Functional and Critical Literacy in *Yo Sí Puedo*
An examination of Cuba’s Literacy Program
Through a Freirean Lens

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Statement of Originality

The thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to the final version of my thesis being made available worldwide when deposited in the University’s Digital Repository, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

Ruth Ratcliffe
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Abstract

The adult literacy program *Yo Sí Puedo* has taught an estimated 5 million people, predominantly although not exclusively in the Global South, to read and write yet remarkably little has been written about these various campaigns. This research draws on the works of Paulo Freire to analyse both the seminal Cuban National Literacy Campaign of 1961 as a significant influence on YSP and the academic literature on contemporary YSP campaigns in 4 diverse settings, Bolivia, Timor Leste, Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia.

A Freirean framework which highlights the inter-relationships between oppression, liberation and education; dialogical and problem posing education and a specific form of conscientization within social struggle is used to analyse the YSP campaigns and draw a number of conclusions regarding how YSP can be characterised in relation both to traditional models of functional literacy and its ability to contribute to a form of critical and transformative literacy.

The unique and uneven contributions of the Cuban revolution to education and international solidarity are considered within the context of the development of ALBA as an alternate pole of international cooperation that potentially offers a path away from various economic and ecological crises.
### List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACSF</td>
<td>Australian Core Skills Framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALBA</td>
<td>Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIA</td>
<td>Central Intelligence Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONFINTEA</td>
<td>International Conference on Adult Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education for All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EWLP</td>
<td>Experimental World Literacy Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLEACE</td>
<td>Latin American Group of Specialists on Literacy and Written Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPLAC</td>
<td>Pedagogical Institute for Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCP</td>
<td>Popular Culture Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SESI</td>
<td>Industrial Social Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWOA</td>
<td>Te Wananga O Aotearoa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>United States (of America)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>Union of Soviet Socialist Republics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YSP</td>
<td>Yo Sí Puedo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YSPS</td>
<td>Yo Sí Puedo Seguir</td>
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