



Fondazione  
Reggio Children  
Centro Loris Malaguzzi

edizioni junior

Supported by The **LEGO** Foundation

**PLAY  
EXPLORE  
RESEARCH**

**Play and learning:  
community educational practices**

Conferences, workshops, meetings, experiences  
with and for communities

Conference proceedings

**São Paulo — Brasil**





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**Aesthetics of education**

Directed by Annamaria Contini  
and Lorenzo Manera

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# Summary

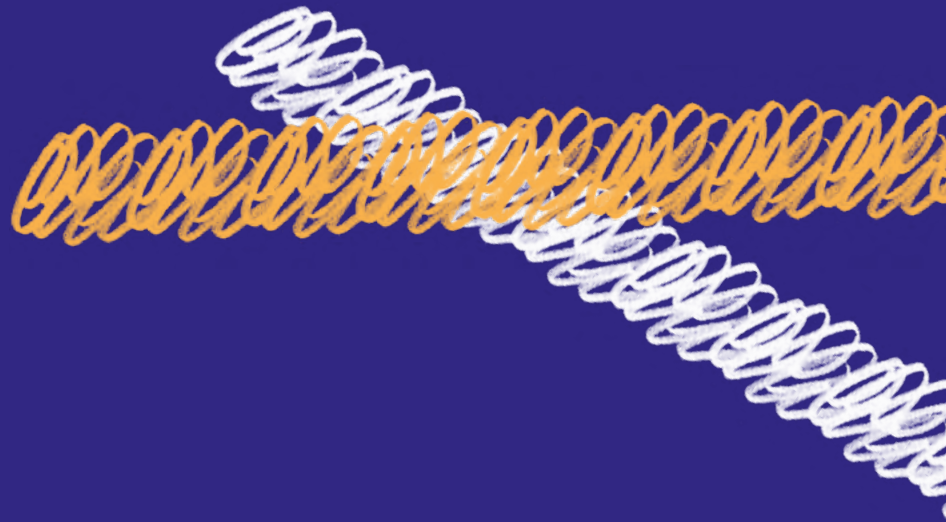
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This publication  
is dedicated,  
with affection and nostalgia,  
to Carla Rinaldi,  
who in the summer of 2024  
spent in São Paulo  
some of the happiest moments  
of her later years of work.

# Introduction



This second publication related to the P.E.R. – Play, Explore, Research project of Fondazione Reggio Children, developed in collaboration with The LEGO Foundation and focused on play and learning, follows the project’s launch at the Loris Malaguzzi International Centre in Reggio Emilia in November 2023. Through the voices of its protagonists, it recounts the second event, held in July 2024 in São Paulo, Brazil.

*“Play and Learning: Community-Based Educational Practices”* was the central theme addressed. In this framework, play, creativity and imagination intersect with community-based educational practices that are essential for building a cohesive

and inclusive society, as well as for fostering resilience and collective well-being through participatory education and engagement.

P.E.R. Brazil brought together teachers, educators, institutions, families, the Reggio Childhood Studies doctoral programme, and a wide range of experiences and contexts. Diverse in terms of target groups and project approaches, and encompassing both formal and informal learning activities, the initiative generated a rich plurality of voices and contents.

Contributions came not only from institutions and educational experiences in Italy and Brazil, but also from Mexico and Colombia, shaping a particularly meaningful format that was later replicated in subsequent P.E.R. editions in other countries.

The publication of these proceedings, envisioned as an integral project action, goes beyond documentation. It conveys the enthusiasm that characterised the meetings held in São Paulo, in which Carla Rinaldi was a passionate and deeply engaged protagonist.

# Curiosity and creativity as learning pathways



*Marta Avancini*

Journalist specialized in education



The 21st century started with promises of human relationships built on respect for and appreciation of differences and diversity. Twenty-five years later, we are witnessing a climate emergency, the rise of fascism, and bloody ethnic conflicts, while information technologies threaten to eat us up.

Given this scenario, it may not be unreasonable to wonder whether humanity has ever experienced such a strong crisis. Precariousness is now an integral part of our daily life. It is a sense of bewilderment that confuses us, that distorts and fragments our perception of time and space.

This world comes with truly epochal challenges for education. How can education keep up in this ever-accelerating and ever-shifting world? Can education help people navigate such times with awareness and purpose?

Education plays a central role because it's the only anchor through which we can find direction in uncertainty and unknown territory. But what kind of education exactly?

For three days, from 1 to 3 August 2024, about 200 educators gathered at the Centro Paula Souza, in São Paulo, Brazil, to discuss and explore new educational paths that focus on the child's personality, start-

ing from the connection between play and learning.

The event “Brincadeira e Aprendizagem: Práticas Comunit para a Educação” (Play and Learning: Educational Community Practices), promoted by Fondazione Reggio Children and The Lego Foundation, was the second of a world tour of the PER Play Explore Research across seven countries and five continents. The aim is to promote the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, i.e., ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.

According to Cristian Fabbi, Director of Fondazione Reggio Children, progressing towards UN’s SDG 4 involves engaging with educational systems in a broader sense. In other words, it involves public and private networks as well as community and informal learning settings organised by civil society organisations, families, and people who believe in education and are committed to it. “These informal settings are what will allow us to get as close as possible to SDG 4 because together we help bring more quality”, said Fabbi in the opening remarks.

However, there can be no quality education without working with children. “Working with children means working with democracy in a country or territory because it means focusing on building dialogue,

which is essential for a culture of peace in a world that increasingly resorts to war,” continued Fabbi.

Finally, quoting former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Fabbi reminded that education is the primary peacebuilding tool because when there’s education, dialogue and the ability to open up to different points of view prevail over war.

### Dialogue as a founding principle

In the Reggio Emilia approach, dialogue is so much more than exchanging points of view. It’s a transformational force because it considers listening a way to recognise others.

“The pedagogy of listening is about recognising others as carriers of knowledge and values, especially in the case of children”, explained Carla Rinaldi, President of Fondazione Reggio Emilia in her conversation with Paulo Fochi, Professor of the University of Vale do Rio dos Sinos (Unisinos) and coordinator of the Children’s Culture Observatory (Obeci), during the session “Reflecting on the pedagogy of the future”.

Dialogue goes hand in hand with listening, forming one of the foundations of pedagogy according to the Reggio Emilia approach, which puts children at the centre, valuing their voice, expression, and perspective.

This consideration intertwines with Paulo Freire's thought. As Rinaldi pointed out, the Brazilian philosopher and educator recognised children as citizens. "Paulo Freire gave us a wonderful gift, which was already present in constitutional and educational acts, but he explained it so well: the idea of children as citizens. This idea of children being citizens is still revolutionary today. It changes society. It changes architecture, spaces, everything", she stressed.

Saying that a child won't become a citizen but IS a citizen is the first step towards giving voice to the revolution that childhood brings about", she added. "We are deeply convinced that childhood is at the centre of the great historical change we need to make, whether we like it or not. Childhood is the highest expression of a human being at the peak of their potential and qualities", hence the central role of children's education.

An idea of education that is rooted in the recognition that children are able to develop relationships and interact with peers, adults, ideas, and objects; with nature and the environment; with real, imaginary, and virtual events. They are able to ask questions and answer them, but also to learn, the latter being an innate human skill<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Available on: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OxHgFf6\\_OIU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OxHgFf6_OIU).

Fondazione Reggio Children's 0-99 education approach is based on childhood, not in the sense of a childhood to be educated, but rather a childhood through which to educate the child and human being of the present moment.

Solidarity and research are just as central in creating a better school for children and all people. When solidarity and research go hand in hand, the hierarchies of knowledge and power are neutralised. Teaching and learning make up a two-way path, involving children and adults (teachers).

"Research – real research – is humble and the only cure for the disease of cultural colonialism. On the other hand, practising solidarity means, first of all, doing it with ourselves, changing the approach. Together, solidarity and research lead to supportive research, where we don't have those who know and have the power on one side and those who don't know and need to learn on the other", said Carla Rinaldi.

As Paulo Fochi pointed out, understanding research as solidarity allows theory and practice to merge, transforming education into dialogue.

"Pedagogy is not about applying theory, and it's not practice just for the sake of it. Pedagogy is a praxeological science that [Loris] Malaguzzi explained perfectly with the bicycle metaphor: there's a theory pedal and a practice pedal, and you need both

to keep balance and progress. This movement alternating between braking and advancing can be compared to this science, helping us realise that the pedagogical aspect is built day after day”.

In this sense, pedagogical documentation – so central in the Reggio Emilia approach – has helped reveal the value and power of children’s thinking. And, since this relationship is based on dialogue, “the children’s actions helped us show the value of a competent teachers, who play a leading role along with competent children. All this highlights the value of this stage in life and early childhood (0-6) education and how important it is for children and society”, added Fochi.

### Creativity’s place

Curiosity and creativity – the latter as a quality of thought – are two concepts resulting from this approach and pillars of the P.E.R. project. According to Carla Rinaldi, curiosity stems from the relationship with otherness. “The relationship with others is the root of learning, and learning is living”, she said. More importantly, creativity is a pleasure.

“This idea essentially results from working on this topic with an international group promoted by Lego [Foundation]. Several colleagues had suggested introducing a creativity class, like there is a drawing class. But, if we think of creativity as the air we breathe and an integral part of thinking, then play steps in as the essential element for developing thinking and creativity”, added Rinaldi, referring to the central role of this debate in this AI age.

“I would love to hear much more about intelligence and learning than just about artificial intelligence. AI should not be demonised, of course, but we must become more aware of the quality of human thinking and reflect on how to protect it”, she reiterated.

For Rinaldi, human intelligence is not just in the head, in the brain. It’s in the whole body and the way a child sees themselves. “We are unaware of how much intelligence children develop with their whole bodies, how much they





need to move, touch, and perceive the things around them”.

So, creativity refers to the hundred languages of children, as a way of learning and not just of expressing themselves. “It forces us to think about all this as a human right, a right of all living beings”, she continued.

“Yes, I like to think creativity belongs to all living beings. I see it in biology, I see it in nature. I also like to think that children renew the beauty of this element of creativity. Creativity as a quality of thought, an essential element of thought. Creativity supported and renewed by play, circling back to our P.E.R. project, and a play environment that doesn’t limit learning but actually becomes a learning tool. Renewing this “everyday utopia” forces us to see what’s possible every day. It forces us to dream and think that things can change”.

### Curiosity and learning

Educators' role is to keep children's curiosity alive because it's curiosity that supports learning and research. This perspective can be critical in countries like Brazil, where fundamental rights, like literacy, are still not guaranteed for every child. This was the focus of the section "How education shapes the world" with Daniela Caldeirinha, Vice-President of Education at the Lemann Foundation, and Cristian Fabbi.

"The right to literacy is a vehicle of transformation. Why? Because of that phrase you've probably heard a thousand times: we learn to read and then we read to learn. And that's exactly what happens in life", said Caldeirinha. "If people can't access this fundamental right, the world becomes a lesser place. And we don't want a lesser world for our children. We want them to have the whole world; the world they want to build".

Based on official statistics indicating a huge literacy gap between black and white students and between different regions of Brazil, Caldeirinha defended the relevance of long-term public policies – like the ones implemented in the municipality of Sobral in the state of Ceará to ensure literacy at the expected age (around 7) – as a way to ensure this fundamental right for children.

"Working with public policies is essen-

tial because they support teachers' work in the classroom, where they are often alone", emphasised Caldeirinha, referring to the Lemann Foundation's support to municipal and state departments in implementing public policies to improve children's literacy.

The affirmation of education as a right becomes strategic after the Covid-19 pandemic had triggered an educational emergency with high dropout rates and learning gaps in a world also marked by social, political, economic, and climate emergencies, increased migrations, war, and inequality, including digital and technological disparities.

Addressing this scenario – outlined in Fondazione Reggio Children's values charter, "Quality education, a global challenge" – requires solidarity and research, which are not static values. Quite the contrary, they adapt to the countless educational contexts and challenges found in so many places.

As Fabbi highlighted, the aim is to adapt the charter's proposals and underlying values (solidarity and research) to local experiences. After all, education is a dynamic process.

"So, what are the actions to take, the values, and the opportunities to bring into play to create the conditions for literacy to flourish?" questioned Fabbi. This process involves a cultural change: recognising children as subjects of civil and politi-

cal rights. The way a child approaches the world – basically driven by curiosity – becomes a value and a way of learning.

“Children are inquisitive, and it’s our duty as educators to keep this curiosity alive, to fuel it, and even trigger it. Stimulating children’s thinking and curiosity means keeping this path to learning and research alive”, added the Director President of Fondazione Reggio Children. Curiosity also drives children to learn language and writing skills because children are naturally curious. They always ask the meaning of words or to write their names when they start being curious about reading. We value this very much. It’s like a continuous journey, and learning to read and write is an essential part of it”.

As Fabbi explained, curiosity and creativity go hand-in-hand, opening up learning opportunities other than those found in traditional classrooms, as demonstrated by Fondazione Reggio Children’s initiatives in various countries.

In Albania, for example, learning was

achieved through food education. In Rwanda, the process revolved around play, while in Kosovo, it revolved around activities promoting dialogue between opposing ethnic groups. In such contexts – and in perfect alignment with the idea of children’s 100 languages, a pillar of the Reggio Emilia approach – teaching materials are not essential for educational activities and languages because children’s experience with theatre, for example, can be just as meaningful as a textbook.

As Carla Rinaldi stressed when asked to comment on the discussion, the point here is that recognising children as citizens is a political, social, and cultural choice, even more than a pedagogical and didactic one. “Our job is to make them exist, give them a voice, and promote cultural and political initiatives so that childhood becomes the highest expression of citizenship: the biggest investment society can make. Because childhood is the parent of humanity, and a society that fails to acknowledge its children is truly primitive”, she concluded.



Cultural and education  
diplomacy with  
Fondazione Reggio Children



*Domenico Fornara*

Consul General of Italy in São Paulo



A diplomat's job is to “build bridges” between different societies. First and foremost, this is achieved by taking advantage of common ground, or any kinds of connections that can bring them together. Diplomats look for things that two cultures have in common and make them into the cornerstones of stronger, more established ties. They can then go on to discuss issues that would initially have been more divisive.

Cultural and education diplomacy plays a key role on this front. It is a form of *soft power* that enables societies to communicate and put in place consistent frameworks and shared goals.

It was for this very reason that in May 2023 the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and Fondazione Reggio Children signed a declaration of intent pledging to jointly promote the Italian education model, Italian language skills, knowledge of Italian culture, and relations between education communities.

The initiative fell on particularly fertile ground in Brazil, due to the great cultural compatibility between the education systems of the two countries. This is largely down to the way Brazilian society has clearly been shaped by huge numbers of Italian immigrants, not to mention the huge popularity of the “Reggio Emilia Approach” in the Brazilian education system.

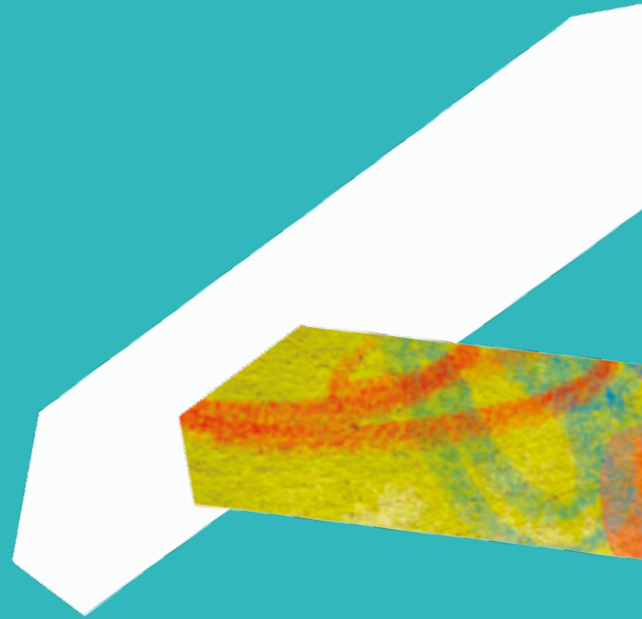
Promoting the Italian Education System in the World is one of the most rewarding and interesting parts of a Consul General's job. In 2024, we were keen to promote a large number of outstanding cultural and education diplomacy events, including as part of the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of Italian immigration to Brazil.

Therefore, I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to Fondazione Reggio Children President Carla Rinaldi for everything she has done and for taking part in the initiatives in the state of São Paulo.





Enriching exchanges  
and careful listening can pave  
the way to schools  
by everyone, for everyone



*Monica Faggionato*

Director of the Education Office, Consulate General of Italy in São Paulo



When Office V of the Directorate General for Public and Cultural Diplomacy at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation wrote to inform us that Fondazione Reggio Children’s “Play Explore Research” project with The LEGO Foundation was coming to São Paulo, I was absolutely delighted. It meant I would have the chance to learn all about the research conducted in Reggio Emilia’s municipal schools, while also – in my own small way – helping to share techniques and processes with various local stakeholders.

Loris Malaguzzi’s vision and Fondazione Reggio Children’s research provide the world of education with a genuine, concrete example of community participation and shared responsibility. It offers a stark contrast to a strict, hierarchical education system that might strive to champion differences and nurture talent, but essentially counts on the ability of individual teachers to include and motivate students.

The 1970s were an important time for the creation of a democratic education culture in Italy. The schools of Reggio Emilia – along with the Italian and international pedagogists that inspired them, and the

families, teachers, ateliers and public decision-makers that built them – showed that it was not only possible but also desirable to envisage and create superior public schools built on respect for students and their potential, with great care taken over their appearance and the choices made.

Years of experience, documents, studies and research have helped to produce a treasure trove of growing renown that is attracting more and more attention. I was surprised to discover that many public and private Brazilian schools have been basing their educational approaches on the values of the municipal schools in Reggio Emilia for some time.

Carla Rinaldi came to São Paulo and talked to the authorities, pedagogists and researchers, while teachers actively participated in workshops, students took part in the process and groups contemplated the role of play in the development of learning systems. All of this strengthened the firm belief that we never stop learning from children and we must look to them in order to understand the world around us and find solutions to complex problems.

The activities carried out as part of the “Play Explore Research” project showed us what lies behind the genesis and development of every human action and every

creative process, at any age: the urge to try out and enjoy the experience of using tools and techniques, which in turn hones attention to detail. Over time, surprisingly significant and creative results can unexpectedly stem from having fun in groups, showing curiosity and focusing on associations and connections rather than results. This is because the only goal is for participants to take pleasure in investigating and discovering things together.

It is important to reflect on the educational setting and what an environment must provide in order to ensure that all learners can truly experience play and discovery, analysis and deduction, exploration and production. Part of the project was carried out in one of the Unified Education Centres run by the Municipality of São Paulo. This experience showed us that genuine education spaces should always be open and accessible to the entire community. They should be safe, public places that are architecturally designed and looked after for and by everyone. Libraries, sports facilities, theatres, gardens, classrooms and laboratories should be among the amenities provided. They should be places for formal learning, but also offer people the chance to spend time engaging in extracurricular activities, in an environment where they are free to get to know

themselves and others, with their families or friends, adults or peers.

As a representative of the Italian Education System in the World, I promote Italian language and culture in various settings in São Paulo and in various ways, including through the workshops provided by Fondazione Reggio Emilia and The Lego Foundation. It gives me a chance to look into countless opportunities and strategies, which is obviously extremely enriching. It fills me with the firm belief that I am on the right track, when time and care are taken over children and listening to their needs, and resources are invested in studying cognitive development from the earliest months of their lives. These same processes can then be applied and transferred to research into learning by young people and adults throughout their lives, bringing benefits for society as a whole.

I am grateful to have spent this time with the staff and President of Fondazione Reggio Children, and for both the scientific approach and the human touch seen here in São Paulo among the students, families, teachers and researchers at the meetings and events.

*“Obrigado is the perfect word to sum up not only my experiences in infant-toddler centres and schools, but also the essence of the Foundation: reciprocity. I am obliged to you; I am bound to you. It is an incredibly beautiful thing and also a huge responsibility. It is a word that expresses my feelings about both Brazil and the whole of Latin America.”*

*Carla Rinaldi  
1 August 2024 – Green Auditorium at the  
Paula Souza Centre – São Paulo*



**The future starts  
with childhood**

***Laura Laganá***

Former director of the Paula Souza Centre (CPS)





The PER (Play, Explore, Research) project is an inspiring example of how we can change education already in the early years of a person's life. Educational games putting children at the centre of the learning process are essential to stimulate creativity, critical thinking, and teamwork, which are all crucial for facing today's challenges.

The Paula Souza Centre had the honour of hosting this important international event in Brazil to discuss new, more effective childhood learning methods. As an institution offering professional and technological education, we value the culture of hands-on learning in the Technical Schools (Etecs) and Technology Colleges (Fatecs) of the State of São Paulo. Hands-on experience promotes deeper, longer-lasting knowledge. And when society makes an effort to improve early childhood education, we increase the chances of shaping better-prepared, more autonomous people.

As an education manager, maths teacher, mother, and, more recently, grandmother of a three-year-old girl, I know the difference transforming everyday activities into



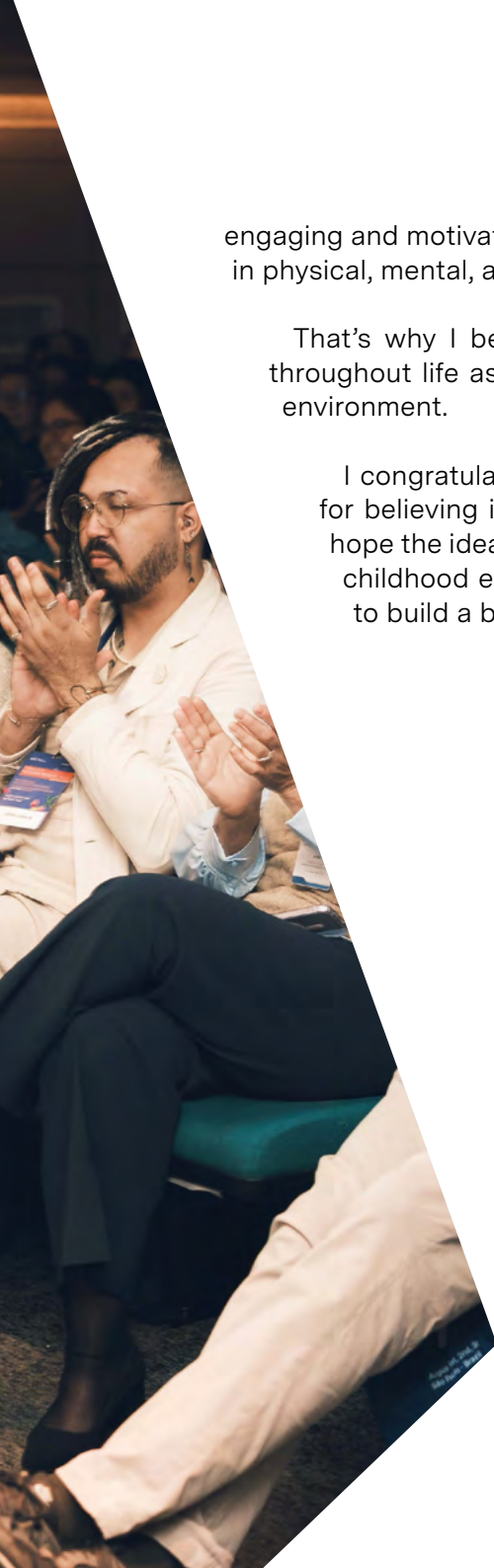
Play  
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Research

August 14, 2024, 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM  
5th Floor, 5th Floor

engaging and motivating experiences can make, considering the crucial role games play in physical, mental, and emotional development.

That's why I believe the magical world of play-based learning should continue throughout life as a process for all ages to create a more pleasant and productive environment.

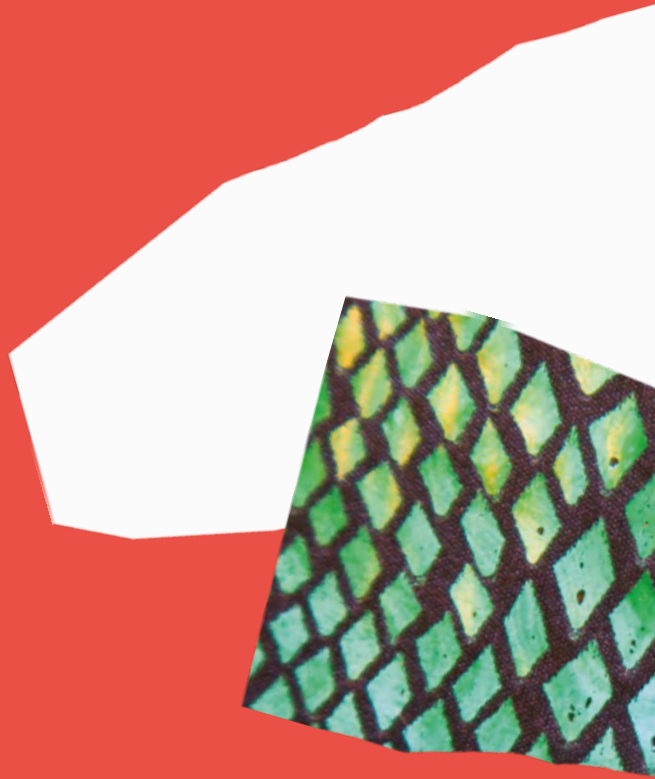
I congratulate the organisers and all the professionals involved in this project for believing in the power of play as a path to innovative, inclusive education. I hope the ideas presented during the event will serve as a model to improve early childhood education and shape happier, more human, creative citizens willing to build a better world for everyone.



# Early childhood education: laying the foundations for educating citizens

*Fernando Padula*

Municipal Secretary of Education of São Paulo





One of the world's largest cities, São Paulo stands as a global inspiration and driving force in many aspects, including education and the efforts to overcome the challenges inherent in ensuring this right as established by the Brazilian Constitution and governed by the Law on Brazilian Education Guidelines and Bases. São

Paulo's Municipal Education Network serves more than one million students, from babies to adults, and more than 4.1 thousand educational units spread across territories with different social, economic, and cultural characteristics.

The Municipal Education Network's care and attention starts with early childhood at the Early Childhood Education Centres for babies and toddlers (0 to 3 years of age). These education centres' spaces and materials are designed to promote physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and linguistic development and all related aspects. Everything has a purpose, including book collections that help develop a love of reading in the early years. Planning how to use these resources and ensuring continuing education help enhance the life and experience of young Paulistanos.

All this work is based on the City Curriculum, a document drawn up in collaboration

with various professionals from the Municipal Network. This document is a benchmark for the entire country as it provides guidelines on children’s day-to-day activities, experiences, encouragement, learning, development, and autonomy. However, the road to ensuring the right to nurseries that respect childhood and affirm the importance of babies and young children has been a long one.

This year marks 23 years since nurseries were transferred from Social Welfare to the Municipal Secretariat of Education, as envisioned by the Law on Brazilian Education Guidelines and Bases. Since then, numerous challenges have been tackled to ensure a service prioritising research, food security, a stimulating environment, and comprehensive development.

As for early childhood education, the City Curriculum outlines the three primary areas of focus of Early Childhood Education Centres, i.e., the social role of providing childcare, the political role of promoting access to cultural heritage and childhood experiences, and the pedagogical role of expanding and diversifying knowledge and programmes.

The Municipal Secretariat of Education has no longer had waiting lists for São Paulo nurseries since 2020. This joint effort, partnerships with civil society organisations, and inauguration of new units help

ensure this service for all registered families: 10-hour full-time with five meals a day guaranteed in addition to experiential and stimulating activities that make a difference in the children’s development during this period when brain plasticity is at its highest.

Moreover, the Municipal Network focuses on valuing ethnic and racial diversity and fighting structural racism. In an unprecedented move, the Municipal Secretariat of Education bought over 128 thousand black and Andean dolls and puppets distributed among early childhood education centres for pedagogical and anti-racist activities. This way, the debate expands beyond these centres, involving families and the territory’s entire community.

In 2022, the Municipal Secretariat of Education launched the Anti-Racist Curriculum. The document “Pedagogical Guidelines: Afro-Brazilian Peoples” complements the triad of available publications on native and migrant populations. The document was drawn up by professionals from various sectors of education, especially those working at the centres.

These Pedagogical Guidelines include practical examples of how professionals can work on this topic in their schools. Including racially and culturally diverse books and books by native, black, or migrant authors in the educational centres’ collections is another crucial initiative with-

in the Anti-Racist Education policy. The titles were selected for a diverse audience, including babies and children, to ensure representation already in early childhood.

Brazilian researcher Mariza Abreu brilliantly summarised the importance of this work in early childhood when she said that early childhood education does not have young adult education. Early childhood education is the foundation for creating citizens, expanding horizons, and helping break down the barriers and vulnerabilities imposed by social inequality.

In 2024, São Paulo hosted P.E.R. Play Explore Research Brazil, the touring event spanning various continents organised by Fondazione Reggio Children and The Lego Foundation. This event promoted meet-ups with educators, teachers, children, and their families, as well as more than 40 workshops in different languages on the relationship between play, learning, and

community practices. This project promotes the connection between play and learning and quality education for all. I had the pleasure of taking part in these talks, which helped us share and connect practices from all over the world. The Reggio Emilia approach has greatly inspired São Paulo's early childhood education and our curriculum.

Ensuring quality early childhood education is crucial for a smooth transition to primary education and a literacy process emphasising the educational role of play and promoting literacy through play. Literacy is an emancipatory process that helps us create a society built on equity. It's a long way to go, but with the help of society as a whole, we can break the cycles of inequality. I'll end by quoting Dom Helder Câmara, who said, "When we dream alone, it's just a dream. When we dream together, it's the beginning of reality."



# Thoughts towards a pedagogy of the future

*Dialogue-interview between Carla Rinaldi<sup>1</sup> and Paulo Fochi<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> President of Fondazione Reggio Children,  
DESU-University of Modena and Reggio Emilia professor, 2015 LEGO Award

<sup>2</sup> Professor of Pedagogy at Unisinos University in Brazil,  
founder and coordinator of OBECI-Observatory of Childhood Culture,  
member of the Scientific Committee of Bambini magazine



**Paulo Fochi:** This is a very special day, to be here with Carla Rinaldi this morning to open this day, and with all of you, is an honour and it moves me. Today, in the first meeting of the P.E.R. Brazil project here in São Paulo, we are going to talk a little about the pedagogy of the present and the future, the relationship between Carla and Reggio Emilia with Brazil and Paulo Freire, and what the pedagogy of listening is a symbol of. I have already told Carla how important her voice is for our work to reflect on pedagogy. The generosity with which she writes and shares her thoughts and knowledge reflects the spirit of 'Dialogue', the title of her book. As Carla herself wrote, dialogue is not just exchanging ideas, dialogue is a force for transformation. The idea of transformation is what in education makes it possible every day to manage the way we relate to children, the way we know, the way we put theory into practice, practice into theory. All of us teachers must have within us the power of transformation.

I would like to start with an idea that is important both for us in Brazil, thanks to Paulo Freire's contribution, and in Italy for the Reggio Emilia experience, and that is the idea of participation as a fundamental feature of education. Paulo Freire says that we educate ourselves much more when we participate in life and society. And so, I would like to ask you to tell us a little about

the relationship between Brazil, Latin America and the city of Reggio Emilia with Fondazione Reggio Children.

**Carla Rinaldi:** Thank you, Paulo, thank you all. I love the word ‘thank you’ very much, I offer it intensely, but I made a discovery that tells everything about why we are so deeply connected to this country and why we need this country so much, like Latin America. I love our Italian language very much, however, the word ‘thank you’ in Italian is a one-way word, *grazie*: I give thanks to you. ‘Obrigada’ I found to be a key word for the experience I had in the infant-toddler centres and preschools, but also for the intrinsic reason for Fondazione Reggio Children: reciprocity.

*‘Obrigada’:* I am ‘obliged’ to you, I have a bond to you and it is of an incredible beauty, of an enormous responsibility and I think *‘obrigada’* is the word that most expresses the feeling of mine, ours, starting with Cristian, not only towards this event, not only towards this country, but towards all of Latin America, precisely because we need you and the ability to build these relationships of reciprocity. Brazil and all of Latin America have been extremely welcoming to our Italian immigrants and able to create a welcoming experience from which we have much to learn. But also, I think, that the Italian heart, which is felt in the heart

of this culture and this city, is the reason why our encounter with the pedagogy of Paulo Freire, whom I had the honour of meeting in Reggio, and with the Pedagogy of Freedom, has really generated, in Loris Malaguzzi as in the culture of Reggio Emilia, this profound sense of Listening. The Pedagogy of Listening is the appreciation of the other from myself. Recognising that they are bearers of knowledge and values, all the more so if they are children.

With Paulo Freire we had one of the most beautiful gifts, already in constitutional and pedagogical acts, but it was so well explicated by him: the concept of the child as a citizen. This enormity, revolutionary even today, the idea that the child is a citizen, changes societies, transforms them, changes architectures, spaces. It changes everything. If more and more here, in Europe and around the world, we have the extraordinary strength of the assumption of the concept of the child, who will not ‘be’ a citizen, but who ‘is’ a citizen, this is the first step in giving voice to the revolution that childhood brings. We are deeply convinced that at the centre of the great epochal change that, like it or not, we will have to make, is childhood understood as the highest expression of the human being, at the height of their potential, their qualities. That is why as Fondazione Reggio Children we talk about 0–99 education

that has childhood at its core. Not a childhood to educate, but ‘with whom’ to be educated. A childhood that is not the man of the future, but rather the citizen and human being of the present.

Reggio Emilia touched live, your culture, your values, your thinking when, amongst several visits there, Paulo Freire attended the conference ‘Crossing Boundaries’, a wonderful title that is a vision, a wish. On that occasion we thanked him for being who we are, and it was Loris Malaguzzi himself who did that.

Paulo Freire pedagogue, Paulo Freire politician, Paulo Freire the heart of this nation, of Latin America. To him we all owe so much, for him we all have to do so much.

Fondazione Reggio Children has in its heart the city’s infant-toddler centres born out of solidarity and research. Because they were born out of World War II, in reaction to the war, and were born out of gestures of solidarity. Children could feed themselves, at the first school built in the post-war period, because neighbourhood farmers brought vegetables from the garden. These gestures are in the DNA, the culture of Reggio Emilia and Fondazione Reggio Children. Those teachers and that one cook who ladled soup from a pot because that was all there was, that teacher who slept in the school because she had no money for the house. Well, all this start-

ed the search for a better school to match its childhood. That is why solidarity and research are the keys to the action we would like to bring to life here, together, and in the world.

For this we need others, Paulo Freire and all the friends, big but also small, that we have in the world: thus, the beauty of seeking, of doing, of building solidarity through research. This is a concept that is especially close to my heart because research when it is true research is humble and is the only antidote to the disease of cultural colonialism. To express solidarity is first of all to apply it to ourselves by changing the approach. So, solidarity through research and supportive research, where there are those who know and have power and those who do not know and must learn. This thing is also dear to Paulo Freire who was clear about the interplay of powers, disciplines as places of power, academies as places of power. These are words, concepts that need to change and for that we need to have the greatest researchers we have, the children and their teachers, deal with them.

**Paulo:** Wonderful. Amongst the various connections Carla proposed, I would like to highlight two that are of particular interest to us. First, building solidarity through research, an important statement for under-

standing education. Second, educational projects as projects for society, projects for coexistence, for civilisation. I remember Bruner saying that in order to understand the Reggio Emilia municipal schools, you have to live, know the society and culture of the city, because we think and do education in constant dialogue with culture and for culture. This is a focal point.

The Unesco report *'Reimagining our future together, a new social contract for education'*, in which there is a lot of talk about the topics of today's conversation, looks at the pedagogy of the future, and I think Carla brings an additional point of view in this direction.

That is, I mean the theory-and-practice dialogue, which you have followed in over 50 years of experience in Reggio Emilia's municipal schools, creating an atmosphere of research, of children seeking themselves, seeking one another, and a world of teachers doing research. But it is from the way children do research that comes the value of pedagogical documentation and dialogue between children and teachers. Research that takes hold with teachers creating other knowledge policies for us so that we think about what the meaning of pedagogy is.

Carla in her book *'In Dialogue with Reggio Emilia'* writes that theory needs to be free and not imprisoned: this is decisive and revolutionary, because our loyalty has to deal with children.

**Carla:** This dialogue between theory and practice is one of the most beautiful and difficult issues, so I also ask for your help. Inherited from our great teacher, Loris Malaguzzi, and from a school of thought to which he also embraced, one of the greatest recommendations that I would testify to colleagues all over the world is not to be called *'authors of practices, even if good practices'*, by which I mean daily actions in infant-toddler centres and pre-schools and schools of all kinds. Not because the practice is bad but because, for historical-political reasons, it stems from being a manifestation of a theory and a starting point for new theories. Theory contains its practice, practice contains theory. There is no practice that has not been a



theory, that is not the form of a theory, and that cannot generate a theory.

This chair was a theory: now it is a form, and my experiencing it requires me to come up with a new possible theory of its being a chair. I would go to the author and say, put the backrest on.

It is a difficult step to describe, but it is theory that holds the power and practice concretises it. It is the drama of the mind separated from the body, as Malaguzzi says in the 100 languages theory, it is the drama of a society, of an economy that must separate instead of discovering all that unites us as human beings and living beings.

This is the big reason, to which we are continually being brought back by children who are really the greatest constructors of amazement, questions, wonders, hypotheses, even the most unbelievable ones that they experiment with and then restart.

Documentation arises precisely as the link between the making of the child's learning and the making of the teacher's learning, where the teacher learns and the child teaches, here is their ability to challenge theory.

There are, in the book 'The Hundred Languages', by various authors, perhaps the most beautiful pages by Loris Malaguzzi, where he expresses this concept very clearly and where he recognises documentation as a democratic place, the place of

encounter. There is Piaget there, there is Bruner, there is an acknowledgement to teachers, but having a clear understanding that the child and the teacher become the new Piaget, the new Bruner, the new researchers with the full right of new page writing through documentation. 'Making visible' is a political act, it is what we need: our teachers need to become more and more visible, because through them the child but above all the culture of the new man, Freire's man, the free man, becomes more visible.

This is for me the strongest content, a small box of theory-practice.

**Paulo:** This brings us many interesting reflections that have to do with pedagogy. Doing pedagogy is not an application of theory and it is not practice for practice's sake, it is a praxeological science that Malaguzzi translated very well with the metaphor of the bicycle: the pedal of theory and the pedal of practice, and this movement of pedagogy between balances of braking and advancing is similar to this science that helps us think and reflect that the pedagogical aspect is done day by day.

About the pedagogical documentation, Carla, that has been built up over the last half century, I feel that it has helped to show us the value of children's nature and the power of children's thinking. And the

actions of the children helped to show us the value of a competent teacher, a teacher who is a protagonist together with the competent child, and all this made clear the value of this stage of life, of childhood education from 0 to 6 years old, the importance it has for the child and for society.

Now, I think the documentation that you have produced over the years has been an incredible way of changing knowledge policies. There are two other concepts that emerge in this regard that I would like to dwell on, and they are: curiosity and creativity. Two words that go hand in hand, as Paulo Freire used to say, and as you wrote in the book 'In Dialogue with Reggio Emilia', creativity is a quality of thought. I would like to talk about the value of curiosity and creativity and how these connect to the P.E.R. project, Play Explore Research, which we present here and which goes far beyond Reggio Emilia.

**Carla:** If I were to write a few pages on creativity today, I think I would need to reflect. Because there was, tell me if you agree, a dramatic fact that the whole of humanity experienced: the pandemic. So terrible that we removed it. That period was a huge shock to humanity. I don't want to be dramatic but I want us to remember what it was, when we talk about children, adolescents and ourselves, because in a culture

of a global society based on economics, a deadly blow like the aftermath of the pandemic threatened to kill the real mother of creativity in my opinion, which is otherness, the other from my person, the relationship with the other from me that is the root of learning and learning means living.

The consequences of pandemic have fuelled the social evil that is selfishness and self-centredness. We have experienced the other as the enemy, so this would require deep reflection on the pages written, by others or by me, on creativity, before the pandemic, although the younger the child, the more they are able to give us some essential confirmations: that creativity is a relational fact and, I am convinced, is a quality of pleasure. This idea essentially comes from having worked on this issue with an international group promoted by LEGO itself. There were several colleagues who recommended introducing the creativity lesson, just as there is a drawing lesson. But if instead we consider creativity as the air we breathe, as an integral part of thinking, then it is play that enters sovereignly as an essential element for the development of thinking and creativity.

I think this is a very strong topic of debate today in the age of artificial intelligence.

I would like to see a lot more talk about intelligence, about learning, than just arti-



ficial intelligence. Artificial intelligence is not to be demonised, of course, but what we need to do is to become more and more aware of the quality of human thinking, the fact that we need to safeguard it and how to do it.

I really believe that we do not know that, for example, intelligence is not here, in the head, but on our whole body, that we are not aware of how much intelligence the child is developing with their whole body, how much they need to move, to touch, to feel what they have around them.

I really believe that the theme of creativity as an integral part of thinking forces us to create contexts, forces us to think about the hundred languages as a way of learning and not just expressing, forces us to think about all this as a right of human beings, of living beings. Yes, I like to think that there is a creativity of living things, I see it in biology, I see it in nature, and to think that this element of creativity is renewed in its daily beauty by the child. So, creativity as a quality of thinking, creativity as an essential element for thinking, creativity aided and renewed by play, to return to our P.E.R. project, and by a playful environment that does not limit learning but itself becomes a tool. Renew this utopia of the everyday, which forces you every day to see the possible, to dream and to think that you can change. Reflexivity as an essential key to all this. The possibility, however, of having another with you. The other is essential not only for creativity, for existing.

**Paulo:** It is really exciting to reason together about creativity. Certainly, selfishness pollutes, it annihilates creativity, is what annihilates creativity, and one of the ways to maintain creativity is through relationships with one another, with others. This exchange of dialogues, the possibility of sharing, the possibility of making connections between us. To conclude this reflection of ours, I would like to invite you, Carla, to take stock and to leave us a message for the future. In this regard, in April 1990 in Reggio Emilia, Paulo Freire left a message to the children of the city, which goes like this: *“Good friend Malaguzzi, eternal boy, asks me to write, before my return to Brazil, some words dedicated to the children of Reggio Emilia.*

*Writing a few words dedicated to children... I don't know if I could say something new in response to such a request, but what could I say?*

*Perhaps the first thing I can say, because of my long experience in this world, is that we need to make this world bigger and bigger.*

*What I can say by virtue of my long experience in this world is that we have to make this world better and better, and based on my experience I say don't let the voice of the children who are growing up die”.*

With this beautiful message, I would like to hear your reflections on this contemporary issue and invite you to leave your message to the children of the world.

**Carla:** Before I respond, Paulo, I would like to thank you. *Obrigada*. Not only for this generous conversation between us, but for how you have gone through the experience of Reggio Emilia and others, in which I also participate, with a delicacy, an ability to interpret and reframe that I think is one of the most beautiful ways to witness the great reason and truth of Reggio Emilia preschools.

When the decision was made with Loris Malaguzzi to call them in Italian ‘schools of childhood’, already he, with his colleagues at the time, decided that from the Italian term ‘maternal school’ that is, with the etymon *mater*, ‘mother’, it should be changed

to a school not ‘for childhood’ but ‘of childhood’, not ‘of the children of Reggio Emilia’ but ‘of childhood and the world’, creating an enormous interdependence summed up in Loris’s phrase: “No child in Reggio Emilia can be well if all the children in the world are not well”. Because with the death of a child, humanity dies. The child is the most living dimension of the human being. The child, father, mother of the human being. There was what we later called Reggio Children, there is the spirit of Fondazione Reggio Children, which was created so as to find not only scholars but interpreters capable of regenerating and generating in context the specific form for common values, the local form. And that is the journey that brought us here with the P.E.R. project.

This was the reason why it was called ‘of childhood’, and this is the reason why I recognise you. All this is to say that I fully embrace the message you just read from Paulo. The message I would like to leave to children and teachers, to politicians, to economists, from Brazil, from Latin America, must become a shout, a cry because we are really in a huge educational emergency.

The child is the first to pay the toll, the child, the teenager and each of us. So: together please, alone nothing is done. Trusting childhood, what Paulo Freire used to say, trusting human being said Malaguzzi. Trust has been killed: the other is the ene-

my, the other is the one with the virus, the other is the one with the biggest car, the other is always a stranger, a foreigner.

Foreigners for us are not only those who come from the border seeking safety, from the sea by barge, those are the foreigners of all, but the foreigner is also the neighbour who makes too much noise. So let us shout in the hundred languages we have and can use each in our role, in embassies, consulates, governments, city halls, wherever we are, to trust childhood, in giving them body and voice. My whole appeal is in childhood: adopt us, children will save us, I am deeply convinced. If we have the courage to give them a voice, trust and surrender to them, they will save us, especially in our relationship with the environ-

ment: they have all the alphabets to relate to natural environments, to living things, all of them. It is here, that I ask you for the courage of utopia, it seems impossible but now either we play the courage of a utopia or really, we are in an emergent educational crisis. This, today, is not meant to be just a conference but the initiation of a process or the enhancement of processes. Lots of conferences, but not enough. Political, local, neighbourhood actions with the neighbour's child. Actions full of theory, full of passion. Paulo Freire today shouted giving voice, manifestos to children, knocking on the door of every politician with the courage that each of us has and, another term very dear to both of our teachers, with the courage of utopia.



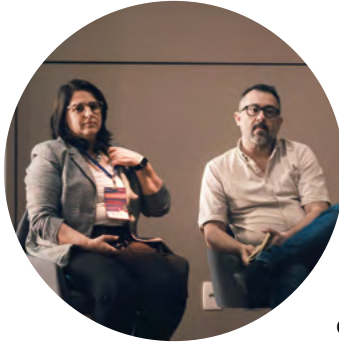
The shape we give  
to education is the shape  
we give to the world



*Dialogue between Cristian Fabbì<sup>1</sup> and Daniela Caldeirinha<sup>2</sup>*

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Centro Loris Malaguzzi ETS

<sup>2</sup> Vice President of Education at the Lemann Foundation



This session, devoted to the theme *'The Shape We Give to Education is the Shape We Give to the World'*, was led by journalist Marta Avancini, who proposed to explore the deep relationship between education and society. "In a complex global context, characterised by different

visions on education, such as anti-racist, indigenous and quilombola education in Brazil, pitted against ideas such as the militarisation of schools, it is crucial to question how education can contribute to building a better country and a better world", said Marta Avancini. Carla quoted Malaguzzi yesterday as saying that "if a child is not well in our city, then no child is well". Thus, trying to bring a broader perspective, I open our conversation and leave a question for both of us: *"How, in this scenario, do you see the relationship between education and society in the world today, and what path do you see for us, for education that actually contributes to having a better country and a better world?"*

**Daniela Caldeirinha:** The Lemann Foundation is a non-profit organisation that has been working for more than 20 years to improve the quality of Brazilian public edu-

cation and to train and develop people determined to devote their lives to finding a way to address Brazil's major development problems.

One vector of transformation is children's right to literacy. Why still this theme today? We have heard a thousand times: we learn to read, then we read to learn. If we do not have access to this right, which is very important, fundamental, and still very far from being guaranteed to all Brazilian children, the world becomes smaller. And no one wants our children to have a smaller world.

We want them to have the world they wish to build. So let us see what is an important, change-promoting element that we must be able to take into account. And the responsibility of public and private actors in guaranteeing this right is also important.

In the public and private sectors, the Lemann Foundation is not directly involved in literacy, but we continue to support the development of partners who, together with departments of education, build literacy policies in collaboration with municipalities. This is our function. It is foolish to think that one person, often the teacher, is responsible for ensuring children's learning in the classroom. The teacher is only one of the responsible parties in ensuring children's learning in school, but there are also the head teacher, the coordinator, the

secretarial technician, the secretaries, the minister, all the teams and organisations, as well as the Foundation and so many others, the families, the press, everyone has a responsibility with regard to this challenge. All of us therefore want to be in the right place, contributing to what we feel responsible for.

It is important in this context to briefly share the scenario we are witnessing today regarding this specific issue of literacy in Brazil. We have a dream for the country, which is to eradicate school illiteracy by 2031.

When we talk about school illiteracy, we are talking about children in the first, second and third years of primary school who have not attained the essential skills that are a child's right for learning.

So, the National Common Core, you know it much better than I do, stipulates that by the end of the second year of primary school, children have achieved a set of skills and knowledge related to the literacy process. This does not happen in the first year, but it is a continuous progression for our children, and we think it is possible to achieve this dream. This is why we are working together with dozens of people.

Why is this important?

When a child is not literate, it is certain to have an impact on their entire life trajectory: dropping out of school has a negative effect on a child, and failure rates are higher

amongst children who experience a literacy deficit and drop out of school. Even later, they do not have access to good job opportunities, and this impacts Brazil as a whole.

And where are we today?

At the international level, every five years, there is the PIRLS assessment, Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, carried out by a prestigious organisation, IEA, and the last assessment covered 57 countries and eight states and provinces. The good news is that for the first time Brazil participated in this assessment, and now we can compare with other countries participating in the test. The test is done with 10-year-old children, which is a slightly older age than the case histories we have discussed.

So, what did we find? Brazil is at the tail end, standing at position 53 out of 57 countries. At the top are Singapore, Hong Kong, Russia, England and Finland. And this is worrying, because we are talking about 10-year-old children and the situation is worse than we could imagine compared to the rest of the world, and it is interesting that the problem is being discussed and addressed in Brazil in recent years. On the one hand much progress is being made, on the other hand illiteracy is increasing in Brazil.

We have accomplished a lot, but we are still in the middle of the journey. In the last assessment in 2019, we have a little more than half of the children literate, which is

already an achievement for Brazil... Then the pandemic came, and the 2021 result showed how dramatic the effect of the pandemic was especially for younger children.

The good news is that by 2023 the networks were able to surpass or reach the pre-pandemic level. Good? Not entirely, but it is a sign that the intention to improve is there. It must be understood, however, that this is only an average. The average is never positive: there are states with illiteracy as high as 20%, others where it is 75%. There are great inequalities in Brazil when we look at this data: indigenous and black children still have far fewer guaranteed rights than in other countries and than white children.

There are great hidden disparities. We have a big difference between blacks and whites, and when we look at the 2023 average. In the South we have almost 70% of students at an adequate level; in the North we have less than half.

It needs to be talked about because this reinforces the sense of urgency of this issue. One very important thing I heard, and I keep repeating, is that 7-year-olds will only be seven years old once in their lifetime, right? As well as those aged five years, four years and three years. Obviously, a lot can be done later, and the networks have invested a lot, as have the schools. All these mechanisms are important, but we have to

make the most of the opportunity to have that child, in that classroom, on that day. And that doesn't come back.

What is our contribution? We, as a third sector organisation, have developed a support strategy, and it is important to say that we are not acting alone but in partnership with Instituto Natura and Associação Bem Comum, an organisation in Ceará.

We need to insist that literacy is a priority and we need to take this debate to a wider audience, do research and show how to make the difference. This is our role, with support from the most qualified, to help create literacy policies.

We also look at racial equity and innovative strategies, for example through the use of technology, which play an important role in supporting children with disabilities in inclusive education. Certainly, some parties play huge roles such as the Ministry of Education, City Departments, State Departments, all have a role. It is almost a joint working design looking at public policy.

How, then, to act? I guess you have heard a lot about the Sobral experience, where over the past 25 years they have made a revolution from the perspective of literacy levels in the country. Sobral is a very poor town, from the interior of Ceará, with few people, but the experience is great. Talking about people from Sobral or São Paulo is very different. There were

few favourable conditions, but there was a decision to make this revolution. And they managed from 2005 to 2019 to far exceed Brazil's level of learning, comparing themselves to private schools in São Paulo.

What are the elements that made the difference in Sobral? The results show that they put literacy of all children at the centre and took care to create cooperation, incentives, training, materials, strengthening municipal management, and strengthening institutional school communication, all together with strong political and technical efforts. I think that explains some of the experience.

The former mayor of Sobral ended his term in the city and said, "Maybe we can help other networks follow a similar path". So, he created the Associação Bem Comum, which is the partner that now supports education departments to design policies by looking at their own contexts.

And what happened? From 2019 onwards, there are 18 states in Brazil that have set policies inspired by Ceará's public policy. The great thing is that this is not a project where Lemann Foundation and Instituto Natura deliver a ready-made project to the states. No, states construct their own institutionalised policies with the whole ICMS so that they are territorial policies.

We also support municipalities, through three programmes: Educar para valer, in-

spired by Sobral, Formar, ongoing since 2016, and Plantar, available in five Amazonian municipalities.

Working in the Amazon is very different than working in the north-eastern, central-eastern or south-eastern parts, in fact there is a specific programme for each region.

The goal is to ensure the right to education, literacy of children in the territory, and the size of this scale is already large. 69% of first- and second-year primary school enrolment occurs in states that have set this goal, and it is very nice that an exchange between states is being created. There is a critical mass of public managers, from governors down to teachers, who have focused on this challenge, to which they apply themselves with dedication and care and by exchanging experiences. This is all very interesting.

There is a very strong movement in Brazil. Eighteen Brazilian states strongly place this issue in their territories. With the arrival at MEC, the Ministry of Education, which also has a history in this issue, of Minister Camilo Santana, who was governor of Ceará, literacy became a priority. To have started this work earlier with the states was very good to foster this movement. The MEC launched a National Commitment to Children's Literacy demonstrating, in my opinion, a very strong commitment on the

part of the executive branch: in addition to a programme that set goals for states and municipalities, it is working in a collaborative atmosphere. I think this is a lesson learned from Pinac, and it was a very strong strategy.

Thus, a great deal of effort was generated by the networks, and this was the work done directly by MEC with the universities.

I think this is a very interesting improvement over previous programmes. In June, the President convened the governors and set a goal of 80% literate children by 2030, and the goals will be shared between states and municipalities.

The debate reaches the schools, and I see that there is discussion amongst the networks. We can go further, but it is very important that Brazil has this vision for itself and its children.

So, of course, what I am saying here comes from the world of public policy. What drives our organisation is ensuring the right to education and literacy for all Brazilian children, which is why working with public policy mechanisms is so important, because it supports the work that teachers often do alone in school.

So, this is our contribution, and I am very proud that we can participate in this agenda, and again I want to thank you for inviting me and for your patience in listening to me here today. Thanks!

**Cristian Fabbri:** As Fondazione Reggio Children we want to propose some insights from our work starting with two key words that Carla herself explored yesterday and which are solidarity and research, two words that for us stand together and are together in this Charter, ‘Quality Education, a Global Challenge’, which has just been translated into Portuguese for this occasion and published on the website of Fondazione Reggio Children in Portuguese.

We have published it so that it can become a working tool, a document with respect to which you can communicate your ideas, your thoughts. We were interested in making it available to the Brazilian educational community to continue the discussion we have been having these days on the topic of solidarity and research.

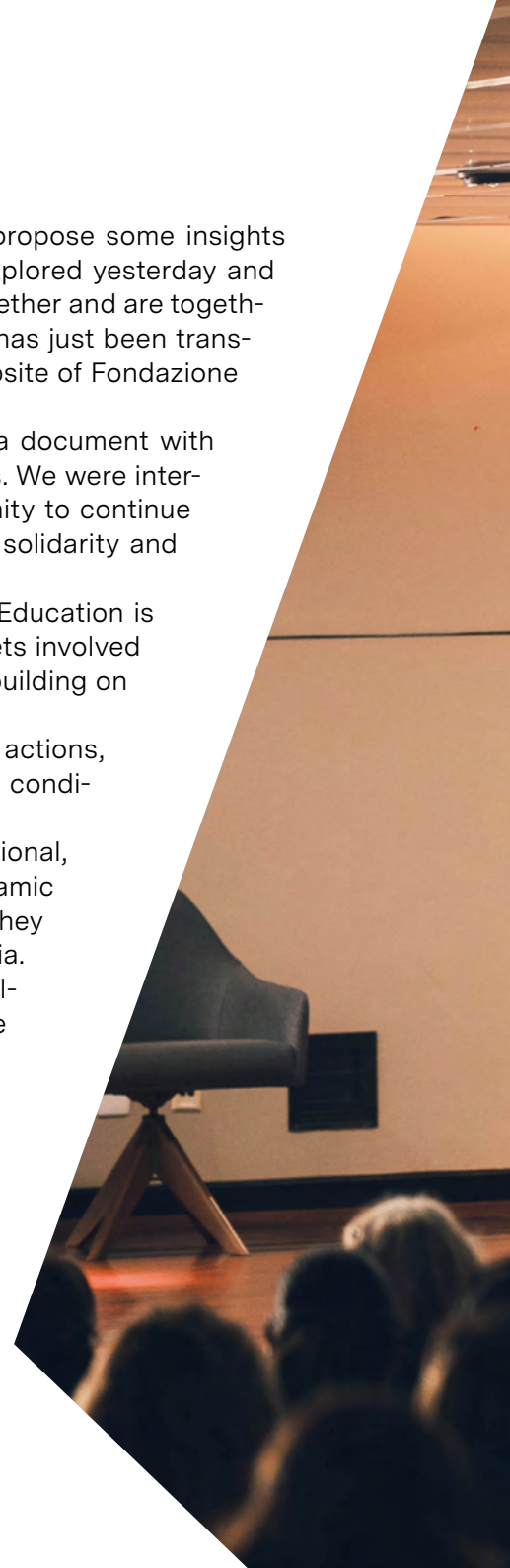
The title of this morning’s meeting is ‘The Shape We Give to Education is the Shape We Give to the World’. Fondazione Reggio Children gets involved in so many contexts around the world and does so precisely by building on these values, always seeking encounters with different contexts...

We asked ourselves, in preparation for today’s dialogue, what actions, values and opportunities we need to bring into play to create the conditions for the development of this literacy.

I try to field some key words, which we want to consider provisional, as provisional is everything that is continuous educating, a dynamic flowing, and so take them simply as food for thought even if they somehow sketch some of the values of the history of Reggio Emilia.

I start from a phrase that Carla said when our Charter of Values was promoted, and I think it is perhaps a bit of a reference for this whole reflection: “There is a need for cultural change”. Already this expression is very important. The first step is to recognise childhood as a subject of political and social rights. This statement places childhood within a broader debate than just education: it is a political-social, contemporary debate about how we stand together as a society. Carla said in one of her reflections in February that “childhood does not exist, that is, it is not recognised as a political subject.

It is a very important message that we take with us to





the countries of the world with which we develop new experiences together. As in South Africa, for example, particularly Johannesburg, which is a friendly country of the city of Reggio Emilia and where some people from Reggio Emilia also played a role in the journey that led to the end of apartheid. This friendship has remained, and our Foundation continues this path by working especially with informal settings in South Africa, where we will hold our next P.E.R. proposal.

One word that has come up a lot so far is 'curiosity'. The power of curiosity, the will to know, to discover again, to do research, we use this word with great awareness and desire. Children are the bearers of great curiosity, and we believe it is our duty as educators to keep this curiosity alive, to continue to nurture it, even to provoke it. We like the word 'provocation', obviously in this direction, precisely because provoking thoughts, provoking curiosity means keeping the path of learning and research alive. So, the word 'curiosity' is one that we offer, and curiosity is one that is also needed with respect to learning codes, learning to write, because children are curious by nature, they ask us about meanings, they ask us to write their names, as a moment of beginning this curiosity for literature.

We cherish this and live as a continuum in which also learning about literature,

about writing. We have to keep this curiosity alive, children are very strong in building these kinds of skills in collaboration with one another, with the adult, but most importantly they have this strength from curiosity.

Curiosity that goes along with the concept of 'creativity' that we explored yesterday and today with the many workshops, laboratories and ateliers that we did together, and so the word creativity points us down a path to learning.

In Albania, with Pause, which is our Atelier of Tastes and Flavours, we have been working on the theme of learning through food, of nutrition, which is at the centre of our reflections. This is also a theme of the future because we find a strong correlation between the themes of food and learning.

There are a thousand avenues that can connect these two strong components: in Albania we have done this with a journey that has now lasted three years and has seen us working with teachers and cooks. For us, cooks, whom we sometimes allow ourselves to call atelieristas of flavours, are very important figures in the school.

The metaphor of a hundred languages is a fortunate one, telling us that all children carry different languages and different ways of expressing their way of learning, and we need to be able to reach them and keep them tuned in.

The ambition of Fondazione Reggio Children is to be present even in the most difficult or opportunity-poor contexts in the world, with quality education proposals and activities for children and their communities.

We also believe, and we care to emphasise this, that education can be done even without the need for classically understood teaching materials. Remida's experience tells us how valuable waste materials can be for educational activities. We are interested in saying that research and learning paths can be made with any kind of material and in any kind of condition.

This is also why the P.E.R. project was born where the first letter, P, is from Play and the theme of play is also at the centre of this path. We know how play is also a learning opportunity and can take place without specific materials.

Another theme close to our hearts is that of dialogue, exchange and the ability of children to lend ideas and knowledge to one another.

We worked for several years in Kosovo: Kosovo is a country unfortunately plagued by ethnic conflict, where two groups still cannot dialogue. And here we return to the peace talk about the importance of education as a means of overcoming war. We have tried in Kosovo to bring the two different ethnic groups that are in conflict into dialogue, starting of course in childhood

and in particular with the concept of the small group, which somewhat belongs to us because it is that dimension that allows children to do research.

For children, as we all know, ethnic, cultural, social, eye colour differences are not a problem. Indeed, the differences between them fuel their interest. We all see on a daily basis in our work that children do research and they love this idea of borrowing ideas; it is something we really want to get involved in together. After all, we also came to propose some ideas and to welcome your ideas, to learn from what we are telling one another in these two days, and the borrowing of ideas is a great asset actually.

We are made of stories, so theatre is a context in which to put them into play.

In Reggio Emilia we have just inaugurated an exhibition on Gianni Rodari in whose curatorship Fondazione Reggio Children participated together with other entities, as it did for a historical exhibition on puppets and marionettes, because figure theatre is part of our history and because we believe that it is one of the many languages to be travelled, very powerful for reading, writing and especially for narrative skills.

We then return to the theme of Playful Learning, the theme from which we started, the theme of research. What children accomplish in their reflections, in their contexts is research. We use this word aware

that in academia the word research has other meanings; we like it when the meanings are multiple because it gives us an opportunity for comparison.

I brought up the theme of observation not so much to return to a question of pedagogical technique, but to say that every child is different and through observation, relationship and exchange we get to know one another and this for us is a point of respect for each child and the power they can bring within an educational journey.

The concept of co-construction or at any rate cultural construction: we do not like the idea of the child as an empty vessel to be filled, we believe that every child has many talents and our duty is to do everything so that these languages can be developed and, in this sense, the work in the small group allows space.

‘Nothing without joy’ is a metaphor we have been carrying for many years, but one that children pose daily. We have a duty to create schools that are places of joy, where you feel good, where you want to be: we tried to make sure that P.E.R. was a context

of joy, the idea of joy is fundamental, it is part of our idea of education.

As Fondazione Reggio Children, we have worked for three years in Palestine to accompany public and private schools to formulate common quality criteria. It was a great opportunity for dialogue about educating in a very complex context, and this also brings us back to the topic of climate resilience.

The theme of circularity, dialogue, conference-action that is done in workshops and not from a stage is very important to us: it is the theme of professional development understood as a path of research. We do not like to think of professional development as the transmission of information; we like it to be a research context, as such not replicable.

Carla often urges us not to replicate what we do, because professional development should be a path where we are always creating something new. I, on behalf of my colleagues, and especially Carla, thank you for what you have given us these days.

Thank you to everyone.





# P.E.R. workshops as living spaces of experimentation and dialogue



*Letícia Munhoz Vellozo*

PhD student in the Reggio Childhood Studies Programme



The major P.E.R. Play Explore Research gathering held in Brazil in 2024, focused on the relationship between play and learning and on the right to quality education for all children and childhoods, is rooted in the pedagogy of relationships proposed by Loris Malaguzzi. It was a particularly rich opportunity that invited all participants to reflect on education as a profoundly human process, built through interactions among children, with educators, and with the environment.

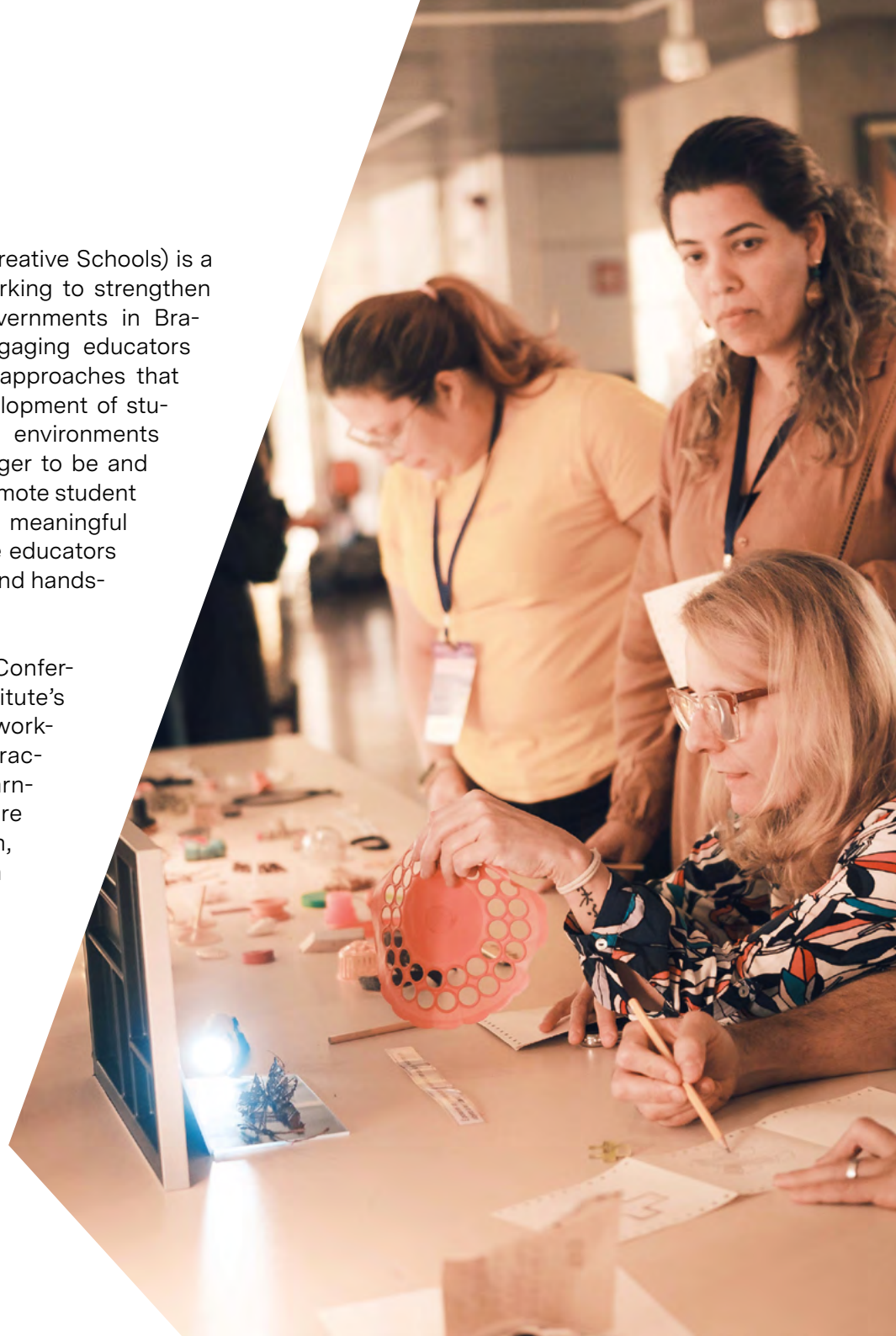
Within this perspective, the partners *aei-otu*, *Escolas Criativas*, *Raiz y Fronda*, *Rede Brasileira de Aprendizagem Criativa (RBAC)* and *Redsolare*, together with the atelieristi of Fondazione Reggio Children, developed workshops based on dialogue, listening and collaboration. These workshops created contexts for reflection in which each participant was recognised as a bearer of multiple languages and potentialities.

The workshops, or laboratories, therefore took on a central role as living spaces of experimentation, research and expression, where participating adults were able to collectively and meaningfully explore ideas, materials and emotions. The diversity of the workshops enabled multiple forms of learning and relationships, strengthening a sense of belonging, autonomy and mutual respect, which are essential principles of Malaguzzi's relational pedagogy.

## Escolas Criativas

Escolas Criativas (Creative Schools) is a Brazilian institution working to strengthen local and regional governments in Brazil by training and engaging educators to adopt pedagogical approaches that foster the holistic development of students, creating school environments where students are eager to be and learn. Our goal is to promote student agency, make learning meaningful and active, and engage educators in creative, innovative and hands-on teaching practices.

During the P.E.R Conference in Brazil, the institute's team facilitated two workshops demonstrating practical ways to design learning experiences that are more playful, hands-on, and meaningful through the Creative Learning approach. These sessions showcased how diverse areas of knowledge and technologies can be seamlessly integrated to enrich and





deepen the educational process. One of the workshops, titled “Museum of Me,” invited participants to reflect on their identities by imagining themselves as museums. They explored questions such as, “What objects would best represent me?” and “What elements would I include in my space?” At the end of the session, participants shared their creations, fostering a deeper sense of self-awareness and connection with others.

This activity is highly adaptable for students of various ages and educational stages, aligning, for example, with key learning objectives from the Brazil’s National Common Core (BNCC)<sup>1</sup> for the 2nd year of El-



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<sup>1</sup> The Brazilian National Common Core (BNCC) is a national educational framework in Brazil that defines the essential knowledge, skills, and competencies to be taught at different educational stages, from early childhood education to high school. It aims to ensure a more equitable and high-quality education across the country by establishing common guidelines while allowing for regional and local adaptations. The BNCC emphasizes the development of critical thinking, creativity, and citizenship, preparing students for the challenges of the 21st century.

elementary School. It supports the development of concepts like “self” and “other” and promotes identity-building through oral expression.

The second workshop, titled “Exploring balance and stability in a playful way” focused on tinkering experiences integrated with Creative Learning and the BNCC, inspired by the balance and equilibrium workshops pioneered by The Tinkering Studio. Remixed for the Brazilian context, this activity challenged participants to explore the concept of physical balance through hands-on creations, using familiar materials in unconventional ways. The workshop concluded with a reflective session, where participants shared their creative processes and outcomes. This activity directly aligns with BNCC objectives for Elementary School, addressing topics such as material properties, measurements of length, area, mass, and the concept of volume.

Together, these workshops embody the essence of active and playful learning experiences. They engage students in meaningful, open-ended proposals that connect with their interests and needs, while also integrating multiple areas of knowledge for different age groups and educational cycles. The inclusion of technology in a creative and purposeful manner further

enhances learning opportunities, making these approaches versatile and impactful across diverse contexts.

### **RBAC Rede Brasileira de Aprendizagem Criativa**

The Rede Brasileira de Aprendizagem Criativa (RBAC, or Brazilian Creative Learning Network in English) is a grassroots movement that promotes the implementation of playful, creative, relevant, and inclusive learning practices in schools and non-formal education environments across Brazil. Started in 2015, growing out of the work of the Lifelong Kindergarten group at the MIT Media Lab, RBAC aims to address the global need for educational systems that are more meaningful and engaging for students and that better prepare them for a rapidly changing world.

In just nine years, RBAC has created a demonstrated model of systems change within the Brazilian educational sector. By identifying innovative work by educators within and outside of schools, connecting those educators to one another, and forging a network of mutual collaboration, RBAC has grown into a network of innovative educators with more than 17,000 registered members. The Network includes 26 regional and thematic hubs led by more

than 150 volunteers, from vulnerable communities in major urban centers to villages in the Amazon.

At the conference-action, RBAC delivered hands-on activities in person for educators, students and parents. The Creative Village gave participants the opportunity to use concepts from the curriculum and lots of creativity to create projects using simple materials and teamwork, while reflecting about their creations and even the creation process itself. The Circle of Inventions developed and delivered by Catalisador Institute, RBAC partner, promoted a creative learning experience in three moments: Circle of Reading, Circle of Making based on a prompt and experimentation with different materialities, and Circle of Narratives, where participants had the opportunity to share their inventions. We also invited participants to Explore Octostudio, a free mobile coding app developed by the Lifelong Kindergarten group, that lets children create animations, games and other interactive projects using photos, drawings, and sounds from the world around them, creating their own projects using the app and sharing their reflections about the process. RBAC was also responsible for the WeScratch: Animate a name online activity for educators inviting remote participants to explore and animate their names

using Scratch, a multimedia programming tool with over 100 million young users from all over the world.

### **RED Solare Brasil**

RedSOLARE Brasil is a non-profit organisation that draws inspiration from the Reggio Emilia approach. It has been building networks to support education for 19 years. Our mission is to defend children's rights and promote an environment full of learning opportunities where every child takes the lead in their own development.

As members of RedSOLARE Latino-Americana and the Reggio Children International Network, we are connected with educators worldwide to share knowledge and build a global community that values children. Our actions impact the lives of thousands of children in Brazil and Latin America.

#### *A plural and representative network*

RedSOLARE Brasil's board of directors comprises educators from various institutions, including public and private universities, public and private schools, and democratic educational movements. This variety ensures pluralism and representation, making us stronger in our work advocating for quality education for all children.

A project by



Associação  
Brasil Criança  
Centro Lúcia Marquês

With the support of

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est/projeto DE.R.  
Explor Research

August 1st, 2nd, 3rd  
Agosto de  
- Brasil



### *Building knowledge networks*

We believe in the power of dialogue and collaboration. That's why we gather educators, families, and institutions in a mutual support network, sharing experiences, research, and knowledge. We organise study groups, conferences, seminars, workshops, and free gatherings in marginalised territories, quilombola communities, riverside and urban areas.

### *Our initiatives*

- Continuing education: We provide courses, workshops, and material for educators, inspiring innovative practices and projects aligned with the Reggio Emilia approach.
- Cooperation with public policy makers: We work with governmental bodies to contribute to public policies that promote quality, inclusive early childhood education that meets children's needs.
- Disseminating knowledge: We share pedagogical, historical, and cultural resources, valuing diversity and different ways of learning.

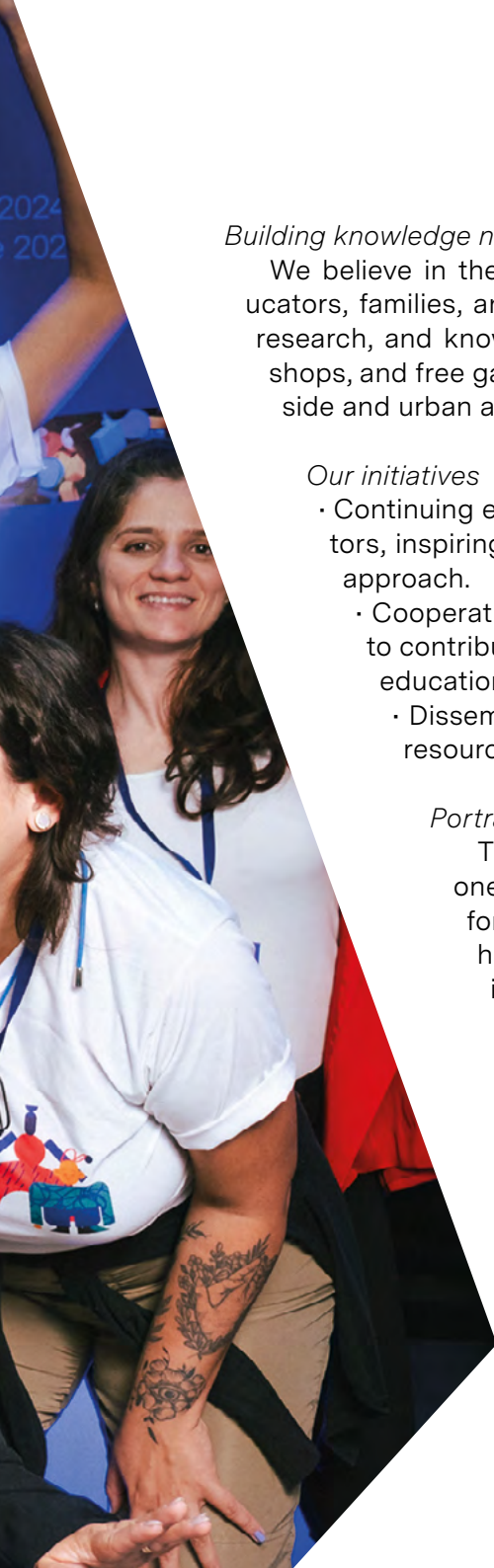
### *Portraits, self-portraits, and identities*

This initiative involves exploring one's identity and way to express oneself. Making children draw their self-portrait creates the conditions for them to reflect on who they are, how they see themselves, and how they would like to be seen. It also helps them recognise their individuality and characteristics and value their way of being in the world.

But how can observing and analysing a people's cultural and historical diversity promote children's self-perception and encourage them to reflect on their emotions, personality, and physical characteristics? What are the founding elements that can be generalised and can qualify the experience?

### *Pen and paper – Mark-making experiences for children*

For children, early experience with tracing and drawing intertwines with the discovery of their bodies and how



they move. It's like a choreography where bodies and hands create poetic forms that gradually gain meaning.

How can diverse environments fostering creativity and exploration initiate different ways to express oneself? How can different materials support artistic activities? How do individual and collective authorship intertwine?

### **Raíz y fronda**

Raíz Y Fronda is a community of children aged 4 to 12, their families, and an educator who guides community-based out-of-school learning activities.

Raíz Y Fronda arose as a community-driven, self-managed alternative to address the severe educational, environmental, and (physical and emotional) health crisis affecting urban children.

It's also Activism advocating for children's right to use the public space and go beyond the spheres — home and school — they are traditionally confined to. Fifteen families and their children have participated in Guadalajara, Mexico, since September 2020.

Raíz Y Fronda transcends pedagogy, involving the city and public spaces to help children organically and meaningfully en-

gage with experiences and information that become precious lessons that enrich their lives.

They collaborate with public and private entities and the sensitive adults who work there. Examples include libraries, museums, metropolitan agencies, shops, forest rangers, and universities. There are also training spaces for adults seeking to promote out-of-school learning communities inspired by this approach, promoting more deschooling communities.

Educational ecosystems in the public space and community activism for free children. "The bicycle helped me experience the streets of my neighbourhood." Rethinking the public space, the people who inhabit it, and their stance in inhabiting it helps shape our stance towards life. The public space has excellent educational potential because real-life experiences, life narratives, and applied knowledge are always there—sometimes implicitly, sometimes explicitly.

During the PER workshop at the Paula Souza Centre, participants reflected on the public space's educational potential, educators' features, and the micro-revolutions within the community that broaden the educational possibilities for children through a more participatory approach, making

children's existence, needs, and contributions more socially visible and emphasising their perspectives.

"I started using public transport by myself when I was about 12 years old. It made me aware of time and distances. My biggest fears were getting off at the wrong stop and getting lost."

### **Aeiotu**

Regardless of where they are born, Aeiotu is committed to ensuring that all children have access to high-quality education and comprehensive care.

Democratizing education to reduce social inequalities through an innovative and sustainable educational model for children aged 0 to 5 is Aeiotu's goal. The organization aims to develop the potential of early childhood to transform communities in an innovative and sustainable way through private management projects, consultancy, and digital advocacy, combining innovation, experience, connection, and transformation.

Aeiotu conducted an in-person workshop, "Playful Interactions: Enhancing Learning Through Play", led by Laura Guzmán Soto and Ana Maria Conde, focused on how interactions with children can transform their learning and development, ex-

ploring the power of play and offering practical and enjoyable strategies to promote meaningful relationships with children.

An online workshop, "Reconfiguring Everyday Spaces for Early Childhood Learning", was led by Felipe Hernández to explore how everyday environments can become learning spaces through play in early childhood, and to design environments that foster enriching interactions and child development through activities and reflection.

"Family Experience in Person – Playing to Connect" was conducted by Laura Guzmán Soto and Ana Maria Conde: families participated in playful activities with their children using engaging proposals and open-ended, exploratory materials. Through meaningful interactions, children become the protagonists while adults respond with sensitivity and attention to their needs and interests.

### **Fondazione Reggio Children**

Fondazione Reggio Children – Centro Loris Malaguzzi ETS is an Italian participatory and research foundation, born from the educational experience of Reggio Emilia, the city where it is based, aiming to promote community well-being through solidarity, research, and quality education. It participated in P.E.R. Brazil with its own workshops.

“A green wall makes me feel good, it makes me think I am rolling on the grass, it makes everything more beautiful... it leaves me speechless.” Children, when approaching spaces, tell us that the identity of a place is transformable, updating like an identity card. Compositions combining analog and digital elements reimagine learning spaces, shaping ideas of pleasure and playfulness for the communities that inhabit them.

Research questions: How can we promote the care and identity of learning environments? What idea of well-being emerges, and how does well-being influence motivation in terms of active engagement? What meanings does it hold in terms of building a learning community?

**Open-mouthed  
Learning spaces outside-inside  
the classroom  
Origins of the workshop proposal**

The proposal originates from a study on the identity of places shared with children. While approaching various locations in Reggio Emilia, children identified two very interesting concepts related to identity: transformation and possibility. Transformation refers to change over time and in relation to people; possibility refers to the proposals, activations, and invitations

that environments offer to the people inhabiting them. This work of reading and interpreting places highlights spaces not as virgin, bare, immutable, or static, but as living organisms with their own life. Working *with* places rather than *in* places requires first listening to them, starting from their material, architectural, and relational characteristics.

The title of this workshop comes from the words of some children – “A green wall (grass) makes me feel good, it makes me think I am rolling on the grass... it makes everything more beautiful, it leaves me speechless...” – identifying the concept of well-being as essential for life in indoor and enclosed spaces. Children associate well-being with natural elements. The vegetal aspect is seen as one of the possible responses to the need for beauty and balance between artificial and non-artificial elements in the spaces around them.

Once the theme was identified, children began a second step: initial ideas transformed into project proposals. Imagination and creativity merged with different space characteristics. The relationship between inside and outside, nature and architecture, is the key to reinterpret structural elements in the space. Through different languages, ideas can take shape and move from concept to realization.

From the analysis of how the research

was conducted with children, the workshop proposed several key steps.

Which environment needs to be rethought in terms of care and pleasantness? What characteristics can I play with? Researching the space or architectural, atmospheric, or material elements to work on: reading the surrounding space and identifying an environment to work on.

What should the reimagined space convey? How? Identify the theme with which to reinterpret the space: something missing, something predominant, or something to harmonize.

What inspirations can I find for the project? What traces of identity do I carry in my pocket? Researching material and digital stimuli for space reinterpretation: materials as stimuli, smartphone gallery as a possible archive of elements with identity qualities related to the theme.

What form will the project take? What language can convey it? Create and imagine the new space integrating physical space and digital elements: project sketches on paper and video collage compositions.

After a brief sharing and initial discussion on the documentation of the process

with children from Reggio Emilia, participants worked in small groups and identified a documenter to capture the meanings of the experience, in terms of emerging concepts and first hypotheses related to the research questions.

The Centro Paula Souza, with its variety of spaces and environments, was the starting point to listen, analyze, and reimagine the expressive and educational potential to be developed. The workshop setup included a table of materials and tools for the exploratory and imaginative phase, as well as iPads and recommended apps for the project phase.

### Listening to waste matter

In education, matter is often exploited and abused, as in the productive world. Listening to matter, and waste matter, helps us reflect on our relationship with the planet's living and nonliving resources, practicing our ecological thinking.

Is it possible to see matter as a subject to be listened to and not as an object to be used? How many identities does matter hide? What possibilities and pedagogical questions does it suggest? And what stories of injustice and exploitation does waste tell to educators? What does this encounter with matter leave us with?

The workshop carried out by Remida at

Sao Paulo was set up with about thirty different types of waste materials, some brought from Italy and some collected in São Paulo in the days leading up to the event. Rubber, fabric, plastic, paper, metal, and natural materials were beautifully displayed on a table. Alongside the materials were a number of tools such as a digital microscope, LED lights, a stethoscope, a magnifying glass, and sheets of paper for writing.

The group was asked to take the time to choose a material and try to get to know it, writing down everything that the material evoked on the sheet of paper.

The participants responded to the request with curiosity and commitment. They took the time to choose the material and then to establish an intimate relationship with their piece, a necessary condition for bringing out thoughts, questions, memories, and imagination.

One participant wrote about a round scrap of red rubber:

“This material first reminded me of crochet lace and then of my grandmother’s skin, which was white, unlike mine, which is dark. When I was 7 or 8 years old, my grandmother taught me some very difficult crochet stitches. Then I stopped and have now started again with my grandson.”

Someone else said about another material, “It looks like organic matter, cerebral matter. If I were this object, I would think that they discarded me before finishing me. It made me shift my gaze by putting me in the object’s shoes.”

A teacher who chose a spool wrote:

“I don’t know what it is, but I thought about my mother’s story. In the 1940s, at the age of 8 or 9, she left school (talk about injustice) to become an embroiderer and learn the profession. I like to think that this is one of her spools from which one of her threads was unwound. She made wonderful things, works of art. If I look at it for a long time, I don’t see waste but the beginning of a work of art.”

Finally, one participant said, “For me, all materials are natural, and waste is a type of nature that we are unable to understand.”

### **Undomesticated domestic nature (workshop online)**

How can we integrate our relationship with nature into our domestic spaces?

How can a new way of thinking about our homes renew our connection with na-

ture and foster a harmonious relationship with the environment in an expanded and collaborative living community?

The relationship between nature and contemporary man, who is increasingly immersed in the urban landscape, seeks new ways and new spaces to reestablish an an-

cient bond, the inherent ability of every human being to connect deeply with the living world. Starting from our homes, a place we inhabit and which inhabits us, we will reflect on how domestic space, through natural elements, can offer multisensory experiences and activate our most creative and playful side.



# Play experiences for children and families

Saturday, 3 August 2024 – CEU Butantã, São Paulo



*Letícia Munhoz Vellozo*

PhD student in the Reggio Childhood Studies Programme



These were two days of intense reflection on education and on the (re)meaning of educational practices based on respect, dialogue, and relationships, with play as the central axis of learning. The event involved educators, key representatives in the field of education, and people who believe that education is a powerful tool for transforming society and our condition of life on Earth.

Following these first two days, and as the conclusion of P.E.R. Play Explore Research in Brazil, a very special morning took place on 3 August 2024 at CEU Butantã in São Paulo. The partners aeiotu, Escolas Criativas, Raiz y Fronda, Rede Brasileira de Aprendizagem Criativa (RBAC) and Redsolare, together with the atelieristi of Fondazione Reggio Children, developed workshops with children and families.

The event was open to the public and entirely free of charge.

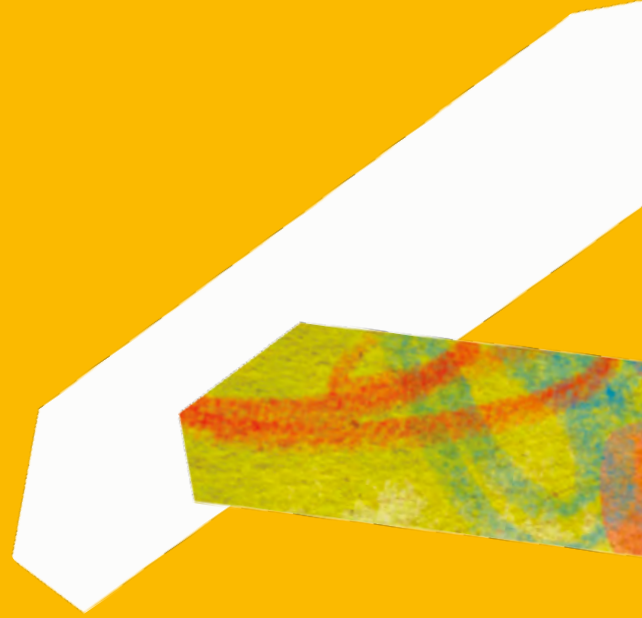
The activities with children and families represented a moment of deep connection between school, community, and childhood, reaffirming the principles of Loris Malaguzzi's relational pedagogy. By bringing together children, educators, and families in spaces for creation and experimentation, this gathering allowed the construction of a shared learning network in which everyone could recognize themselves as protagonists in the educational process.

The approach, based on respect, dialogue, and play as the structural axis of learning, expanded the vision of education as a practice of listening and cooperation. By opening its doors to the community and integrating different institutions committed to humanizing education, the event emphasized the importance of strengthening bonds and (re)defining pedagogical practices, transforming the act of educating into a collective experience of care, sensitivity, and social transformation.

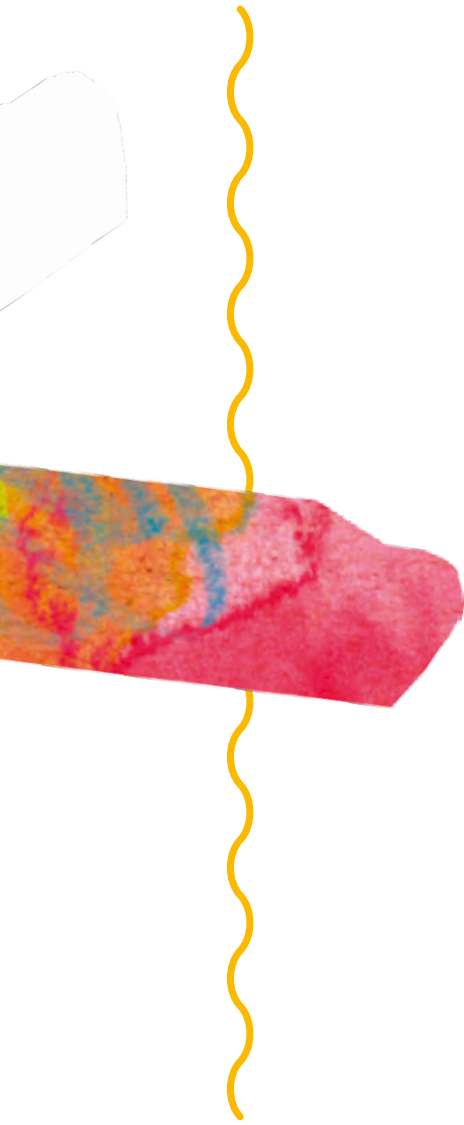




# Conclusions



*From Reggio to Brazil: the P.E.R. project  
on play and learning by Fondazione Reggio Children  
and The LEGO Foundation*



In São Paulo, Brazil, from 1 to 3 August 2024, play and learning as educational strategies for the social cohesion of communities were at the heart of the P.E.R. Play Explore Research project, promoted by Fondazione Reggio Children – Centro Loris Malaguzzi ETS and supported by The LEGO Foundation.

The first two days featured in-person and online sessions for an international audience, conducted in four languages: Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, and English. The programme included action-conferences, dialogues and exchanges among participants, and over forty free workshops. On the third and final day, a special session was dedicated to children, parents, and families.

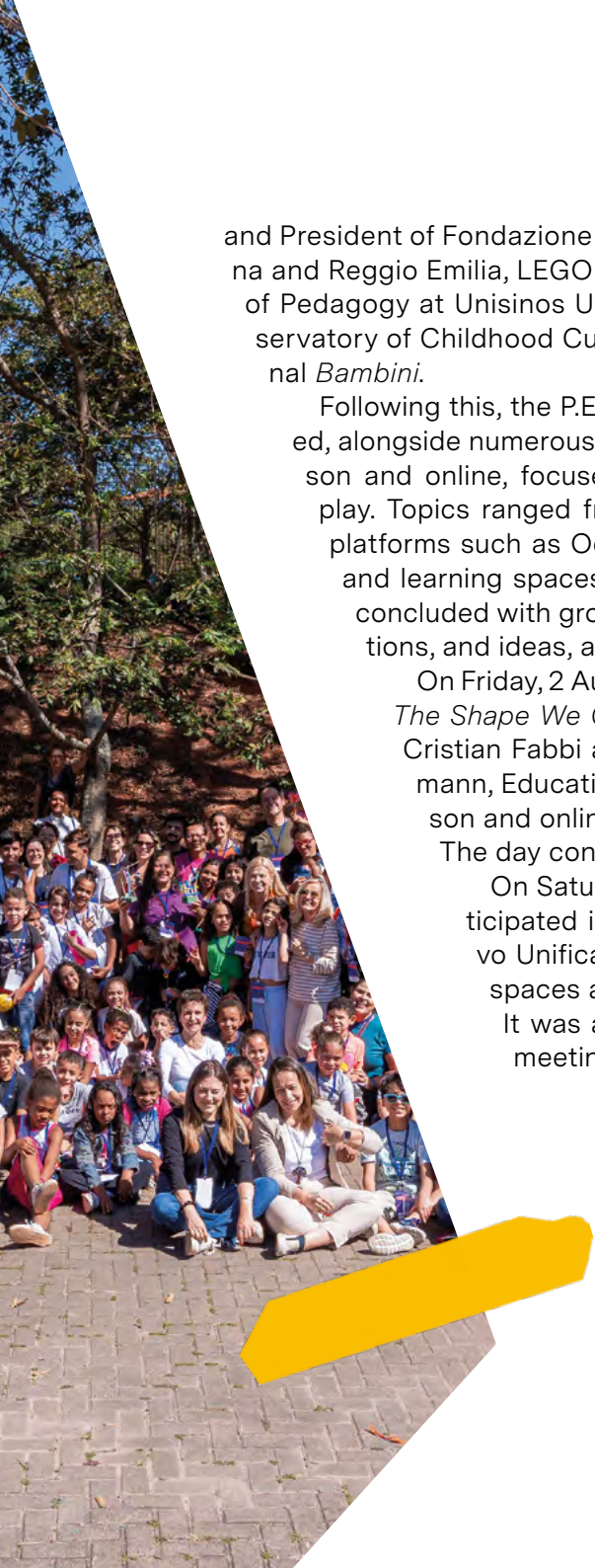
The Brazilian event was organised by Fondazione Reggio Children with The LEGO Foundation in collaboration with Italian and Brazilian institutions and educational organisations from Latin America, including: the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, represented by the Consulate General of Italy in São Paulo and the Italian Training System Abroad; the Government of the State of São Paulo; the Municipality of São Paulo; Centro Paula Souza; the CEU – Centro Educativo Unificado Butantã; and organisations such as Red Solare Brasil, aeioTU, Fondazione Lemmann, Escolas Criativas, RBAC – Brazilian

Network for Creative Learning, Fondazione Cintra Gordinho, and Raiz y Fronda.

The first two days were aimed at educators, teachers, policy makers, and the educational community. On Thursday, 1 August 2024, at Centro Paula Souza in Santa Ifigênia, São Paulo, the event opened with institutional speeches by Laura Laganà, Superintendent and Director of Centro Paula Souza; Fernando Padula, Municipal Secretary of Education of São Paulo, representing the CEUs; Livia Satullo, Deputy Consul at the Consulate General of Italy in São Paulo; and Monica Faggionato, School Principal, Italian Training System for the consular districts of São Paulo, Curitiba, and Porto Alegre. The programme was inaugurated with addresses by Sidsel Marie Kristensen, CEO of The LEGO Foundation, and Cristian Fabbi, Director General of Fondazione Reggio Children.

In plenary, the first of two dialogue sessions focused on the pedagogical and cultural themes of P.E.R. Brazil took place. Under the title *Thoughts Towards a Pedagogy of the Future*, a dialogue-interview was held with Carla Rinaldi, internationally renowned educationalist





and President of Fondazione Reggio Children, DESU lecturer at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, LEGO Prize 2015 recipient, conducted by Paulo Fochi, Professor of Pedagogy at Unisinos University, Brazil, founder and coordinator of OBECI – Observatory of Childhood Culture, and member of the scientific committee of the journal *Bambini*.

Following this, the P.E.R. educational partner network in São Paulo was presented, alongside numerous workshops organised in two parallel sessions, both in-person and online, focused on diverse educational practices for learning through play. Topics ranged from nature and regeneration to digital creative apps and platforms such as OctoStudio and MIT Lifelong Kindergarten's Scratch, public and learning spaces, museum experiences, and educational policies. The day concluded with group discussions, opportunities to share experiences, reflections, and ideas, and a musical performance.

On Friday, 2 August, the plenary and online sessions addressed the theme *The Shape We Give to Education Is the Shape We Give to the World*, with Cristian Fabbi and Daniela Caldeirinha, Vice President of Fondazione Lemmann, Education Area. This was followed by workshops held both in-person and online, culminating in a plenary session to share the outcomes. The day concluded with remarks by Carla Rinaldi.

On Saturday morning, 3 August 2024, the community that had participated in the two days of sessions moved to the Centro Educativo Unificato (CEU) Butantã in São Paulo. Here, visits to educational spaces and activities for children, parents, and families took place. It was also a moment to say goodbye, celebrate, and plan future meetings with P.E.R.





The *P.E.R. - Play, Explore, Research* project by Fondazione Reggio Children-Centro Loris Malaguzzi, made possible by the collaboration with The LEGO Foundation, is a global platform for exchange and research for teachers, educators, researchers, families and administrators to promote playful approaches to learning for children, young people and adults.

This series of publications brings together the contributions that characterised each individual conference-action in the seven countries involved in the project, starting with the launch of the P.E.R. project in Italy, in Reggio Emilia, in November 2023.