


INDIGENOUS VOICES, ANCESTRAL KNOWLEDGE: A UNIVERSITY FESTIVAL AS A PLATFORM FOR INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

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ABSTRACT

The ongoing project, *Indigenous Cultural Festival at the University: Roots and Land* aims to promote the appreciation and preservation of indigenous cultural diversity, integrating academic experiences of indigenous and non-indigenous students with the cultural expressions of some indigenous communities in southeastern Pará. With objectives such as celebrating cultural manifestations, raising awareness about the contributions of indigenous peoples, promoting intercultural actions and aligning with SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals – UN) 4 and 10, the initiative highlights the importance of inclusion and intercultural dialogue in the university environment. In an Amazonian context, where indigenous identities play a central role in cultural plurality. The festival reinforces the transformative role of education in building a more equitable and sustainable society. The proposal also highlights the public university's commitment to social responsibility, inclusion and justice, aligning with the global goals of the 2030 Agenda. Thus, the festival consolidates itself as a practice that celebrates cultural richness while promoting social and academic transformation.

Keywords: Applied linguistics. Intercultural education. Cultural identity. Festival. Inclusion.

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INTRODUCTION

The public university is a plural and diverse space, which reflects the multiple cultures, knowledge and experiences that make up Brazil. In the context of the Brazilian Amazon, this diversity takes on an even more striking dimension, especially due to the significant presence of indigenous students, who bring with them a cultural heritage deeply rooted in the traditions and ways of life of their peoples.

In this scenario, the extension project *Indigenous Cultural Festival at the University: Roots and Land* emerges as a strategic initiative to value, preserve and promote indigenous cultural wealth in the academic environment. By bringing to the academic environment the ancestral knowledge of native peoples. The festival contributes to the decolonization of knowledge and to the construction of a more plural cultural identity. In addition, the event seeks to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for indigenous students, providing them with a space where they can connect with their roots and feel part of the academic community naturally. The holding of festivals, cultural exhibitions and other activities that value indigenous cultures contributes to the visibility and strengthening of communities.

Based on the principles of inclusion, interculturality and social responsibility of the public university, the festival is not limited to being a space for cultural celebration. It aims to raise awareness in the academic and external community about the struggles, knowledge and contributions of indigenous peoples to Brazilian society. Through artistic presentations, conversation circles, exhibitions and workshops, the event fosters the recognition of indigenous cultural richness while stimulating a more equitable and respectful university coexistence.

In addition, the festival aligns with the university's commitments to the UN 2030 Agenda, especially Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4 (Quality Education) and 10 (Reduction of Inequalities). In this way, the transformative role of education in the construction of a more just and inclusive society is reaffirmed.

This initiative highlights indigenous protagonism and reiterates that academic knowledge is enriched by dialoguing with traditional practices and knowledge. Thus, the festival transforms the university into a space for symbolic exchanges, strengthening both students and the community that surrounds it.

SDG 4: QUALITY EDUCATION

SDG 4 aims to ensure inclusive, equitable and quality education, promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. In the context of the project, this means:

- Create a university environment that recognizes and values indigenous cultures as an essential part of the plurality of knowledge.
- To offer a space for indigenous students to share their traditions and knowledge, promoting intercultural learning.
- Strengthen the academic training of these students through activities that integrate their cultural identities into the university context, reducing barriers that may hinder their full development.

SDG 10: REDUCING INEQUALITIES

SDG 10 seeks to reduce inequalities within and between countries, promoting the social, economic, and political inclusion of all, regardless of origin, ethnicity, or condition. The project contributes to this objective by:

- Promote recognition of the contributions of indigenous peoples and combat prejudices and stigmas that often marginalize these groups.
- Create an inclusive space that respects and celebrates cultural diversity, ensuring that indigenous students have an active voice and are protagonists in their educational trajectories.
- Reinforce the public university's commitment to equity, offering opportunities for integration and appreciation for historically underrepresented students.

EXPECTED IMPACT ON THE PROJECT

Aligning with SDGs 4 and 10 means that the Indigenous Cultural Festival at the University: Roots and Land will not only be a celebration event, but also a strategic action to transform the university into a more equitable and respectful space. Thus, the project will contribute to the construction of an education that is truly inclusive, while strengthening the struggle to reduce the inequalities that affect indigenous peoples.

RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT

By expanding the idea of the project, we address complementary aspects that reinforce the relevance of the project, such as the following:

Connection with Public Inclusion Policies

The project is aligned with public policies that aim to expand the access and permanence of indigenous students in higher education, recognizing that inclusion is not limited to offering vacancies, but demands strategies that promote cultural

representativeness and the appreciation of diversity. In particular, programs such as the National Education Plan (PNE) and affirmative action for indigenous people find an echo in the proposals of projects such as this festival.

In recent years, Brazil has advanced in public policies aimed at the inclusion of indigenous students in higher education, such as ethnic-racial quotas and academic permanence programs. However, these mechanisms face challenges to go beyond access and ensure effective conditions of permanence. Initiatives such as the cultural festival complement these policies by providing an environment in which indigenous students feel valued and supported. In addition, these actions reinforce the university's commitment to the democratization of education, expanding the possibilities of permanence with dignity.

Strengthening Indigenous Identity and Protagonism

By creating a space where indigenous students can share their cultural expressions, the festival contributes directly to the strengthening of their identities and their protagonism in the university environment. This protagonism is essential for the deconstruction of stereotypes and prejudices, in addition to being an opportunity for these students to resignify their presence in historically excluding spaces.

Many indigenous students face difficulties in reconciling the demands of the academic environment with their cultural and community responsibilities. The festival acts as a space for them to express their traditions and share their knowledge, enabling the resignification of their identities in a university context. This protagonism is crucial to combat prejudice and strengthen self-esteem, promoting a positive view of the role of indigenous peoples in contemporary society.

Interculturality as an Educational Principle

The interculturality proposed by the festival is not only a cultural element, but a pedagogical strategy that enriches the training of all students at the university. By promoting the exchange of knowledge between cultures, the university fulfills its function of being a dialogical and inclusive space, essential to form critical citizens committed to diversity and equity.

Interculturality goes beyond the recognition of diversity; It is about promoting respectful and enriching interactions between different cultures. In the context of the festival, it manifests itself not only in the artistic and cultural presentations, but also in the dialogues and reflections that emerge during the event. This practice contributes to an

education that values multiple perspectives and prepares students to act in a globalized world, without losing sight of the local context and cultural specificities.

Impact on the Academic and External Community

In addition to the direct impacts on indigenous students, the project contributes to raising awareness in the academic community as a whole, promoting respect and empathy in relation to cultural differences. This effect transcends the walls of the university, generating reflections and changes that can influence institutional policies, pedagogical practices and extension actions in other regions.

Relationship with Cultural Sustainability

Culture is an essential element of sustainability, especially in regions such as the Amazon, where indigenous peoples play a central role in environmental conservation and maintaining sustainable livelihoods. The festival, by giving visibility to these cultures, reinforces the idea that respect and appreciation of indigenous peoples are inseparable from the sustainable development of the region.

The preservation of indigenous cultures is essential for cultural and environmental sustainability, especially in the Amazon. Indigenous peoples not only carry ancestral knowledge about biodiversity, but also practices of sustainable coexistence with nature. The festival is an opportunity to sensitize the academic community to these connections and highlight how indigenous knowledge can contribute to innovative solutions in areas such as ecology, health, and education.

Integration of Traditional and Academic Knowledge

The project is also an opportunity to integrate traditional and academic knowledge, breaking with the dichotomy that often places this knowledge in opposition. Workshops and debates held during the festival can create bridges between these forms of knowledge, opening space for collaborative research and innovations based on ancestral wisdom.

The festival can incorporate activities such as conversation circles with indigenous leaders, workshops on native languages or demonstrations of traditional practices, promoting a genuine interaction between academic and traditional knowledge. This approach creates new possibilities for research and pedagogical practices, helping the university to become a more inclusive space for different forms of knowledge. In addition, it demonstrates that science and tradition are not competitors, but complementary.

PROPOSAL FOR DEVELOPMENTS

The Festival is not just an event, but a concrete manifestation of the university's commitment to building a more inclusive, respectful and sustainable future. Through initiatives such as this, it is reaffirmed that the university is, above all, a space to welcome, dialogue and transform realities, honoring the cultural richness of our society and projecting it as a common good for the next generations.

If the festival is to be successful, it can serve as a pilot project for other Brazilian universities. The lessons learned from its realization could be documented and shared, expanding the repercussion of this initiative. It would also be possible to create partnerships with public and private institutions to finance and continue similar programs, consolidating cultural appreciation as part of the academic routine.

In addition to strengthening access and permanence policies, the festival can dialogue directly with initiatives such as the Permanence Scholarship Program (PBP), which aims to financially support indigenous and quilombola students. The event, by integrating academic and cultural activities, can be presented as a good practice to justify the expansion of investments in these programs. In addition, it shows that the university not only welcomes indigenous students, but also recognizes their intellectual and cultural contribution as central to the construction of knowledge. Articulation with community leaders: Bring representatives of indigenous villages or communities to dialogue about how the university can become a more welcoming space and connected with indigenous realities.

Next, we will see how the idea will be based when we present the reference and then the initial methodology.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The project is part of the scope of Applied Linguistics, a field that seeks to apply the theoretical knowledge of linguistics to real situations, finding fertile ground in the urgent need to preserve indigenous languages at risk of extinction. The conservation of these languages is not only a linguistic issue, but also an ethical and cultural imperative that involves identity, ancestral knowledge and the very survival of entire communities.

INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION: A FUNDAMENTAL PILLAR

Intercultural Education, as advocated by authors such as Candau and Fleury, plays a crucial role in this process. By promoting dialogue between cultures, intercultural education values cultural linguistic diversity, deconstructing prejudices and stereotypes.

In addition, authors such as Jean-Paul Bronckart whose studies on discourse analysis and semiotic mediation are fundamental to understanding how languages are used in specific social and cultural contexts; Telma Ferraz Almeida, whose work highlights the importance of language as a tool for the construction of identities and cultural resistance; Vera Candau, who advocates for intercultural education that values diversity and promotes social justice; Reinaldo Matias Fleury, who addresses the challenges of intercultural education in Brazil, emphasizing the need for a school that respects cultural and linguistic diversity; Maria da Conceição Gomes de Oliveira Gohn, whose studies on non-formal education and social movements contribute to the understanding of the importance of community participation in the preservation of indigenous cultures, in addition to the United Nations (UN) that defends the importance of cultural and linguistic diversity and promotes policies for the preservation of indigenous languages, bring, among others, important contributions that we seek to support this project.

The preservation of cultural diversity and the appreciation of traditional knowledge in the academic sphere have been widely discussed by scholars who highlight the importance of intercultural approaches in education. According to Walsh (2009), "interculturality goes beyond a simple coexistence between different cultures; it is a critical process that seeks social justice and the recognition of the epistemologies of historically marginalized groups." In this sense, the Indigenous Cultural Festival at the University: Roots and Land is aligned with proposals that aim to integrate academic and traditional knowledge in an equitable way.

The relationship between territory and identity is central to understanding indigenous culture. For Almeida (2010), "indigenous peoples not only inhabit the land; they are part of it, and their cultural practices are deeply rooted in the territory they occupy." This aspect is fundamental to understand how indigenous identity is manifested and strengthened in spaces that respect and promote their relationship with the land, as the festival proposes. According to Haesbaert (2014), the territory is not only a physical space, but a sociocultural construct, being essential for the consolidation of identity practices.

Another relevant aspect is the importance of educational spaces that promote interculturality. According to Fleury (2003), "intercultural education is not only a path to respect diversity, but also a strategy to transform unequal power relations". The festival, by creating spaces for dialogue and cultural exchange, contributes directly to this transformation. In addition, Candau (2008) reinforces that interculturality should be understood as a guiding principle of pedagogical practices, being essential to promote respectful coexistence and equity.

In the context of Brazilian public universities, the presence of indigenous students is an important milestone of social inclusion and recognition of diversity. According to Silva (2015), "the implementation of quotas and permanence policies is a crucial step, but insufficient if there are no initiatives that promote cultural appreciation and the strengthening of indigenous identities". In this sense, the Indigenous Cultural Festival represents an innovative practice that seeks to fill this gap. Initiatives such as this are in line with the studies of Gohn (2011), which highlight the relevance of cultural projects for social inclusion and community strengthening.

In addition, the UN 2030 Agenda offers an important theoretical framework to contextualize the impact of projects like this. SDG 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and quality education, is intrinsically linked to the promotion of cultural diversity in the educational environment. According to the UN (2015), "quality education should reflect diversity and promote intercultural dialogue as a basis for building fairer and more sustainable societies". SDG 10, which seeks to reduce inequalities, emphasizes the importance of initiatives that promote the social and economic inclusion of historically marginalized groups. The festival, by aligning itself with these principles, reinforces the role of the university as an agent of social transformation and promotion of justice.

Finally, Santos (2007) points out that "the ecology of knowledges is an approach that recognizes epistemological plurality and values the dialogue between different forms of knowledge". The Indigenous Cultural Festival embodies this concept by promoting interaction between academic knowledge and indigenous traditions, creating a space for collective and inclusive learning. From this perspective, the workshops and conversation circles that will be held during the event can serve as practical examples of the integration of knowledge, demonstrating that traditional epistemologies offer significant contributions to areas such as sustainability, education, and health.

In summary, the theoretical framework that underpins the *Indigenous Cultural Festival at the University: Roots and Land* highlights the importance of educational practices that promote interculturality, value indigenous identity and contribute to a more inclusive education aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. These initiatives not only enrich the academic environment but also strengthen the university's commitment to social justice and the transformation of society.

METHODOLOGY

The ongoing project, *Indigenous Cultural Festival at the University: Roots and Land* aims to promote the appreciation and preservation of indigenous cultural diversity,

integrating the academic experiences of indigenous and non-indigenous students with the cultural expressions of some indigenous communities in southeastern Pará, will be held in 2025 in two moments: the first moment in order to be a pilot and the second moment with the objective of becoming institutional. To achieve this goal, a participatory methodology will be adopted, with the active involvement of indigenous communities in all stages of the planning and execution of the event. In addition, innovative technologies will be used to publicize the festival and promote interaction between participants. The evaluation of the festival will be carried out through questionnaires, participant observation and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, allowing the identification of the strengths and weaknesses of the event and proposing improvements for future editions.

Strategic planning will ensure the success of the event, so understanding the need to adapt the methodology to changes in the context, the commitment to innovation and sustainability, the importance of continuous evaluation to improve the project, are relevant aspects that will need attention.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

- **Flexibility:** the methodology must be flexible to adapt to unforeseen events, such as changes in the political, economic, or social scenario.
- **Continuous monitoring:** It is essential to keep a close eye on the development of the project and make adjustments as needed.
- **Innovation:** Constantly seek new tools and technologies to enhance the experience of attendees and increase the reach of the festival.
- **Participant feedback:** Use participant feedback to identify opportunities for improvement and adapt the schedule for future editions.

REGARDING INNOVATIONS FOR INCLUSION IN THE INDIGENOUS CULTURAL FESTIVAL AT THE UNIVERSITY: ROOTS AND LAND:

- **Virtual reality:** Create immersive experiences that allow participants to experience indigenous culture in a deep way.
- **Interactive digital platforms:** Develop online platforms to promote the festival, connect attendees, and share information about indigenous culture.
- **Partnerships with digital influencers:** Invite indigenous and non-indigenous influencers to spread the word about the festival and increase its reach.



- **Content Creation Workshops:** Offer workshops so that participants can create their own content, such as videos and podcasts, to share their experiences and knowledge.

PLANNING TO MEASURE THE IMPACT OF THE INDIGENOUS CULTURAL FESTIVAL ON THE UNIVERSITY: ROOTS AND LAND ON THE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY AND THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

- **Quantitative indicators:** Use metrics such as the number of attendees, social media reach, and audience engagement to assess the impact of the festival.
- **Qualitative indicators:** Conduct satisfaction surveys, interviews, and focus groups to understand participants' perception of the festival and its impacts.
- **Long-term monitoring:** Track festival results over time to assess its lasting impact on the community.

CHALLENGES AND OVERCOMING THEM

Difficulty: Obtaining financial resources, resistance from some sectors of society, unforeseen weather events, among others.

Solutions: Seek sponsorship from companies and institutions, build partnerships with other organizations, develop a contingency plan for unforeseen events and communicate the challenges and achievements of the project in a transparent way.

IN VIEW OF THE ABOVE, WE WILL BUILD

- Planning and organization;
- Engagement of the indigenous community;
- Dissemination and mobilization;
- Realization of the Indigenous Cultural Festival at the University: Roots and Land;
- Evaluation.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The idea was to present this project, initially, to the head of the Parkatejê Village, all the monitors involved and other villages in the southeast of Pará and, together, we outlined the best strategies for this pilot project to achieve its objectives.

The involvement of classes that have indigenous students is important since the project seeks to be in accordance with the needs of these students to preserve their culture. It is interesting to note that these indigenous students respond to the calls of their people in

festive activities in their villages, promptly, such as those that take place between November and December in the villages where they live.

Thus, it is a pilot project aimed at indigenous undergraduate students and non-indigenous students, at first, coordinated by a professor of Letters, a project conceived within a discipline of Introduction to Linguistic Studies whose professor observed that indigenous students felt uncomfortable at the university, since, in class, they expressed such feelings of ethnic prejudice.

We emphasize the need for colleagues, who align themselves with the project, to participate, expanding the reach of the project so that more and more indigenous students feel prestigious at their university.

Today we have more than twenty students considered volunteer monitors of this project whose first movement was the visit to the Mãe Maria Indigenous Tribe, in Bom Jesus do Tocantins, the tribe of the first member of the Gavião Group, the late Krôhônrenhum, whose Cuia son, Akroiarere Parkatejê, took over and is in charge of the village.

The reflections on our indigenous students from the initial communication of this project have been the best possible. They comment that they are now feeling more belonging to the university environment that, at first, even here, in this part of the Amazon, they perceived a certain prejudice.

It is our intention, in addition to all the activities planned for the coordination of the project, together with the volunteer monitors, to prepare a documentary so that we can disseminate our results.

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