least in 'Life-Source on Fire,'<sup>17</sup> our new solo, I can show this to my community. And women and children can interpret for themselves. Contemporary dance invites. It doesn't direct."

We return to our rooms to prepare, and then visit the spaces where we will work. Camylla's flu is becoming more bronchial by the hour and threatens to become pneumonia. In the 10 days we spend together, Camylla gives Afro-contemporary workshops and performances of "Life-Source on Fire" to students at the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts and to activists and community arts groups from the Umbrella Movement. Living on chicken soup I find in backstreet restaurants, she sucks every ounce of nutrition from the bones, then grinds them bite by bite into a pulp, which she spits onto the periphery of her plate.

Every morning and night, I bring her lemon, ginger, and garlic tea and revive the massages she received during research into her respiration, and she begins to recover. But when we arrive in New Zealand, her health again becomes fragile. Her workshops and performances for Maori youth activists, and later for students at Auckland University Dance Academy, inspire. But when she is forced to cancel a performance, we face a threshold that cannot be concealed. "We can't lie on stage, amiga," I say. "People believe in what we're proposing. And we cannot fly home. So we need a solution."

"We pass from extreme air-conditioning to humid pollution, every day. My body can't take it, Dan!"

I smile. "You know that's not the whole story. Look at what you do to the bones."

16 In her pedagogic reports on AfroMundi Kids, Camylla analyzes with courage her occasional eruptions of verbal anger and gestural threat when she is tense or impatient. She dramatizes her understanding of the origins of these legacies in her 2015 solo "Life-Source on Fire."

17 "Life-Source on Fire," AfroMundi's third Amazonian contemporary dance piece, first presented in Belém in December 2015, was based on a year of research into Afro-Indigenous histories of Amazonian women.

She smiles, looks down, aware. "I know I'm addicted to foods that fill my belly but leave me weak, as a dancer, as a dance educator, as a person. But it's the only food that stays down."

I have an idea. "These next two weeks, Camylla, you cook for us. Experiment. Taste as you cook. We're in this high-tech apartment. You have a dream kitchen. Take care of yourself. Care for me as I care for you. In exchange, I'll translate you and mediate." She nods and looks down at her mobile. Cabelo Seco is always present.

We're here to research the future of the Amazon, to sensitize everyone we meet about new emerging scientific evidence that Indigenous peoples have known for millennia: that there are huge rivers in the sky<sup>18</sup> that sustain the rains, rivers, and continents of the world. We are here to learn from the most advanced urbanized Indigenous people in the world. But we have stumbled across a simple insight that illuminates many unresolved questions in our project. We prepare people to care for others, but they do not care for themselves. To research the future of Cabelo Seco and the Amazon, we need to research how Camylla will care for herself. I look at Camylla, imagining herself as a student in the School of Dance. She takes care of others by obligation, and in emergencies. "Prepare the lemon, ginger, and garlic tea for us both."

Camylla cuts, experimenting, tasting.

### Moving Forward

Five months later, I read these stories to all the youth coordinators at the wooden table of formation in the kitchen of our Community University of the Rivers. They have been writing an essay on state high-school education in preparation for university entrance exams in November. Free state education is threatened by privatization and cuts to the humanities in the wake of the recent impeachment of President Dilma. Will our university survive this political-juridical coup d'état? They approve the stories and the inclusion of their real names in this article.

This publication may one day just save their lives.

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18 See the TED Talk "There Is a River Above Us," by Dr. Antonio Nobre (National Institute of Space Studies).