

MANIFESTO

#GirlsDecide

for the Right to Education

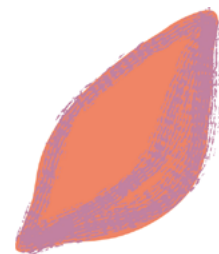
We are girls. We are Black girls, quilombola girls, Indigenous girls, we come from the rural areas and from the forests, from the city's outskirts and slums. We are transgender girls, we are girls with disabilities. We are in scrapped schools and in crowded public transportation, we are on the streets and in the alleys, in the squats and on demonstrations, we are in the virtual and in the real networks. At this moment, many girls are starving and facing gender violence. We carry the strength from our ancestors and a history of struggles and resistance. We belong to the present generation, but we are also the future. We are warriors and caregivers. We are not silent, we were silenced. We won't shut up any longer. This is our cry.



Brazilian education cries for help, it's agonising, it suffers with so many problems: from funding cuts to censorship.

The pandemic exposed what has long been discussed within social movements: overcrowded public transportation — when available, the lack of internet access and equipment, the extreme poverty that makes schools the only place

where many will find their only meal, overworked and underpaid teachers. It also highlighted the need for an education **focused on our African, Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous origins and ancestry** that colonisation has robbed us of.

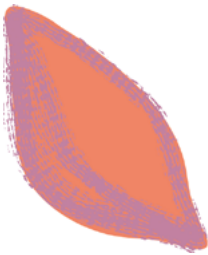


Education as we know it today is hanging on a thread or on a chain of hands held by people who still believe it is possible to build an accessible and plural education, even though they are immersed in a reality of ongoing cuts and scrapping of schools. Education came from the people's fight. We secured this right thanks to the struggle, and thanks to education, there are more people to keep fighting. Warriors shape education and education shapes warriors.

When we say schools, we refer to public education, which educates the workers' children, who are at the bottom and at the margins of the society. Many of us do not even have access to these public spaces of education. **Many of us are expelled from schools**, in violation of what is determined by the Constitution and the Children and Adolescent Statute (ECA), which guarantee by law the right to education for all. Here we refer to transgender girls, whose access to educational spaces is denied from the moment they step into a school, because they know their identities will be disregarded and they will be constantly violated. Here we also refer to people with disabilities, Black, Indigenous, quilombolas and rural-area children, adolescents and youth, and many others in this unequal country.

We need to think about the infrastructure of secondary schools in Brazil. It is indeed problematic to think of "throwing" these young people in schools that look like





prisons, surrounded by bars and giant gates, that segregate them from each other, where the diversity of people and cultures is not taught, which have a Eurocentric curriculum, disregarding the knowledge produced within communities. Are those schools able to prepare the young people for higher education and for the work environment? Are those schools able to encourage critical thinking and citizenship among the youth? **Is this really the education we want for the present and for the future?**

It's highly important to specify who suffers most within these environments. Among them are transgender and other LGBTQIAP+ people — especially people of color, Indigenous peoples, quilombolas, rural workers, in other words, **all bodies that are historically marginalized**. People with disabilities are stigmatised in our society and some people want to further segregate them by preventing them from attending the same schools.

Education plays a key role in a country's development. We want another development model, one that places caring for people and nature at the forefront. **Dreaming of a plural and accessible education** is fundamental because it is impossible to get somewhere that has not been dreamt of before. Among the people who dream of a diverse and popular education, especially for girls, we can highlight Malala, who fights tirelessly for girls' and women's right to learn all over the world.

There are experiences in other countries that can inspire us, as well as in our country. We can **learn from the struggle of the Indigenous and quilombola groups** for the right to a differentiated school education that respects their ways of life, their education concept as a process that takes place within community relations and in the boundary with their territories. However, those schools suffer from increasingly precarious operating conditions.

It is extremely important that public schools, as the great pillar of educational systems, be a "real" priority for the state and for society. Not only by ensuring the teaching of

the subjects, but also its quality. **The educational system itself needs to be educated** to consider societal dimensions. They mistake education with schooling and teaching quality with simple learning tests: They don't want to foster critical minds, but work machines; they kill the dreams of their students in favour of a society where the market dictates the rules of the "game." We are going through a deep crisis, that is undeniable. The authoritarian setbacks we are experiencing due to the implementation of the new high school system, education budget cuts, school dropouts and the impacts of the pandemic and violence against the Black, Indigenous, and poor population all contribute to more young people and children suffering and losing motivation and hope, having their dreams trampled upon.



*That's why we must act!
If we want to change Brazil,
It has to start with education!*

We want a plural education that goes hand in hand with teachers, values them and provides them with decent salaries. We want equal pay for Indigenous and quilombola teachers who receive less, in spite of holding equivalent training. We want schools in the countryside, in the forests and in the outskirts to have proper infrastructure, supporting materials, dignity and quality education. We want that education be liberating, with multiple forms of teaching and learning, that actively listens to the students in their diversity of sufferings, proposals and dreams.

We want an anti-racist, anti-ableist, anti-sexist, anti-LGBTQIAP+phobic education, highlighting the need to put an end to the tremendous suffering imposed on transgender people. We want an education that teaches the history and culture of Indigenous peoples and Afro-Brazilians without prejudice and stereotypes, in compliance with the National Education Directives and Bases Law, as amended by Laws 10.639/2003 and 11.645/2008. We want an education that supports student mothers, considering that the lack of support and understanding results in pregnant teenagers

and young girls dropping out of school. We want an education that ensures students' welfare at school and on their way to school. That prepares students for adult life and higher education, and schools that can adapt to different realities. An education that strengthens public universities and expands quotas and affirmative policies, ensuring effective conditions for Black, Indigenous, quilombola, disabled, rural and trans students from marginalised communities to remain in higher education.

We advocate an education that includes and does not exclude. People with disabilities do not “get in the way,” as some say. An inclusive education, which embraces the specificities of every person without excluding anyone, benefits all. Inclusive education entails accessibility, material and technological resources, but also overcoming prejudices and ableist practices that are incapable of perceiving the potential of each student. And it is in this way, with this system, that we can create a better society and, consequently, a better Brazil.

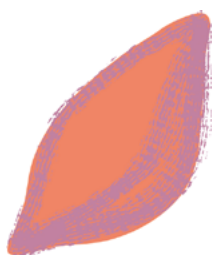
*“Education does not change the world.
Education changes people.
People change the world.”*

– Paulo Freire
patron of Brazilian education



What needs to be a priority for us to effectively realise the right to quality education in Brazil?

The debate about education often seems reverend. Overall, educational policies are submitted to the “available” budget, which is always insufficient. Historically, the people's money is drained away for the elites. But we should start by asking ourselves: What education do we want (and need) to build, and for whom? This should be our starting point so as to establish the necessary resources — which do exist. They should be distributed in a way that confronts inequalities, that is, by making them reach more where



they have always reached less — the case of Indigenous and quilombolas schools, schools in the urban peripheries and in the countryside — and, in this way, **repair part of the historical debt of the Brazilian State with its most violated and oppressed populations.**

Our educational practices continue to prioritise the same people as usual, since colonisation. Against so many problems and challenges, Black, Indigenous, quilombola, peripheral and rural, LGBTQIAP+ and disabled feminist youth unite every single day to occupy universities and schools, to **paint education with the colours of the people.** Our struggles are **plural for a democratic and participatory education that serves the emancipation of our people,** of the girls and women scattered across our country. This movement brings together the people and communities to take together the place of study and to have the right to dream and achieve.



We must act!

We need to see our people as a means to build effective public policies that break the oppression imposed by elitism and Whitewashing that still surround us. Those who are ruling on educational policies in our country are White, hetero, cis and rich men, who have never experienced the precarious situation of public education. The future they're designing benefits merely them. But education is PUBLIC and we have our right to also be “doctors.” We must mobilise ourselves and ask: What are we doing for girls today? Here we are referring to Black, Indigenous, quilombola, LGBTQIAP+, and transgender girls, girls with disabilities, peripheral and rural girls, so that we can build a feminist future.

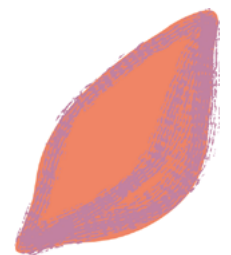




For whom is the education they are building?

To effectively realise the right to quality education, we need to break the top down “reform” model. We need to transform the state reforms into popular intervention that not only creates workers — hostages of capitalist exploitations — but instead critical thinkers who do not reduce their potential to a merely “well-paid” profession. That studies nurture a dignity that does not depend upon a diploma on the wall, that means, this idea that someone’s worth comes only through a career. When pedagogy politicises, masses and collectives move. Black, transgender, Indigenous, quilombola women, women with disabilities, mothers, daughters, leaders and women from marginalised communities are humanised, politics is made and takes place. Inequalities are overcome, the oppressive state is dismantled, people go to the streets for the intervention and liberation of our own. **We want to occupy the spaces of power!**

Finally, we want all to understand that the way education is done in Brazil, for us — Black, Indigenous, quilombola girls, girls from the favelas and marginalised communities, transgender, girls, rural workers and girls with disabilities, together here in this group and in many other battles — is not an education that meets our pluralities, our most basic needs. We “enjoy” an illusory education that does not reach us. We dream of the day when we will enjoy quality education — without sexism, racism, LGBTQIAP+phobia and ableism — one that complements who we are, one that values our ancestries and not one that forces us to follow a system that will certainly erase our history that shapes us and makes us unaware of who we are and why we are here.



*The fight is for an education for all!
The education that raises awareness, that
frees and strengthens
everyone within their specificities!*

“ I no longer want an education that makes me afraid of expressing my opinions. I want an education where I can be myself, with my cultural and social heritages, in an environment where being different doesn't exclude me.

LORRANE MACEDO

19, young Black rural woman

“ I dream of an education in which all will be accepted. To reach a quality education, we need equality and respect. I dream of an education that respects my skin color, my religion and my gender.

ANA LUIZA ROQUE

17, Black and quilombola girl

“ Many schools have a physical infrastructure incompatible with students' needs and the allocated resources are below what is necessary.

RHAYNNARA BORGES

19, young rural woman

“ The education I want is a quality education, in which teenage mothers do not have to drop out of school to take care of their homes or children because they don't receive support at school.

SHAYRES PATAXÓ

19, young Indigenous woman

“ Often the voices of young people are ignored. People usually say that the young people are the future, but we are also the present. To make a better future, we need to pay attention to the present.

MARIA CLARA TUMBALALÁ

18, young Indigenous woman

“ I hope to see the school of my community stabilized and that all the children and young people are fulfilled.

MEL KAIMBÉ

17, Indigenous girl

“ I want an education painted of people! An education that corresponds to people’s reality, that is built from the streets into the schools. An education that builds the country like a classroom.

BIA DINIZ

16, Black and pansexual girl

“ I want an education that addresses the reality of the students, that stimulates their protagonism. And that contextualized didactic material is used and that the school environment has all the necessary equipment for the students to develop their skills

VITÓRIA SOUZA

21, young Black and quilombola woman

“ There is nothing better than a document that is written by people who experience education on a daily basis. That’s why this manifesto is so important, because we represent all the Brazilian diversity and plurality, we know about our experiences

LORENA BEZERRA

18, young Black and quilombola woman

“ This manifesto arises from the need for a document that elevates women’s voices, that makes other women mobilise, articulate and politicise themselves amid social struggles.

MARIA EDUARDA MOREIRA

17, Black girl from a marginalised community



“ *I, as a trans, Black, and girl from a marginalised community, do not want an educational institution where I am afraid to be and to study, where my social name is not respected. A quality education is a constant, anti-conservative education, as a phenomenon always in movement and change.*

ANGEL QUEEN

19, young, Black, trans, and from a marginalised community

“ *I no longer want a selective and elitist education, a privatised education in which a large part of the population is forgotten and undermined. To achieve quality education, we need more inclusion, accessibility, and empathy.*

THALITA NOGUEIRA

18, Black and young woman from a marginalised community

“ *What we see today are schools that look more like prisons, with teachers and students without hope. We dream of an education that is truly for everyone, an emancipatory education that liberates people. A school that allows students to dream.*

LUA QUINELLATO

18, young trans girl

“ *I dream of an education where people like me are not abandoned at school, alone, because the bus for the ride had a broken ramp. I dream of an education that sees me and my equals as people worthy of respect and equality, not as untouchable angels.*

MARIA VIVIANE LIMA

17, Black girl with disabilities

“

I don't want an education where those with money have more value. I dream of an education where we have all the resources, from a curriculum focused on our culture and our way of life, being able to have the same access to technologies.

JULIA DE FRANÇA

15, Black and quilombola girl

“

The education I want is one in which I can have the right to everything that is secured by law, in which I can feel good when I express my culture, my gender, my origins. An education that listens to me and is able to understand my ideas and proposals for education in my school.

MARIA CLARA SILVA

16, rural girl

“

I want an education where one of the biggest challenges is not to actually continue studying. Where the lack of teachers and difficulties in getting to school no longer exist. I want an education where access is equal for everyone, and where we feel listened to and welcomed.

GLENDA TEIXEIRA

16, girl from a marginalised community

“

I want an education without prejudice, where our needs are taken into consideration. Where we can feel respected and cared for.

AMANDA ANDRADE

14, Black girl with disabilities





The challenges in education are numerous: from the poor school environment to the lack of preparation for supporting the student. This is intensified in schools in marginalised communities. When we have a higher percentage of diverse applications from people from marginalised communities, people with disabilities, Black, and trans, LGBTQIAP+ girls, it is still difficult for them to put their plans into action. This has to change!



CAROLAINÉ DO NASCIMENTO

17, Black girl from a marginalised community



Indigenous school education is one of the biggest challenges for our communities; the implementation of what was formulated and desired is still far from ideal in our communities. We still have unequal salaries for Indigenous teachers, who receive less than non-Indigenous teachers. We want Indigenous women to have more security and respect in our schools and universities.

HELLEN SHAREN PATAXÓ E ATIKUM

17, Indigenous girl

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