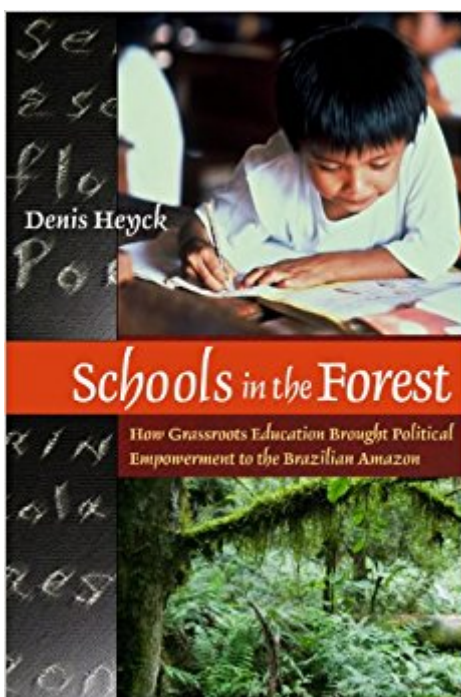


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Schools In The Forest: How Grassroots Education Brought Political Empowerment To The Brazilian



Synopsis

Beginning in the 1960s, the Brazilian government aggressively developed the , opening the rainforests up to ranchers and loggers who began clear-cutting at a rapid pace. The indigenous subsistence farmers already living in these areas either fled to the city or found themselves beholden to rich speculators bent on destroying the very foundation of their livelihoods. From these circumstances arose Projeto Seringueiro (Project Rubber Tapper), a radical educational experiment based on the ideas of Paulo Freire that was initially designed to simply bring literacy to the rubber tappers, but grew into much more by helping them claim their political rights, preserve their cultural heritage and defend their forest habitat. Schools in the Forest narrates the history of Projeto Seringueiro and gives voice to its principal actors. It explains how the rubber tappers and their allies managed to succeed despite ferocious opposition, and the new set of challenges the organization faced after that success. Though the Projeto Seringueiro experience was a unique response to specific circumstances, many of its features were adopted in other parts of the world. The rubber tappers story shows that threatened communities can organize, form alliances and advocate on their own behalf. In the trajectory of empowerment, no tool has been more important than that of literacy.

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Schools in the Forest: How Grassroots Education Brought Political Empowerment to the Brazilian

documents how the Brazilian government aggressively developed the and provides a history of Projeto Seringueiro, a radical educational experiment based on the ideas of Paulo Freire designed to bring literacy to the rubber tappers who were at the mercy of the developers. It provides a history of the project and shows how the rubber tappers succeeded in forming different alliances that benefitted all, and is an invaluable pick for education and Latin American collections alike! --Midwest Book Review

[T]he first half of the book offers a very detailed social, historical, and political backdrop for the personal interviews in the later portion. The reflections and insights by people who played significant roles in ProjetoSeringueiro bring it to life for the reader, and inspire awe at the magnitude of what was accomplished...Flying in the face of current American educational and political trends, Schools in the Forest reminds one of the potentially empowering effects of education on individuals and communities when the voices, needs, and participation of those being educated are actually heard and addressed. Anyone interested in grassroots social organizing or progressive education will certainly find this book well worth their time. --ForeWord

This is a well-written, accessible and inspiring book. Its wealth of interview material, carefully framed within the economic, political, and intellectual history of the past three decades, provides a uniquely detailed grassroots perspective on the empowerment that can come with innovative educational programs, and their important role in the social construction of a strong vision of sustainable development. This is a valuable demonstration of how ideas work in practice, going beyond generalities to portray the nuances, and changing dynamics of grassroots projects. --Marianne Schmink, Latin American Studies and Anthropology, University of Florida

Denis Heyck received her Ph.D. in Latin American Studies from the University of London, Kings College. She is currently a Professor of Spanish Language and Literature in the Modern Languages department at Loyola University Chicago. Her research interests include nonformal education in Latin America, the effects of globalization on traditional cultures in Latin America, the role of civil society in Latin American culture, gender, and development in Latin America, religion in contemporary Latin American culture, and environmental issues in Latin America.

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