



Technical Report

Change Laboratory in Brazil: Origins, development, and dissemination

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Abstract: This article aims to present the trajectory and development of the formative intervention method of the Change Laboratory in Brazil. To this end, a narrative is constructed that articulates the author's direct experience with a systematic review of publications available on the Google Scholar platform. The first publications on the method date from 2011 and 2012, followed by training courses, technical visits and exchanges. After an initial "gestation" period, the first interventions were implemented in 2014. Since then, at least 40 interventions have been carried out in the country, with a predominance in the areas of education, health, agriculture and occupational health surveillance. The analysis of the dissemination of the method among different research groups indicates that its adoption requires at least three key processes: formation, establishment of collaborative networks and creation of a local support group. It is concluded that, in view of the theoretical-methodological complexity of the Change Laboratory, it is essential to strengthen forms of inter- and intra-group research cooperation.

Keywords: Change Laboratory; Formative interventions; Theory of Historical-Cultural Activity; Expansive Learning.

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1. Introduction

Since the first publication in Portuguese (Querol et al., 2011), in 2011, the Change Laboratory has been expanding in Brazil and consolidating itself as a method of formative intervention aimed at promoting collaborative development in organizations.



The Change Laboratory is an intervention methodology that articulates research and development through collaboration between researchers and the subjects of a given activity. Together, they problematize the situation experienced, analyze contradictions, design, implement and evaluate solutions to the identified challenges. Of Finnish origin, the method is based on the Historical-Cultural Theory of Activity and on the principles of materialist dialectics, making use of a series of concepts and theoretical models, such as the principle of double stimulation. This approach has the potential to promote, in a participatory way, transformations in the concept and configuration of activity systems, while contributing to the formation of the participants' transformative agency (Querol, 2011; Querol et al., 2011, 2020; Querol & Seppänen, 2019).

The purpose of this article is to narrate, from my personal experience, conversations with colleagues and a documentary analysis, the history of the insertion and expansion of the Change Laboratory method in Brazil, as well as to share my experiences with its application in the country.

It is important to emphasize that the Activity Theory was already known in Brazil (Damiani, 2006; Engeström, 2002) before the first interventions of the Change Laboratory. I make it clear, therefore, that the focus of this work is the history of the application of the Change Laboratory method, and not the Historical-Cultural Theory of Activity as a whole. From what I was able to ascertain, based on publication records and in contact with colleagues, the negotiations and data collection of the first interventions using the Change Laboratory method took place in 2012 and 2013, with the sessions starting in 2014.

The “gestation” of these interventions in the different research groups certainly has its own histories — as the reader will be able to perceive — but here I present my perspective, with emphasis on the PesquisaAT group, as it was the one in which I worked most intensely and carried out the largest number of interventions. I seek to incorporate, as far as possible, contributions from other groups with which I have collaborated, as well as from groups with which I have had no contact. Based on memory, on reports exchanged by messages with researchers from these collectives and on the literature review, I draw up a list of the formative interventions conducted in Brazil so far.

The literature review was carried out in the Google Scholar database, on 29/07/2025 and 31/07/2025, using, respectively, the descriptors “Laboratório de Mudança” (Change Laboratory in English, in singular) (218 results) and “Laboratório de Mudanças” (Change Laboratories in English, in plural) (122 results) excluding only citations. One of the selection criteria adopted was the explicit presence of a statement indicating that the study conducted an intervention based on the Change Laboratory methodology. Theses, dissertations, scientific articles and publications in annals of events were included.

This work does not aim to present the theoretical basis of CL, as this has already been the subject of other publications (Querol et al., 2011, 2020; Querol & Seppänen, 2019). In fact, some studies have already reported the historical trajectory of the method at the international level (Engeström et al., 1996; Engeström & Sannino, 2021; Querol et al., 2019; Virkkunen et al., 2014a; Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013). However, there is still no specific report on how it was introduced in Brazil, what interventions have already been conducted, and what are the conditions for its use. This work seeks to fill this gap.

My personal motivation for writing this paper is that, by systematizing the trajectory of the Change Laboratory in Brazil, I find a way to visualize the product of my own work. Obviously, I am not the only researcher working in this field, and certainly the CL would have emerged



and developed in Brazil even without my contribution—though perhaps not with the same intensity. Thus, the history of the CL in Brazil is intertwined with my own history: to know one is, to some extent, to know the other.

For the international reader, the trajectory of the CL in Brazil may reveal what was required for the method to take root and evolve in this context. As will become evident, practical efforts such as translation, training, and the organization of events were fundamental for its consolidation and dissemination. With this paper, I hope readers from other countries may learn what can be done to implement and spread the CL in their own contexts.

I hope that this publication can help researchers and research groups interested in the application of the method to develop strategies to form their teams and create a supportive local community.

2. The arrival of the Change Laboratory in Brazil

In 2008, during the *Activity2008* symposium, held in Helsinki, Finland, I met a fellow researcher named José Marçal Jackson Filho from Fundacentro in Rio de Janeiro. At the time, I was in the second year of my PhD at the Center for Research in Activity, Development and Learning (CRADLE), where Yrjö Engeström, Jaakko Virkkunen, Annalisa Sannino and Laura Seppänen were working, among several other researchers. We talked about our work and exchanged contacts.

In 2009, I had my first experience with the Change Laboratory in an intervention in the vegetable production chain in Finland. In collaboration with researcher Irene Vänninen, we conducted an intervention with tomato growers, with the aim of building a new pest control model (Vänninen et al., 2015, 2021).

In 2010, Marçal contacted me by e-mail, informing me that a research group in Brazil, PesquisAT (Research on Occupational Accidents) led by Professor Rodolfo Vilela, from the School of Public Health of the University of São Paulo, was preparing a research project and would probably be interested in activity theory as a theoretical approach. The group sought conceptual articulation between TAHC and the Ergonomics of the Activity, which was already the domain of researchers in the field of interventions in work and health (Vilela et al., 2018).

The group PesquisAT had already at that time expanded its approach to analyzing workplace accidents through Activity Ergonomics, which made it possible to identify organizational factors and develop a broader systemic view of accident causes (Vilela et al. 2018). However, this approach still lacked a theory capable of explaining change: why the system functioned as it did, how problems emerged, and what directions it might take. In addition, many studies remained at the diagnostic level, being presented to companies and then archived, with little transformational impact. Faced with this, the group recognized the need for an interventionist approach, in which analysis and solutions would be developed jointly with the subjects of the activity, in collaboration between researchers, workers, and management.

Parallel to PesquisAT, the Historical-Cultural Theory of Activity and the works of Engeström was already known by several research groups in Brazil, of which I highlight four: that of Profa. Yara Bulgakov, from Positivo University (Paraná); that of Profa. Magda Damiani, from the Federal University of Pelotas (Rio Grande do Sul), Profa. Fernanda Liberali from the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo, and the group of Prof. Cristiano Matos from the University of São Paulo. However, until then, none of them had applied intervention using the CL. In 2011 I met at CRADLE some Brazilian colleagues from these research groups, with whom



I later collaborated and who are currently important contributors in the area of Activity Theory and the Change Laboratory in Brazil: Prof. Marcio Cassandre, André Machado Rodrigues, and Monica Lemos.

In collaboration with Dr. José Marçal and Professor Márcio Cassandre, aiming to introduce the Change Laboratory in Brazil, we published together an article in co-authorship with entitled *Change Laboratory: a methodological proposal for research and development of learning* (Querol et al., 2011). This is the first record of the presentation of the Change Laboratory in Portuguese that I am aware of.

In 2011, we started a series of publications with colleagues, which were later published to meet the need for material in Portuguese about the Change Laboratory. Among them, two interviews stand out: one with Professor Yrjö Engeström (Lemos et al., 2013) and another with Professor Virkkunen (Virkkunen et al., 2014b) in addition to the translation of key texts by Engeström (Engeström, 2001, 2016) and to discussions on theoretical contributions (M. Cassandre & Pereira-Querol, 2014; Querol et al., 2014).

Also in 2011, during a trip to São Paulo, I gave a lecture at the School of Public Health, in which I presented the Change Laboratory. We also promoted seminars aimed at disseminating the method to Brazilian researchers in Occupational Health, which aroused great interest. Under the coordination of Prof. Rodolfo Vilela, we were able to complete the elaboration of a project, which was submitted to the Foundation for Research Support of the State of São Paulo (FAPESP) and approved with the title “*Occupational accident: from sociotechnical analysis to the social construction of change*” (FAPESP nº 2012/04721-1), effective from 2013 to 2019 (Vilela et al., 2019). The project’s proposal was to use CL as the main methodological tool to support research and development, with a focus on preventing occupational accidents and improving workers’ health.

3. Training and the exchange of experiences (2012 and 2013)

In October 2011, I defended my PhD thesis on Learning Challenges for Sustainability (Querol, 2011). In June 2012 I returned to Brazil and started a more intense collaboration with the PesquisaAT group and with Marcio Cassandre. In July 2012, I was invited to go to Piracicaba, São Paulo, to give a lecture about the Change Laboratory to a group of professionals from the Reference Center for Workers’ Health (CEREST) in Piracicaba. Instead of giving a traditional lecture, I decided to hold a mini session of the CL, in which we sought to analyze the activity system historically and formulate hypotheses of contradictions. The group appreciated the approach, which would culminate in the implementation of a more extensive CL intervention in 2014.

To train PesquisaAT researchers and professionals interested in the implementation of the Change Laboratory, in September 2012 a course on Change Laboratory was held in collaboration with the University of Helsinki. To teach it, we invited my thesis supervisor, Professor Jaakko Virkkunen, one of the main developers of the method. The course was conducted at the School of Public Health of the University of São Paulo (FSP-USP), and focused on the presentation of the theoretical-conceptual foundations and examples of interventions already carried out. The methodology adopted was predominantly expository, which generated learning difficulties for the participants, due to the absence of practical activities and experiences with the application of the method.

During the course, the participants were divided into three groups, and each group was responsible for planning the pilot of an intervention. In all, three pilot projects were developed:



one in the activity of Occupational Health Surveillance, one at the Hospital das Clínicas of USP and another at the USP School Health Center.

After the course, between 2012 and 2013, three members of the PesquisaAT group — Prof. Ildeberto Almeida (2012), Prof. Rodolfo Vilela (2013) and the then doctoral student Manoela Lopes (2013) — participated in an exchange at the University of Helsinki, Finland. During the period, they also participated in *the Summer School on Activity Theory and the Change Laboratory*, organized by the university. During the visit the researchers visited the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health and CRADLE.

In 2013, Prof. Jaakko Virkkunen published a fundamental book that systematizes the Change Laboratory method, addressing its philosophical and theoretical foundations, as well as the step-by-step application of its application (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013). As soon as the work was launched, we started its translation into Portuguese at PesquisaAT, which was published in 2015 (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2015).

In 2013, I started my postdoctoral studies at the Federal University of Paraná, with a project aimed at the formation of concepts for solid waste management in the State of Paraná. During this period, I presented the Change Laboratory method in a seminar that was attended by, among other participants, two managers from the University Hospital (HU) of Maringá. After a brief conversation and exchange of contacts, the idea of applying the method at the institution came up. At the time, I contacted Professor Cassandre and presented him with the proposal, which was received with enthusiasm.

In September 2013, we began the process of negotiation and data collection for the intervention at the UH of Maringá. I went to Maringá to give a lecture to HU professionals interested in participating in the intervention. The preparatory meetings continued under the coordination of Prof. Cassandre, with the support of Profa. Carine Senger, until 2014, when the Change Laboratory sessions finally began.

In 2014, during my postdoctoral studies in Curitiba (PR), I met Prof. Manoel Lesama, from the research group “Socioeconomics and Local Knowledge”, at the Federal University of Paraná, who worked with research in agroecology and agroforestry systems. From this meeting, I was invited to give a lecture on Activity Theory and the Change Laboratory to his research group. The presentation aroused the interest of the participants, who began to explore possibilities of applying these references in the studies developed by the students — which resulted in the implementation of two interventions.

In 2015, a course was offered again at FSP-USP with Professor Jaakko Virkkunen, with the collaboration of visiting researcher Laura Seppänen. In this second edition, the course proposal was expanded, incorporating both theoretical foundations and the analysis of real cases of ongoing intervention, and also included the performance of preparatory tasks by the participants.

In 2015, two Brazilian researchers, Manoela Lopes from the Occupational Accident Research Group (PesquisAT) and Adriane Cenci from Education and Historical-Cultural Psychology (EPHC), did an exchange at CRADLE, Finland through a sandwich doctorate under the supervision of Professor Emeritus Yrjö Engeström, with the aim of obtaining support in the analysis of the data from their interventions.

From the end of September 2015 to mid-January 2016, for four months, the PesquisaAT group received the visit of the researcher from the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, my co-advisor Dr. Laura Seppänen at the Faculty of Public Health. The purpose of the visit was to facilitate the transfer of knowledge about the method. To this end, we obtained funds from



FAPESP, in the visiting researcher modality. During her stay, Dr. Seppänen assisted Brazilian researchers in conducting different projects with the Change Laboratory. In addition, he led study seminars on the method for the PesquisaAT group and collaborated in coordinating the submission of research results.

As of October 2016, the PesquisaAT group designed and implemented the first Brazilian edition of the course on CL offered at FSP-USP, adjusted to the national context and the specific demands of the group. The workload was increased and we formed a team of instructors. The construction of the discipline was carried out collaboratively between the teachers and instructors involved, with openness to the learning needs expressed by the students. This format enabled a continuous evaluation of the process by all participants, allowing adjustments throughout the development of the course. This discipline model was reapplied in 2018 and 2019.

In 2017 another course was offered with Professors Emeritus Reijo Miettinen and Jaakko Virkkunen from CRADLE. Professor Reijo taught the conceptual part in the format of seminars and debates, and the planning and conducting of the interventions was coordinated by professors Jaakko and Laura, using as a method case discussions in subgroups enriched by the presence of participants from the ongoing Change Laboratorys.

In 2019, based on the discussions on the lessons learned from the thematic project, the PesquisaAT group highlighted the need to expand the solutions developed and to sustain, in the long term, the learning process (Vilela et al., 2020). That same year, FAPESP launched, in partnership with the French National Research Agency, a call for proposals for collaborative research between the two countries. Envisioning the collaboration with French researchers, the PesquisaAT group began the construction of a new initiative with researchers from the National Conservatory of Arts and Crafts (in French: Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers - CNAM), giving rise to the project Innovation and Transformation of the Activity of Prevention of Occupational Risks (ITAPAR).

As of 2020, the courses on the Change Laboratory, organized by the PesquisaAT group, began to be offered exclusively by Brazilian professors, maintaining the format started in 2016, but with an interinstitutional structure. Classes started to be held online and had the participation of professors from different universities, with each meeting conducted by a professor from a different institution. This strategy sought to strengthen two main aspects: (1) to ensure greater continuity to the discipline, avoiding dependence on only one or two professors; and (2) to promote the engagement, learning and involvement of other teachers, considering that, in order to teach the method, it is necessary to understand it deeply. Since then, the courses have been offered in this collaborative format. For bureaucratic reasons, in the last two years (2024 and 2025), the discipline was no longer linked to the FSP-USP graduate program and started to be offered by UNESP, which offers greater flexibility for interinstitutional disciplines.

In the other groups, MEDIATA and EPHC, the process of training the researchers in the method took place through readings, study groups and individualized tutoring during the exchanges. In the MEDIATA group, for example, researchers meet periodically to read, discuss cases and exchange experiences.

4. CL interventions in Brazil

A total of 40 interventions (Table 1) were identified and conducted by different research groups. The first ones occurred in 2014, in a relatively parallel manner, in three distinct groups: PesquisaAT, MEDIATA, and EPHC. Most of the interventions were carried out in the areas of education (35%), health (20%), agriculture (10%) and labor surveillance (7%).



Although negotiations and data collection for the first interventions with the Change Laboratory method began in 2012 and 2013, the sessions themselves did not begin until 2014. Among them, the following stand out: intervention in the solid waste management activity (M. P. Cassandre et al., 2018; Paniza, 2016), the intervention related to the construction of an airport (Lopes et al., 2018a, 2018b), one in the occupational health surveillance of CEREST Piracicaba (Cervený et al., 2020; Vilela et al., 2018) and one in basic education with the aim of promoting the inclusion of students with disabilities (Cenci, 2016; Cenci et al., 2019, 2020).

The latter described by Cenci (Cenci, 2016) was carried out by the research group Education and Historical-Cultural Psychology (EPHC), coordinated by Professor Magda Damiani, from the Federal University of Pelotas. The intervention with solid waste management at the HU of Maringá was conducted by Prof. Cassandre, who later created the research group MEDIATA.

Among the CLs carried out in 2014, the one conducted at CEREST in Piracicaba stands out, whose proposal was not limited to the experimentation of a new approach, but aimed at the adoption of an innovative methodology of intervention in companies. This methodology sought to overcome the traditional logic centered on recommendations and sanctions, promoting transformations in production and organizational processes through the active participation of internal actors in companies. The experience resulted in a paradigmatic change in the way the occupational health surveillance service operates, signaling an inflection towards more participatory and transformative practices (Vilela et al., 2018).

From 2015 onwards, the number of interventions begins to increase. Among them, an elementary school (Avellar, 2017; Silva-Macaia et al., 2019), one in rural credit activity (Picinatto, 2017); in higher education (Vilas-Boas et al., 2020) and at a School Health Center (S. V. Costa et al., 2018).

Between 2016, several interventions were carried out, including in the reintegration activities of adolescents in conflict with the law (Morgado, 2023), in metropolitan transport (Lopes et al., 2020), in the hemodialysis service (Masiero et al., 2020), in the fight against child labour (Donatelli, 2019), in the health service network (Guidi Junior, 2018; Silva-Macaia et al., 2020); and another in the management of an association of agroforestry producers (Francisco Junior, 2018; Francisco-Junior et al., 2023).

Among the interventions carried out in 2016, I highlight here the one carried out in the railway transport activity (Lopes et al., 2020) by researcher Manoela Lopes. This Change Laboratory resulted in a series of innovations, including the combination of the method with the Accident Prevention Analysis Model (MAPA), the use of training workshops and the formation of collaborative planning groups for the sessions. Among these innovations, the holding of training workshops stands out, which played a fundamental role in the training of the intervention participants regarding the concepts involved, which contributed to a more qualified use of these references in subsequent sessions.

Between 2017 and 2019, several interventions were conducted applying the Change Laboratory method in different sectors. In 2017, the initiatives in the areas of public cleaning stand out (Bobadilha, 2020; Coluci et al., 2020) and childbirth and maternity care (conducted by the Gender, Maternity and Health group – GEMAS, (Diniz et al., 2021; Niy & Diniz, 2023) higher education (Santos, 2017).

The following year, in 2018, there were interventions in Social Security (Tessarro; Kerol; Almeida, 2022), in business management (Palongan et al., 2019) and in the fight against endemic diseases (Paulino, 2021), elementary school (Cruz, 2020). In 2019, actions aimed at



valuing coffee were carried out in a cooperative in the north of Paraná (Leite, 2020), in the qualification of Primary Health Care (Bezerra, 2022), youth and adult education (Dias, 2021).

In 2020, due to the agglomeration restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, interventions with the Change Laboratory method had to be rethought. Many were postponed or canceled, and those that occurred during this period were mostly held online. Among the interventions conducted in this context, actions in basic education aimed at children with special needs stand out (from the Study and Research Group on Inclusive Education from Vygotski - GEPEIVyg; (Gomes, 2022), at the Prosecutor's Office for Children and Youth (Grecco, 2023), in coffee production (Senger, 2022) and in the prevention of deaths from occupational accidents (Moriyama et al., 2022), elementary school (De Matos Oliveira; by Loiola Araújo, 2024).

In 2021, with the relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions, CL interventions will return to face-to-face. In 2021, an intervention was carried out in the international cooperation activity (M. P. Cassandre et al., 2024), in a collective of women researchers (Pontes, 2022), Elementary School (Betty, 2023). In 2022, interventions were carried out in the public security activity of the Military Police of Santa Catarina (Schüler, 2024; Zanotti, 2024), Health Service for Alcohol and Other Drug Users (S. L. B. Hurtado et al., 2024), Hospital Management (Ferreira et al., 2024) and in elementary education (from the Research Group on Practices and Training for Teaching – GPDOC; (A. M. Costa & Powaczuk, 2024).

In 2023, an intervention was conducted in the inclusive primary education activity (Morais, 2024) (Morais, 2024), higher education (Postiglione et al., 2025) Occupational Accident Surveillance (S. B. Hurtado, Em prelo), oil union activity (Takahashi et al., 2024). Probably, other interventions were implemented in 2024 and 2025; However, due to the time required for analysis and publication, these experiences should only become known soon.


Table 1: Interventions with the Change Laboratory method conducted in Brazil, from the first in 2014 to the present.

Date	Activity	Sector	Institution	Local	Research group	Refs.
2014	Occupational Health Surveillance	Occupational health	Reference Center for Workers' Health	Piracicaba, SP	SearchAT	(Cervený et al., 2020; Vilela et al., 2018)
2014	Elementary School	Education	Elementary School	Pelotas-RS	EPHC	(Cenci, 2016; Cenci et al., 2019)
2014	Construction	Infrastructure	Viracopos Airport	Campinas, SP	SearchAT	(Lopes et al., 2018a, 2018b)
2014	Solid Waste Management	Environment	University Hospital of Maringá	Maringá, PR	MEDIATE	(M. P. Cassandre et al., 2018)
2015	Rural Credit	Agriculture	UNICAFES Cooperatives	Southwest of PR	Socioeconomics and Local Knowledge	(Picinatto, 2017)
2015	Health Service	Health	USP School Health Center	São Paulo, SP	SearchAT	(S. V. Costa et al., 2018)
2015	Elementary School	Education	Metropolitan School	RMSP	SearchAT	(Avellar, 2017; Silva-Macaia et al., 2019)
2015	Higher Education in Medicine	Education	Federal University of Pelotas	Pelotas-RS	EPHC	(Vilas-Boas et al., 2020)
2016	Prevention of child labor	Justice and Rights	COMETIL	Limeira, SP	SearchAT	(Donatelli, 2019)
2016	Hemodialysis Service	Health	University Hospital	State of SP	SearchAT	(Masiero et al., 2020)
2016	Management of an Agroforestry Association	Agriculture	Morretes Ecological Agroforestry Association	Matinhos, PR	Socioeconomics and Local Knowledge	(Francisco Junior, 2018; Francisco-Junior et al., 2023)
2016-2017	Reintegration of adolescents in conflict with the law	Social assistance	Casa Foundation	Campinas, SP	SearchAT	(Morgado, 2023)
2016-2018	Health services	Health	Work Accident Care Network	Piracicaba, SP	SearchAT	(Guidi Junior, 2018; Silva-Macaia et al., 2020)



2017	Rail transport	Transport	Metropolitan transport company	São Paulo, SP	SearchAT	(Lopes et al., 2020)
2017	Public Cleaning	Education	Public Cleaning Company	Interior of SP	SearchAT	(Bobadilha, 2020; Coluci et al., 2020)
2017	Higher education	Education	Public Institution of Higher Education	N/A	MEDIATE	(Santos, 2017)
2017	Childbirth and maternity care	Health	Maternity of São Paulo	São Paulo, SP	GEMS	(Diniz et al., 2021; Niy & Diniz, 2023)
2018	Company management	Administration	Cosmetics Company	N/A	MEDIATE	(Palongan et al., 2019)
2018	Control of Endemic Diseases	Health	SINDSEP-SP	São Paulo	SearchAT	(Paulino, 2021)
2018	Social security	Social assistance	INSS	Jaú, SP	SearchAT	(Tessarro et al., 2022)
2019	Elementary School	Education	Public School in the Municipality of Osasco	Osasco, SP	N/A	(Cruz, 2020)
2019	Primary Health Care	Health	Basic Health Unit	Parnaíba, PI	SearchAT	(Bezerra, 2022)
2019	Youth and Adult Education	Education	Public Networks in the State of Paraíba	Online	N/A	(Dias, 2021)
2019	Coffee Production	Agriculture	Cooperative of Coffee Growers of Northern Paraná	Tomazina-PR	MEDIATE	(Leite, 2020)
2020	Coffee Production	Agriculture	Matão Community Center	Tomazina-PR	MEDIATE	(Senger, 2022)
2020	Child and Youth Justice Prosecutor's Office	Justice and Rights	São Paulo State Public Prosecutor's Office	São Paulo, SP (online)	ITAPAR	(Grecco, 2023)
2020	Prevention of Deaths from Occupational Accidents	Occupational health	SUS, VISAT and CEREST	Online	ITAPAR	(Moriyama et al., 2022)
2020	Elementary Education	Education	Elementary School	Contagem, MG Online	N/A	(Oliveira & Araújo, 2024)
2020	Special Elementary Education	Education	State School	Natal, RN (online)	GEPEIVyg	(Gomes, 2022)



2021	International cooperation	Education	State University of Londrina	Londrina, PR	MEDIATE	(M. P. Cassandre et al., 2024)
2021	Elementary Education	Education	Elementary School	Limeira, SP	ITAPAR	(Betty, 2023)
2021	Social Movement	Civil society	Collective of Women Researchers in Administration (COMPA)	Online	MEDIATE	(Pontes, 2022)
2022	Hospital Management	Health	University Hospital	N/A	ITAPAR	(Ferreira et al., 2024)
2022	Health Service	Health	Health Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Users	Botucatu, SP	ITAPAR	(S. L. B. Hurtado et al., 2024)
2022	Public Safety	Safety	Military Police of Santa Catarina	N/A	ITAPAR	(Schüler, 2024; Zanotti, 2024)
2022	Elementary Education	Education	Elementary School	Santa Maria, RS	GPDOC	(A. M. Costa & Powaczuk, 2024)
2023	Occupational Accident Surveillance	Occupational health	CEREST, Companies and Unions	Piracicaba, SP	ITAPAR	(Hurtado, in press)
2023	Ensino Fund. Special	Education	Elementary School I	Natal, RN	GEPEIVyg	(Morais, 2024)
2023	Oil unionism	Civil society	Oil Workers Union - SINDIPETRO	São Paulo coast	ITAPAR	(Takahashi et al., 2024)
2023	Higher education	Education	Federal Public University	St. Maria, RS	N/A	(Postiglione et al., 2025)



5. Discussion

The article aims to answer the questions: How many and which CL interventions were conducted? What conditions allowed the emergence and diffusion of CL in Brazil?

The historical analysis of the emergence and expansion of the Change Laboratory in different research groups in Brazil indicates that, even before the beginning of negotiations and data collection, there is a previous period of “gestation”. This gestation process seems to follow a recurring pattern, usually composed of three main stages:

1. Formation of teams of interventional researchers;
2. Establishment of networks with external communities (networking);
3. Building a local community of practice.

Training can take place in a variety of ways: through participation in formal courses (such as MOOCs, summer courses, or academic courses) or in a more artisanal and individual way, such as self-reading, access to videos, and small group discussions. Another way, although less common, is the insertion in interventions already in progress, which allows direct learning in practice.

Given the strong theoretical basis of the CL, this training requires specialized support material, such as texts, videos, and case studies. These materials often need to be translated and adapted to the local cultural context—including language, vocabulary, and specific practices—in order to become effectively applicable.

Networking plays a key role in this process, functioning as a technical and conceptual support network. It can be achieved through participation in events, academic exchanges, visits by researchers or individual meetings. This external contact contributes significantly to the transfer of knowledge, in addition to offering support at key moments such as the negotiation, analysis and planning of interventions. This becomes even more relevant in view of the theoretical complexity involved in conducting a CL.

In parallel with training and networking, local discussion and support groups are beginning to form. As this local community consolidates, the dependence on international exchange tends to decrease, and external networking starts to play a role more focused on the continuous updating and deepening of knowledge.

In the case of the PesquisaAT research group, due to the large number of researchers involved, the training process was institutionalized through disciplines, which were initially organized by external professors and over time began to be conducted by the team itself. In other groups, the training process seems to remain more artisanal, through periodic group discussions and individualized tutoring.

The historical trajectory of CL in Brazil suggests the emergence of local subcommunities composed of senior researchers and students with different levels of specialization, who articulate with broader networks through connections with external researchers, seeking validation, advice, and methodological support. Tools such as videos and translations expand access to training content, while online courses, MOOCs and summer schools contribute to a more structured training. In addition, innovations promoted by our group, such as monthly seminars, an annual course dedicated to the method and the possibility of learning by participating in other CLs, strengthen the learning processes and favor the qualified multiplication of this approach in different territories and themes.



This process of supporting local communities is recognized and conceptualized as learning platforms Lopes and colleagues (Lopes et al., 2021). These platforms are understood as systems of intermediate activities, in which participants have another activity as their object of action. Examples of these platforms include the method training process, intervention planning meetings, among others. These platforms prove to be an important learning strategy.

6. Conceptual and practical challenges

During the adoption and implementation of the Change Laboratory in Brazil both conceptual and practical challenges emerged, affecting researchers and participants alike. Among the conceptual challenges, two proved particularly complex: the concepts of object and contradiction.

In activity theory, the concept of object is dual in nature: it refers simultaneously to the raw material or initial problem situation to be transformed and to the envisioned outcome, the desired future (Miettinen, 2005). Many members of the groups struggled to grasp this duality, which makes identifying the object of the activity a lengthy and demanding process within interventions.

The concept of contradiction also poses difficulties, not only for novice researchers but even for more experienced ones. It is often interpreted as a synonym for conflict, barrier, or lack of something; however, in the dialectical sense, a contradiction refers to opposing internal forces that coexist within an element or system and drive its development (Vilela et al., 2020).

In my view, the root of this difficulty lies in the fact that fully understanding these two concepts requires dialectical thinking, particularly grounded in two principles: the principle of internal relations and the principle of contradiction as the driving force of development. For those unaccustomed to this type of reasoning, it can be challenging to recognize the dual aspect of the object and to accept contradiction as a permanent and structural feature of reality. Assimilating and applying such logic demands time and practice.

In addition, two practical challenges were particularly relevant. The first relates to the specific object of occupational health and accident prevention during the negotiation of interventions. Accident prevention does not always appear attractive to management, which requires greater negotiation efforts and the construction of demand.

The second is linked to the strong hierarchical culture in Brazil, which is far more pronounced than in Nordic countries. In Brazilian organizations, there is a rigid division of labor regarding innovation and development: management is responsible for planning and decision-making, while workers are restricted to task execution. This culture limits workers' active participation in transformation processes and can generate resistance from management. Therefore, it is necessary to address this issue explicitly with management before initiating the sessions. In some cases, communication problems between workers and management are so severe that parallel sessions are required until a sufficient level of learning and trust is established.

7. Final thoughts

Given the theoretical complexity involved, the implementation of a Change Laboratory requires a careful process of training and specialized support. To accelerate its diffusion in Brazil, it would be essential to have a national coordination that would facilitate this process of "gestation". This could be done through the provision of structured courses, teaching materials



adapted to local conditions — such as videos, practical guides and translated texts — and spaces for continuing education.

In addition, strengthening networking between researchers and professionals who work with CLs is essential. The exchange of experiences and technical and methodological support between groups can expand the reach and quality of interventions.

In this sense, it is proposed the creation of a national network of researchers involved with Change Laboratories, with the objective of articulating efforts, sharing knowledge and promoting the consolidation of this approach in different Brazilian contexts.

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