

**RACIAL LITERACY: THE BEAUTY OF DIVERSITIES – LEARNING TO BE AND TO  
COEXIST MUNICIPALITY OF BENEVIDES – PARÁ**

**LETRAMENTO RACIAL: A BELEZA DAS DIVERSIDADES – APRENDENDO A SER E A  
CONVIVER MUNICÍPIO DE BENEVIDES – PARÁ**

**ALFABETIZACIÓN RACIAL: LA BELLEZA DE LAS DIVERSIDADES – APRENDIENDO  
A SER Y A CONVIVIR MUNICIPIO DE BENEVIDES – PARÁ**



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**ABSTRACT**

In a context where differences are often met with strangeness and prejudice, educating for ethnic-racial and cultural diversity becomes an extremely important topic for forming citizens capable of respecting and engaging in dialogue with people and the world. Learning to be and learning to coexist are two fundamental pillars of education; therefore, helping children recognize the beauty of their own identity allows them to expand their perspective beyond themselves and discover that others also have unique beauties. Considering the roots of racism and its sociocultural persistence is a way to seek paths that give new meaning to our history, where we can embrace and value the richness of knowledge and practices that have color and ancestry, thereby contributing to a more socially just and humane world. The project's general objective was to provide children with awareness of the beauty of diversities, considering the importance of each child in discovering their own identity, and, through self-recognition, expanding their perspective toward respectful coexistence with various racial diversities. The project was carried out in five stages. The process of strengthening each child's identity was developed through dialogue, listening, and support, and culminated in Afro-Brazilian music and dance, theater with storytelling, and a photo exhibition—a celebration with the participation of the school community, including education staff and the children's families.

**Keywords:** Racism. Childhood. Culture. History.

**RESUMO**

Diante de um contexto em que o diferente   considerado com estranheza e preconceito, educar para diversidades  tnico-raciais e culturais, torna-se uma tem tica de suma import ncia para formar cidad es capazes de respeitar e dialogar com as pessoas e com o mundo. Aprender a ser e aprender a conviver, s o dois pilares fundamentais da Educa o, portanto, ajudar a crian a a reconhecer a beleza da sua identidade,   possibilitar que ela possa ampliar o olhar para fora de si e descobrir que o outro tamb m belezas particulares.

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Considerar as raízes do racismo e sua permanência sociocultural, é buscar caminhos para dar um novo sentido à nossa história, onde se possa acolher e considerar a riqueza dos saberes e fazeres que tem cor e ancestralidade, e desse modo, construir um mundo mais socialmente justo e mais humano. O Projeto teve como objetivo geral proporcionar para as crianças uma sensibilização para a beleza das diversidades considerando a importância de cada criança com a descoberta da sua própria identidade, e através do reconhecimento de si, ampliar o olhar para a convivência respeitosa com as diversas diversidades raciais. O Projeto teve a duração de 5 etapas. O percurso de fortalecimento da identidade com cada criança foi feito com diálogo, escuta e acolhimento, e culminou com músicas, danças afro-brasileira, teatro com contação de histórias, e exposição de fotos, uma celebração com a participação da comunidade escolar, como servidores da educação e as famílias das crianças.

**Palavras-chave:** Racismo. Infância. Cultura. História.

### RESUMEN

En un contexto en el que la diferencia se percibe con extrañeza y prejuicio, educar para las diversidades étnico-raciales y culturales se convierte en un tema de suma importancia para formar ciudadanos capaces de respetar y dialogar con las personas y con el mundo. Aprender a ser y aprender a convivir son dos pilares fundamentales de la educación; por lo tanto, ayudar a los niños a reconocer la belleza de su propia identidad les permite ampliar su mirada más allá de sí mismos y descubrir que los demás también tienen bellezas particulares. Considerar las raíces del racismo y su permanencia sociocultural implica buscar caminos para dar un nuevo sentido a nuestra historia, en la que se pueda acoger y valorar la riqueza de los saberes y prácticas que tienen color y ancestralidad, contribuyendo así a un mundo más socialmente justo y humano. El objetivo general del proyecto fue sensibilizar a los niños sobre la belleza de las diversidades, considerando la importancia de cada niño en el descubrimiento de su propia identidad y, a través del reconocimiento de sí mismos, ampliar la mirada hacia la convivencia respetuosa con las diversas diversidades raciales. El proyecto tuvo una duración de cinco etapas. El proceso de fortalecimiento de la identidad de cada niño se desarrolló mediante el diálogo, la escucha y la acogida, y culminó con música y danza afrobrasileña, teatro con narración de cuentos y exposición de fotos, en una celebración con la participación de la comunidad escolar, incluyendo al personal educativo y a las familias de los niños.

**Palabras clave:** Racismo. Infancia. Cultura. Historia.



## 1 INTRODUCTION

The history of Brazil is deeply marked by the presence of the native peoples, who inhabited this territory long before the arrival of the European colonizers. With the Portuguese invasion, a process of exploitation and oppression was established based on deep social and racial inequalities, among which the enslavement of African men and women, violently removed from their territories, cultures and family ties, stands out. This past forged a social structure based on racism, the effects of which are still persistently present in our society. However, it is also from this reality that seeds of resistance, ancestry, culture, and collective strength emerge, fundamental elements in the construction of a fairer society.

In the municipality of Benevides, in the state of Pará, this memory of struggle and resistance is expressed in a unique way. On March 30, a local historical milestone is celebrated: the liberation of the first six enslaved people in the region, an episode prior to the signing of the Golden Law. This date, known as the History of March 30, is a potent symbol of emancipation and protagonism, which consolidated Benevides as the "Cradle of Freedom". The symbolic force of this narrative inspires pedagogical practices that value ethnic-racial diversity, equity, and social justice from the earliest years of childhood.

Based on this historical and social context, the project "Racial Literacy: The Beauty of Diversities – Learning to Be and to Live Together" was conceived, conceived and executed by the Benevides Training and Research Center. The initiative began on November 6, 2024, at CMEI Berço da Liberdade, reaching four institutions in the municipal Early Childhood Education network so far. In 2025, it will be expanded to all schools in this stage of education and, from 2026, it will also include Elementary School I.

## 2 GENERAL OBJECTIVE

Promote, through playful and accessible pedagogical practices, an awareness of children in Early Childhood Education for the appreciation of ethnic-racial diversity, enabling each student to recognize and strengthen their own identity, understand the richness of differences and develop attitudes of respect, empathy and coexistence. From the recognition of themselves and their ancestry, the project seeks to broaden the children's view of the other, stimulating the formation of conscious, ethical and socially committed subjects with the construction of a more just, plural and anti-racist society.

## 2.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- a. Awaken, through storytelling, children's perception of ethnic-racial differences, promoting the appreciation of the plurality of colors, traits, cultures and ways of being present in Brazilian society;
- b. Encourage the recognition of their own identity, helping each child to perceive and value their personal characteristics such as skin color, hair, name and origin as important elements of their history and belonging;
- c. Retell and reinterpret the history of Benevides as the Cradle of Freedom, through storytelling activities, dramatizations and children's artistic productions, rescuing the local memory as a reference of resistance and inclusion;
- d. Promote cultural experiences through music, dances and games, which value Afro-Brazilian, indigenous, riverside and other cultural heritages, strengthening respect for differences and the pleasure of living with diversity.

## 3 DEVELOPMENT

In the face of a social context in which difference is often received with strangeness, prejudice and exclusion, educating for ethnic-racial and cultural diversities becomes a formative urgency. It is an essential path for the construction of citizens capable of respecting the other, dialoguing with plurality and living ethically in a multicultural society.

In the educational field, the principles of "learning to be" and "learning to live together" are fundamental pillars that guide the integral development of children. In this sense, promoting the recognition of the beauty of one's own identity is also opening space for the child's gaze to expand beyond oneself, allowing the encounter with the other in their uniqueness, history, ancestry and culture.

Considering the historical roots of racism and its permanence in Brazilian social and cultural structures is a necessary step to resignify our collective trajectory. This movement implies welcoming and valuing knowledge, practices and memories that have color, territory and ancestry, recognizing in them a richness that should be celebrated and integrated into the school routine.

By promoting an education that recognizes, respects and values diversity, not only a more inclusive school environment is built, but also a project for a more humane, plural and socially just society.

The project "Racial Literacy: The Beauty of Diversities – Learning to Be and to Live Together" was developed based on an integrated, affective and culturally referenced pedagogical proposal, based on the guidelines of Law 10.639/2003, on the National Common

Curricular Base (BNCC), on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda and, above all, on sensitive listening to children and local socio-cultural realities.

Initially structured in five stages, the project underwent a methodological adaptation during its execution, opting for a more objective and effective organization, consisting of three central stages, with an average duration of 40 to 50 minutes per activity. This reorganization made the practice more accessible and applicable in different contexts of Early Childhood Education, including in municipal networks with more limited infrastructure, strengthening its replicable character.

- a. **Planning and Training of Educators:** The starting point of the methodology was the continuing education of teachers and pedagogical coordinators, promoted by the Training and Research Center of Benevides. This preparatory stage addressed the fundamentals of racial literacy, structural racism in childhood, childhood pedagogy, and anti-racist methodologies. Educators were encouraged to develop a sensitive look at children's identities and the cultural contexts of their communities.
- b. **Application of the Stages with the Children:** The activities with the students were planned to respect the time, interest and forms of expression of childhood. The methodology values playing, imagining, narrating and representing as ways to build knowledge and strengthen identity. The three main steps were:
  - **Stage 1 – Identity and Representativeness:** Storytelling with black, indigenous and traditional community characters, followed by activities such as self-portraits, creation of various dolls, body recognition games, conversation circles about name, family and skin color. The goal is to promote positive self-identification and respect for differences.
  - **Stage 2 – Local History and Child Protagonism:** The children were invited to learn about and retell, through theater, art and imagination, the story of March 30, the date that marks the liberation of the first enslaved people in the region. This experience enables the construction of a new narrative, in which children see themselves as an active part of the history of the municipality and the country.
  - **Stage 3 – Celebration of Cultural Diversity:** Experiences with Afro-Brazilian, indigenous and riverside music, dances, tales, clothing and games. Cultural fairs, singing circles and workshops were also held that integrated families and the school community, promoting mutual respect and a sense of collective belonging.
- c. **Participation of the School Community:** The methodological proposal contemplates the active participation of families and the community, recognizing the school space as a place of intergenerational exchanges and joint construction of knowledge. Workshops,

conversation circles and exhibitions with families expanded the scope of the project, transforming it into a community experience of valuing roots and collective memories.

- d. Registration, Evaluation and Sharing: All actions were recorded in portfolios, videos, photo albums, murals and pedagogical diaries. These materials serve as an evaluative instrument, process memory and model for replication. The municipality's technical team has also organized reports that can be used by other education departments interested in implementing the practice.

The methodology applied is simple, adaptable and low-cost, and can be reproduced in different educational contexts in Pará, especially in municipalities that wish to promote racial literacy in a playful, affective way and aligned with the local reality. The use of accessible materials (books, fabrics, dolls, music and stories), combined with the appreciation of the history and culture of the territory, makes the project versatile and powerful to be expanded in a network, inspiring other initiatives in the state and beyond.

#### **4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The application of the project "Racial Literacy: The Beauty of Diversities – Learning to Be and to Live Together" has generated significant and concrete results, both in the development of children and in the transformation of the school environment as a whole. Experience shows that, by including the debate on identity, ancestry and respect for diversity in a sensitive and playful way from an early age, it is possible to build a solid foundation for a more just, empathetic and plural coexistence.

The main results achieved are highlighted below:

- a. Strengthening Children's Identity: Children began to recognize and value their physical and cultural characteristics, such as skin color, hair, name, and family history. An increase in self-esteem, emotional security and a sense of belonging was observed among black, indigenous and riverside children, who began to see themselves as beautiful, capable and important within the school space.
- b. Reduction of Discriminatory Attitudes in Daily School Life: Teachers and pedagogical coordinators reported noticeable changes in interactions between students, with a decrease in derogatory comments and a greater willingness to dialogue, care and acceptance of differences. The project contributed to the construction of a healthier, more welcoming and affective school climate.
- c. Active Involvement of Families and the Community: The project also reached the children's families, who began to participate more actively in the school's activities, especially in conversation circles, cultural fairs and theatrical presentations. This

involvement favored the rescue of family memories, pride in the origins and the strengthening of the bonds between school and community.

- d. Awareness and Training of Educators: The continuing education promoted by the Benevides Training and Research Center has increased the awareness and preparation of educators in relation to anti-racist practices. Teachers reported feeling safer to address ethnic-racial issues in the classroom and more attentive to the cultural and affective aspects that involve the formation of identity in childhood.
- e. Increased Visibility of Local History: By retelling and dramatizing the History of March 30, a milestone in the liberation of the first enslaved people in Benevides, children and the school community began to value more the collective memory and the role of Benevides as the Cradle of Freedom. This strengthened the feeling of belonging to the territory and resignified local history as a symbol of resistance, pride and inspiration.
- f. Consolidation of a Replicable Pedagogical Practice: With the documentation of the stages, the use of accessible resources and efficient methodological adaptation, the project has consolidated itself as a viable proposal to be replicated in other municipalities in Pará, regardless of the size or structure of the education network. The results achieved in Benevides become a reference for the implementation of public policies for anti-racist education aimed at children.

The practice of racial literacy developed in Early Childhood Education in Benevides demonstrated measurable results that attest to its effectiveness both through qualitative (observations, reports and behaviors) and quantitative (participation, adherence and children's production) indicators. These results prove the positive impact of the project on identity formation, respectful coexistence and the appreciation of diversity.

#### 1. Quantitative Indicators

The quantitative results of the project "Racial Literacy: The Beauty of Diversities – Learning to Be and to Live Together" show not only the active involvement of the school community, but also the effectiveness of the strategies adopted and their ability to generate real pedagogical changes. The following are the main indicators collected during implementation:

- a. Child Participation and Cultural Production:
  - 100% of the children in Early Childhood Education participated in the proposed activities, including conversation circles, storytelling, theater, games and cultural workshops.
  - More than 90% of the children produced authorial records related to the theme of the project, such as drawings, dramatizations, story rewritings, collages and artistic

presentations that addressed the appreciation of diversity, identity and respect for differences.

- In all the schools involved, at least one collective event was promoted per two months, with the joint participation of students, teachers and families, with the ethnic-racial and cultural theme as its central focus.

b. Training and Involvement of Educators:

- 100% of the Early Childhood Education teachers of the participating schools participated in the initial training and developed the activities with their classes.
- Educators reported a significant increase in repertoire, pedagogical security and sensitivity to work on racial issues with children, which demonstrates an important advance in continuing education and institutional commitment to equity.

c. Institutional Impact and Sustainability of the Practice:

- The project caused changes in the planning of the schools: the ethnic-racial theme was inserted as a structuring axis in the Pedagogical Action Plans (PAPs) of the school units for the following year.
- Schools began to institutionalize Black Consciousness Week as an annual event integrated into the school calendar, with expanded involvement of the entire school community and educational management.

These data reinforce that the practice, in addition to being pedagogically consistent, is evaluable and measurable and replicable, which qualifies it as an inspiring reference for other municipalities in the State of Pará that wish to implement racial literacy actions in Early Childhood Education with concrete results.

## 2. Potential for Replicability and Scalability of the Project

The project "Racial Literacy: The Beauty of Diversities – Learning to Be and to Live Together" has high potential for replicability and scalability, based on universal principles of humanizing education, on the appreciation of ethnic-racial identities from childhood and on accessible, sensitive and culturally referenced methodologies. Its pedagogical structure is flexible and can be applied in different educational contexts, respecting the singularities of each territory, which makes it a replicable experience in several municipalities in the State of Pará and in other regions of the country.

a. Replicability

The practice can be easily adapted and applied in other schools in the municipal, state or private network, both in Early Childhood Education and in the first years of Elementary School, with language adjustments and strategies according to the age

group. Its methodological simplicity and low operational cost favor reproduction in different educational realities, even in municipalities with fewer resources.

Among the main elements that can be replicated from the practice, the following stand out:

- Afro-Brazilian and indigenous storytelling, promoting active listening, imagination and cultural appreciation;
- Traditional games and music, which integrate playfulness and respect for differences;
- Art and body expression activities, such as painting, theater, dance and self-portraits, stimulating self-esteem and protagonism;
- Conversation and reading circles, which favor dialogue, empathy and plural coexistence.

Such actions dialogue directly with the National Common Curriculum Base (BNCC), with Law 10.639/03, which makes the teaching of Afro-Brazilian and African History and Culture mandatory, and with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda, especially SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 10 (Reduction of Inequalities).

#### b. Scalability

The project is also highly scalable, with the possibility of expansion to other educational and social dimensions, such as:

- Expansion to other age groups, with approaches adjusted to the level of cognitive and emotional development of students in Elementary School I and II;
- Direct involvement of families and communities, through workshops, conversation circles and cultural events that strengthen bonds and the appreciation of ancestral roots;
- Articulation with other municipal and state education networks, through institutional partnerships with education departments, universities and civil society organizations;
- Continuous training of teachers and school managers, through pedagogical workshops, seminars and production of training materials based on the experience of the municipality of Benevides.

The practice has the potential to integrate public educational policies aimed at racial equity, being incorporated into the Political-Pedagogical Projects (PPP) of schools, the Pedagogical Action Plans (PAPs) and the guidelines for continuing education of education professionals, as a structuring axis of an anti-racist, inclusive and plural school culture.

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