

## Education and pedagogical practices in the Barreiro Grande *quilombola* community, Serra do Ramalho-BA


### ARTICLE

**Romário Pereira Carvalho<sup>i</sup>** 

Prefeitura Municipal de Bonito, Bonito, Bahia, Brasil

**José Valdir Jesus de Santana<sup>ii</sup>** 

Universidade Estadual do Sudoeste da Bahia, Vitória da Conquista, Bahia, Brasil

**Reginaldo Santos Pereira<sup>iii</sup>** 

Universidade Estadual do Sudoeste da Bahia, Itapetinga, Bahia, Brasil

**Edmacy Quirina de Souza<sup>iv</sup>** 

Universidade Estadual do Sudoeste da Bahia, Itapetinga, Bahia, Brasil

### Abstract

This article aims to analyze how the pedagogical practices at the Ailton Senna School, situated in the Barreiro Grande *Quilombola* Community in Serra do Ramalho, Bahia, engage with the cultural knowledge and traditions of the community. This is a qualitative, descriptive study. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, held between July 13th and 16th, 2022, and unsystematic observations. The research participants included teachers, the school administrator, and community leaders. They acknowledged the significance of incorporating the community's cultural practices into differentiated pedagogical approaches, while also criticizing the imposition of a Eurocentric curriculum by the municipal Department of Education, the lack of teaching materials aligned with the community's context, and the need for more comprehensive teacher training. Despite these challenges, the school has fostered meaningful dialogue with local knowledge, particularly through its engagement with *samba de roda*.

**Keywords:** Anti-Racist Curriculum. *Quilombola* School Education. Pedagogical Practices. *Quilombo* Barreiro Grande.

### Educação e práticas pedagógicas na comunidade quilombola Barreiro Grande, Serra do Ramalho-BA

### Resumo

Neste artigo, busca-se analisar de que forma as práticas pedagógicas constituídas na Escola Ailton Senna, na Comunidade Quilombola Barreiro Grande, em Serra do Ramalho-BA, têm dialogado com os saberes e práticas culturais dessa Comunidade. Trata-se de uma pesquisa de natureza qualitativa, do tipo descritiva. Para a produção dos dados, utilizou-se da entrevista semiestruturada, realizadas entre os dias 13 a 16 de julho de 2022, e da observação assistemática. Constituíram sujeitos desta pesquisa professoras, gestora escolar e lideranças da Comunidade, que reconhecem a importância das práticas culturais da comunidade na construção de práticas pedagógicas diferenciadas, ao mesmo

tempo que denunciam a imposição de um currículo eurocêntrico por parte da Secretaria de Educação do município, a falta de material didático condizente com a realidade da comunidade e a necessidade de formação de professores(as). Contudo, a escola tem construído um diálogo com os saberes da comunidade, em especial com o samba de roda.

**Palavras-chave:** Currículo Antirracista. Educação Escolar Quilombola. Práticas Pedagógicas. Quilombo Barreiro Grande.

## 1 Introduction

Within the scope of *quilombola* school education, pedagogical practices constitute a central element of the educational actions developed in community schools. Pedagogical practices are understood here from the perspectives of Celestino (2016), Gomes (2012), and Veiga (1994). Veiga (1994, p. 16) states that pedagogical practice is “a social practice oriented by objectives, purposes, and knowledge.” For Gomes (2012a, p. 30), pedagogical practices, from the perspective of Law No. 10.639/2003, which made the teaching of Afro-Brazilian and African History and Culture mandatory throughout basic education, should be “guided by joint work and articulation among school-based educational processes, public policies, and social movements, since ethical, cultural, pedagogical, and political changes in ethnic-racial relations are not limited to the school.”

In this study, the research locus was Escola Airton Sena, a basic education school belonging to the *quilombola* (term used in Brazil to refer to communities formed by descendants of enslaved Africans) Community of Barreiro Grande (Serra do Ramalho, Bahia). For this reason, in pedagogical, administrative, curricular, and other respects, the school must be structured in accordance with the National Curriculum Guidelines for *quilombola* School Education. In this sense, according to these Guidelines, “*quilombola* School Education is the educational modality that comprises *quilombola* schools and schools that serve students originating from *quilombola* territories” (Brazil, 2012, p. 27).

The *quilombola* Community of Barreiro Grande was officially recognized by the Palmares Cultural Foundation on December 12, 2012. This recognition is the result of struggles led by Black movements, especially rural Black communities that demanded from

the Brazilian state the guarantee of rights historically denied to them, such as the rights to health, education, and territory, rights that came to be recognized by the Federal Constitution of 1988.

According to O'Dwyer (2002), the term “remanescents of quilombo,” as it is currently used, acquires legal status with the 1988 Constitution, which ensured land tenure regularization through Article 68 of the Transitional Constitutional Provisions Act. This article states: “the remanescents of *quilombo* communities who are occupying their lands are recognized as having definitive ownership, and the State must issue the respective titles” (Brasil, 1988).

The emergence of these rural and urban communities, which resisted the material and symbolic erasure to which they were subjected throughout our history, results from tense processes in which the definition of the *quilombola* school education modality also takes part (Miranda, 2016).

Gomes (2012b), rapporteur of the opinion on the National Curriculum Guidelines for *quilombola* School Education, reaffirms the protagonism of *quilombola* communities throughout our history. In this sense, *quilombola* subjects are understood as political actors who forge their demands through struggle, while at the same time denouncing the forms of inequality and prejudice imposed on these communities.

Principles such as specificity, difference, interculturality, the valorization of memory and of the knowledge of these communities, territoriality, among others, should constitute school experiences within the context of remnant *quilombo* communities, thus ensuring compliance with the aforementioned curriculum guidelines. According to Alves and Leite (2020, p. 136), these guidelines “represent a new milestone for education in ethnic-racial relations in Brazil, as they constitute legal foundations that confer legitimacy on an educational model that must be differentiated due to the specificities of the population it serves.”

The general objective of this article is to analyze how the pedagogical practices developed at Escola Airton Senna, in the *quilombola* Community of Barreiro Grande, in

Serra do Ramalho, Bahia, have engaged in dialogue with the knowledge and cultural practices of this Community.

From a theoretical standpoint, this research mobilizes critical interculturality as an analytical category, drawing on authors such as Walsh (2009) and Sacavino (2016), among others. For the discussion on contemporary *quilombos* and *quilombola* school education, authors such as O'Dwyer (2002), Gomes (2015), Alves and Leite (2020), and Miranda (2016), among others, were used.

For Walsh (2009), critical intercultural education is concerned with processes of exclusion, denial, and the subordination of knowledge that privilege some forms of knowledge over others, “naturalizing” difference and concealing the inequalities that are structured and maintained within them. Thus, according to the author, “critical interculturality as a pedagogical tool” must question the dispositifs of racialization and subalternization that are updated within colonialities (of power, knowledge, being, and nature) and, at the same time, articulate and place differences in dialogue, warning and creating “other” modes of thinking, being, existing, learning, teaching, dreaming, and living that cross borders (Walsh, 2009, p. 25).

For critical interculturality to take place in school institutions, such as those located in remnant *quilombo* communities, it is necessary to construct “other” pedagogical experiences, reform curricula, invest in the intercultural training of teachers, and place different forms of knowledge and regimes of knowledge in dialogue. It is therefore a matter of constructing decolonial pedagogies in dialogue with intercultural educational projects (Walsh, 2009).

## 2 Methodology

This research is grounded in a qualitative approach, since such an approach, according to Lüdke and André (2013), values the experiences of subjects within their spaces of existence, their social relations, and the meanings they construct in relation to their sociocultural dynamics.

With regard to its type and in accordance with its objectives, this is a descriptive study (Mattar & Ramos, 2021; Triviños, 1987). According to Mattar and Ramos (2021, p. 119), “descriptive research aims to describe situations and events,” privileging the perspectives of research participants on a range of issues. In the present study, this approach enabled the analysis of how the pedagogical practices developed at Escola Ailton Senna, in the *quilombola* Community of Barreiro Grande, in Serra do Ramalho, Bahia, have dialogued with the knowledge and cultural practices of this Community, from the perspectives of teachers, the school principal, and community leaders.

Data production was carried out through semi-structured interviews. In this type of interview, according to Gerhardt and Silveira (2009, p. 72), the researcher “organizes a set of questions (an interview guide) on the topic under study, but allows—and sometimes even encourages—the interviewee to speak freely about issues that emerge as developments of the main theme.”

The research participants/collaborators included teachers, the school principal, and leaders of the *quilombola* Community of Barreiro Grande. The interviews were conducted in person between July 13 and 16, 2022, and were audio-recorded using a mobile phone application. To ensure the safety of the research participants, health protocols were followed, including the use of face masks, hand sanitizer, and social distancing, in accordance with the guidelines of the World Health Organization (WHO), given the pandemic context, thus enabling public health safety measures for the *quilombola* interviewees. It should be noted that this research was submitted to and approved by the Research Ethics Committee (CEP) of the Universidade Estadual do Sudoeste da Bahia, under substantiated opinion No. 5,292,422, on March 11, 2022.

## 3 Results and discussion

### 3.1 The school and its importance for the *quilombola* Community of Barreiro Grande

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Escola Airton Senna, founded in 1992, is considered the first official school in the community maintained by the municipal government of Serra do Ramalho, Bahia. According to teacher Valéria Silva, the school “*plays a very important role in the community; it brings people together and values people’s ways of life and their traditions*<sup>1</sup>.” For teacher Roseane Soares, the school has “all the importance in the world; I believe that without that school in the community, the community would make no sense—the school is the community’s point of reference” (2022, verbal information).

As described by teachers Valéria and Roseane, the school is a point of reference for the community, as it brings people together, values their ways of life and traditions, and at the same time renews bonds of sociability. In this sense,

*“The school goes beyond reading, writing, and counting; it represents more than a geographical space. It is a pathway for change, a space used for collective and community meetings and for discussions of public policies. School knowledge is seen as a path to access other spaces”* (Teacher Naita Nunes, 2022, verbal information).

In other words, the school is understood as a community space that serves community projects. It acts in the construction of collective citizenship, in the struggle for rights and improvements for the community, and as a dispositive for accessing other spaces, codes, and relationships that extend beyond everyday community life.

For teacher Maria Carvalho, the school is a space for strengthening identity, fostering coexistence among different generations, and also a support point for the community. The school brings benefits such as employment opportunities and, therefore, it is important that teachers and administrators come from the community itself. In this way, the school acts in defense of the community, enabling its residents to remain there.

<sup>1</sup> Interview conducted in July 2022.



Moreover, having a school within the community not only strengthens the bonds among its members but also prevents the “*suffering*” experienced by students who are “*transported to the city*,” which largely results from prejudice, discrimination, and racism. By remaining in the community, students strengthen their bonds of sociability, their identities and self-esteem, value local knowledge, and engage in the construction of the school, both pedagogically and curricularly.

Darci Pereira, a community resident and mother of students attending Escola Ayrton Senna, recognizes the school as a place that enables “*knowledge of life, of the world of politics, and of public policy*,” that is, knowledge that is central to managing relationships with the world beyond the community. At the same time, she affirms that at school one learns about “*how our community came into being*,” thus highlighting the importance of learning about memory and history concerning the community’s presence in this territory and, therefore, its ancestral ties.

Feliciano Martins, a teacher, community leader, and president of the Community Association, emphasized the importance of the school as a place that, according to her, makes it possible:

*“To learn to read and write, to acquire new knowledge, to have a school in the community. Having children in the school means keeping the school in the community; it means resistance; it means staying in the community, which is the most important thing—not having to travel to other communities and schools outside. With our children in the school, we will keep it here, which is very important for the community. By attending the school, learning also happens at home, and the school remains open, and students study in the place where they live” (Feliciano Martins, 2022, verbal information).*

As Feliciano Martins emphasizes, having children enrolled in the *quilombola* school means realizing a living school that is open to the community, beyond simply teaching reading and writing. This perspective is shared by teacher Maria Carvalho, namely that the school enables students to remain in the community without the need to commute to schools located outside the *quilombola* territory and, consequently, to experience prejudice. At school, according to Feliciano, students learn *resistance* as they come to understand the demands and struggles that traverse the community and what it means to be a student and *quilombola* in a society marked by racism and prejudice, and by the denial

of rights to groups that have historically been excluded from public policies related to health, education, housing, territory, among others.

This resistance is also expressed in the effort to build a school in accordance with the National Curriculum Guidelines for *quilombola* School Education (Brasil, 2012), one that is specific and differentiated, with curricula and pedagogical practices that engage in dialogue with local realities. Teacher Rosângela Soares drew attention to the need to construct “a curriculum that is specific to us,” since, according to her, what they desire “has not yet arrived,” thus demonstrating the need for a curriculum that is conceived by the community and (re)thought with it.

### 3.2 *Quilombo Barreiro Grande*: knowledge, cultural and ancestral practices

In the *quilombola* Community of Barreiro Grande, culture, in its most varied expressions, has been produced and transmitted across different generations. The research interlocutors were asked which cultural aspects and expressions predominate in the community and which they consider most relevant.

*“I think midwives and medicinal herbs are important as well. Here, we live far from the city; finding assistance is difficult, and reaching medical care is even more so. Therefore, those people who have experience with herbs are very important and help us a great deal”* (Valéria Silva, 2022, verbal information).

*“Knowledge of blessings, midwifery, prayers, religious festivities, fishing, sustainable agricultural production practices, and samba de roda are elements that make up our identity”* (Naita Nunes, 2022, verbal information).

*“Ancestral knowledge here is varied, but what is identified here and made explicit by the community is samba de roda, which takes place during the festivities of all the saints; it is celebrated every year. In addition, weaving fishing nets—many people here live from planting in the wetlands; they are farmers”* (Maria Carvalho, 2022, verbal information).

The statements of the collaborators announce and articulate a diversity of cultural practices and expressions, understood here in the sense proposed by Geertz (1978), who argues that culture is a web of meanings in which subjects are immersed and is therefore publicly shared and read through its symbols and signs.



Moreover, this same culture operates in terms of diacritical signs—as culture “in quotation marks,” as noted by Carneiro da Cunha (2009)—insofar as it becomes an element that affirms the identities of subjects and collectives, who activate it to mark the boundaries between “us” and “the other.” In the case of the *quilombola* Community of Barreiro Grande, culture becomes central, as it affirms values, knowledge, and practices that are specific to this community, while simultaneously seeking to mark its difference in relation to non-*quilombola* groups and other traditional communities in the region.

Among the many cultural and ancestral manifestations—such as, as noted by Naita Nunes, “knowledge of blessings, midwifery, prayers, religious festivities, fishing, and sustainable agricultural production practices”—*samba de roda* has been highlighted (Barth, 2011) or, as Maria Carvalho states, is “*the most identified [...] and explicit within the community*,” thus acquiring a position of prominence both in the community and in the school environment. *Samba de roda* is performed during the Festivity of All Saints, which takes place over ten days at the end of October each year.

*Samba de roda* is a musical expression and a sociocultural practice that, in Barreiro Grande, is performed by men, women, and children, with the participation of nearly the entire community, through a circle formed by those who take part in or accompany the festivities. In this context, each person is invited to enter the circle to dance, stomp, and perform *barrigadas*, to the sound of *chulas*, drumming, drums, and flutes.

*Samba de roda*, like other cultural practices and expressions present in the community, is practiced with some frequency at Escola Airton Senna, as students recognize in this cultural practice a sign of “belonging,” since it has been transmitted and taught by older generations through orality.

It is therefore a cultural practice that establishes “relations of sociability,” as stated by Jesus (2020, p. 26) in her analysis of the celebrations and festivities of Reis do Mulungu, “practiced by the rural Black community of Mulungu, located in the high hinterlands of Bahia, in the municipality of Boninal, in the Chapada Diamantina, Bahia.” According to the author, in these celebrations,

[...] the group's identity is reinforced during festive moments, generating a feeling of satisfaction and recognition among its members that derives from a value shared by the group. Festivities, therefore, can be understood as spaces of sociability among people, whether they take the form of religious rituals or entertainment, whose purpose is celebration, commemoration, enjoyment, or pleasure. They are unique or singular, portraying the way of life and everyday practices of the community. It follows, therefore, that each of them reveals the ways of being and living of social groups, through which diverse meanings and significations are produced and reproduced (Jesus, 2020, p. 30).

Regarding *samba de roda*, teacher Valéria Silva stated that it *“is what is strongest here; when there are events, if there is no samba de roda, it feels like something is missing. It is a constant practice.”* Teacher Naita Nunes also emphasized:

*“Samba de roda generally appears as a cultural presentation, as the culmination of some event or project; the samba group is invited to participate in school activities. Last year [2021], in work with the 1st- and 2nd-grade classes, I sought to develop some readings based on research conducted in the community, such as the work of Shirley Pimentel, which brings narratives about samba, chulas, and batuque. I used it as a reference, together with my own experience with samba de roda, contextualized it, and developed written activities for the literacy class. I even shared this material with a colleague to be used in other classes this year. I recognize that this samba needs to be more present in the school, and not only during events”* (Naita Nunes, 2022, verbal information).

The school administrator, Maria Carvalho, stated that *“students really enjoy it because it is a familiar culture; that is why all events held at the school include a samba de roda presentation—it is already in their soul, it does not even require rehearsal.”* Daci Pereira, in turn, stated:

*“Samba de roda is important, but I think fishing is more important, because fishing provides food; this food can be eaten or sold to buy other foods—not only food, but also clothes and shoes. So I think it is a source of income for quilombola families in Barreiro Grande; that is what I think is most important. Even the fishing nets that people weave—I myself do not know how, but there are people there who do; they weave them for use and for sale, as a source of income, earning money through handicrafts”* (Daci Pereira, 2022, verbal information).

Many of the collaborators in this research identified *samba de roda* as an important cultural practice, but they also recognized other practices and cultural expressions as equally relevant, such as fishing and the making of artisanal fishing nets, which foster the

local economy and become a means of survival for most families in the Barreiro Grande Community. Moreover, according to Rosângela Soares, all cultural practices are important:

*“All of them are important. Samba de roda is important; fishing is the main key, it is a core culture for us. Planting on the islands of the São Francisco River is also a culture; it has immense production. So I do not even know what I could single out—this one or that one” (Rosângela Soares, 2022, verbal information).*

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At every moment of dialogue with residents of the Barreiro Grande Community, the closeness and sense of belonging of individuals to the cultural practices present in the community became evident, whether *samba de roda*, fishing, agriculture, religious aspects, or others. As stated by Feliciano Martins:

*“Samba de roda is one of the most important practices; it refers to religious issues, prayers. Every year we hold novenas for all the saints. It is a moment in which we recall our Africanness as quilombola people. Here we have samba; in the past, people used to say that Black people used that samba as a moment of celebration to distract themselves, to step away from moments of suffering. Both capoeira and samba were forms of resistance, to relieve suffering” (Feliciano Martins, teacher and community leader, 2022, verbal information).*

Feliciano Martins also highlighted the importance of other cultural practices when she stated:

*“[...] fishing—many people here survive from fishing and agriculture; it is a cultural practice and a source of income. Another important factor is that at school, sometimes the school organizes events, and the Association is the one that most encourages events related to Black Consciousness, in partnership with the school and with the entire community” (Feliciano Martins, teacher and community leader, 2022, verbal information).*

*“At school, in Art classes, teachers use the school’s instruments; the students themselves ask to do samba de roda. They already know how to play, sing, and dance. This is good because it is a form of learning—they are also learning. These moments must indeed come from the school; the school must also be prepared to transmit the culture of the community’s people” (Feliciano Martins, teacher and community leader, 2022, verbal information).*

The leaders of the Barreiro Grande Community stated that *samba de roda* has taken place in the community for more than 250 years. For this reason, it became necessary to examine more closely how community members conceive *samba de roda* and its relationship with Escola Airton Senna.

This perspective invites us to (re)think the need for a curriculum that is dialogical and produced with the subjects of the community, so that cultural processes are in dialogue with pedagogical practices, as argued by Macedo (2011, 2016). Such an approach reorients and nourishes these practices, contributing to overcoming the tradition of a Eurocentric curriculum and, consequently, the colonality of knowledge (Maldonado-Torres, 2019). It is within this process that decolonial pedagogies and practices are established, from the perspective of critical interculturality, as asserted by Walsh (2009). Moreover, it is in this movement that “curricular acts” (*atos de currículo*) are constituted (Macedo, 2016, p. 56), which “enable us to understand how curricula change through the actions of their actors, how curricular actors change within this movement, how their signifiers change, or how they, in some way, preserve their conceptions and practices.”

Serafim (2020) argues that in schools within *quilombola* communities, pedagogical experience occurs at multiple levels of life activity and, therefore, cannot result solely from teacher–student interaction, but from the integration of teacher–student, student–family, student–place of living, place of living–school, school–work, work–student, student–community, community–school, school–society, and school–world relations.

### 3.3 Pedagogical practices and dialogue with community knowledge

As emphasized by Celestino (2016), pedagogical practice belongs to the field of didactics and focuses on the teaching–learning process, carried out in schools by teachers, students, and all other professionals involved in education.

As noted by Santos (2018), pedagogical practices and experiences in remnant *quilombola* communities are guaranteed by the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDBEN) and by Law No. 10.639/2003, and they aim to promote dialogue with the sociocultural realities of these communities. These pedagogical practices should be constituted in dialogue with the history and culture of these communities, through the engagement of the subjects involved in the teaching–learning process.

In this sense, schools must rethink and ensure new pedagogical practices for social collectives that engage with respect for identities, diversities, lived experiences, and cultural traditions. From this perspective, pedagogical practices should be grounded in collaborative learning, in the discovery of knowledge, and in mediation among different forms of knowledge and ways of knowing that are capable of positively intervening in the sociocultural realities of the subjects (Celestino, 2016).

Reflecting on pedagogical practices in the daily life of a *quilombola* school requires considering the diverse ways of educating, including different forms of teaching and learning, while taking into account the context of each community and its own modes of education—that is, the pedagogies that are specific to them. Moreover, according to Souza (2015, p. 20), “each society, throughout its history, creates its own educational processes; it creates and recreates its culture, its way of life, and its worldview based on its experiences, beliefs, and needs.”

It is in this sense that contemporary *quilombos* not only challenge the Eurocentric tradition of school knowledge and its colonialities, but, above all, commit themselves to the construction of a new school project. This proposal is capable of engaging in dialogue with the knowledge of these communities, with their collective memories, cultural practices, collections and oral repertoires, as well as with the affirmation of identities and the fight against racism and racial prejudice, as ensured by the National Curriculum Guidelines for *quilombola* School Education (Brasil, 2012).

As Souza (2015) argues, school education has been—and continues to be—used as an instrument for the colonization of minds, aimed at adapting society to the interests of dominant groups. Thus, the knowledge that has historically been considered valid has, in general, disregarded the worldviews of African peoples and their descendants. Hence the need to decolonize school education and pedagogy.

In this way, the ideal is for the school to be constituted through the action of *quilombola* subjects and their participation. In this sense, the school project should be conceived and constructed by and with *quilombola* people, making it possible to (re)think the types of knowledge they value as important to be taught, the curriculum perspective,



and the affirmation of pedagogical practices capable of engaging in dialogue with community knowledge.

According to school principal Maria Carvalho, at Escola Airton Senna, pedagogical practices seek to value and engage with the knowledge produced within the community context. These practices are established through different actions in which students are encouraged “to value local cultures, recognizing themselves in their origins.” In addition, according to Maria Carvalho, through these practices, the school seeks to show...

*“[...] to students and to the community, the histories of struggle of quilombos and their remnants, from their historical emergence as forms of resistance and the persistence of these groups in creating mechanisms of protection against all forms of persecution, especially within quilombos. The school seeks to demonstrate ways of ensuring the human rights of remnant quilombo communities, preserving the cultures of their ancestors and teaching new cultures” (Maria Carvalho, 2022, verbal information).*

However, according to teacher Naita Nunes, constructing pedagogical practices aimed at valuing community knowledge has not been an easy task, given the imposition of a “prescribed curriculum” by the Municipal Department of Education of Serra do Ramalho.

*“These practices are still modest and stem from the individuality of each teacher who, within their own field of experience, has sought to recognize and convey the importance of the community’s history and its knowledge. These are actions that I see some teachers trying to carry out, even if in simplistic ways, because we come up against the imposition of the prescribed curriculum (the municipality’s pedagogical proposal) and textbooks that are far removed from our realities” (Naita Nunes, 2022, verbal information).*

Teacher Naita Nunes’s account reveals the difficulties involved in implementing pedagogical and curricular practices guided by the National Curriculum Guidelines for *Quilombola* School Education (Brazil, 2012), since, according to these guidelines, school education should be grounded in local history, collective memory, and the cultural practices of these communities. According to the teacher, one of the main obstacles is related to the municipality’s imposition of a curriculum that has been configured as an attempt to meet the prescriptions of the National Common Core Curriculum (BNCC), along with the use of “textbooks that are far removed from our realities,” which hinders the construction of



specific, differentiated, and intercultural curricula and pedagogical practices. As highlighted by Alves and Leite (2020, p. 138):

History and memory hold great significance for a *quilombola* community. Values, religious practices, and other cultural expressions that make up its identity are inherited from its ancestors. Thus, orality, stories told by elders, records of events, and the life histories of ancestors are part of the educational process present in all spaces of the community, especially at school (Alves; Leite, 2020, p. 138).

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that, as teacher Naita Nunes states, each teacher, on their own initiative, seeks other ways to incorporate *quilombola* knowledge, which is transmitted across generations in the everyday life of the community. It is necessary to recognize that the *quilombola* school has, among other functions, the role of acknowledging the territory and the “historically constructed identities mobilized by local knowledge. In this relationship between disciplinary content and *quilombola* identity, a differentiated school education is proposed” (Azevedo; Campos; Souza, 2021, p. 264), so that, in *quilombola* school education, “teaching should take place based on a reading of lived experience, territory, identities, group belonging, and the relationships articulated between established content and the sociocultural elements of *quilombola* populations” (Azevedo; Campos; Souza, 2021, p. 264).

Teacher Roseane Soares, when asked whether pedagogical practices at the Airtton Sena School are developed in dialogue with what is established by the National Curriculum Guidelines for *Quilombola* School Education, states:

*“Not always. We still need to have a specific curriculum for the quilombola school; we still follow a municipal curriculum that is the same for everyone. We have several different realities within the municipality. When the curriculum was developed, it brings everyone together, and I think that is wrong. The reality of the urban center is completely different from ours, who live in the countryside, in the quilombo. We observe that we have a quilombola community right next door, Água Fria, with very different cultures and realities, just like Pambu, another reality, other customs. I believe that curricula should be developed by communities, with the participation of the people who live in the community”* (Roseane Soares, 2022, verbal information).

In line with the diversity of knowledge present in the community, there is a clear need for a curriculum that engages in dialogue with these forms of knowledge, as

established by the National Curriculum Guidelines for *Quilombola* School Education. According to teacher Valéria Silva (2022, verbal information), this dialogue has taken place through the valorization of “ancestral knowledge, such as the use of medicinal herbs, handicrafts, midwives, and others.”

However, it was observed that there is no consensus among the teachers regarding how this dialogue has been constructed. Teacher Naita Aparecida Nunes, for example, stated that the curriculum has not been developed in dialogue with the community. According to her,

*“What we have had recently was a first meeting, part of the listening process with coordinators and the community. According to the coordinators, the Department of Education is beginning the process of constructing the municipal guidelines for rural and quilombola education”* (Naita Aparecida Nunes, 2022, verbal information).

Teacher Maria Carvalho, addressing the same issue, stated:

*“The curriculum for schools located in the municipality of Serra do Ramalho is attentive to the historical and cultural reality of these students, with the aim of affirming the right to ethnic-racial diversity in school education, breaking with the silencing of African and Afro-Brazilian realities in curricula and school practices, and affirming Black children, adolescents, youth, and adults in basic education and their families, taking into account their culture, their way of life, and their sense of belonging to quilombola ancestors”* (Maria Carvalho, 2022, verbal information).

Teacher Maria Carvalho argues that the dialogue between the curriculum and community knowledge occurs through discussions aimed at affirming the right to antiracist education, understood as a “right to ethnic-racial diversity,” focused on the affirmation of identities, belonging, and cultural knowledge.

While some teachers argue that the school curriculum has not dialogued with community knowledge, since it has been imposed by the Municipal Department of Education of Serra do Ramalho, as stated by teacher Valéria Silva, with regard to pedagogical practices, according to this same teacher, such dialogue has been possible. As she reports:

*“We work according to the reality of the community. There are various forms of knowledge that we bring into the classroom: medicinal herbs, handicrafts, fishing, midwives who are now elderly but still remain present in the community and are*

*respected. We also try to work with the history of the community* (Valéria Silva, 2022, verbal information).

For teacher Naita Nunes, the dialogue with community knowledge, both in terms of curriculum and pedagogical practices, has occurred in a modest way, but not without transgressions, insofar as, according to her, “in some aspects, it seeks to transgress the municipality’s curricular alignment proposal and bring narratives about the community’s history into the school.” Thus, it is within the everyday life of the school and its pedagogical practices that teachers “circumvent,” transgress, and construct tactics and strategies (Certeau, 1998) that place the “community narratives” in dialogue with schooled knowledge.

Similarly, principal Maria Carvalho stated that “we teachers try to bring content closer to the students’ reality, associating it with the everyday lives of learners and their families, showing them the importance of each culture in our community, from the youngest to the oldest.”

The “limits” identified by the teachers constitute a critique of a curricular tradition grounded in eurocentrism. They denounce the constraints imposed by the Department of Education of Serra do Ramalho, since they are “required” to follow the municipality’s curricular guidelines and because the textbooks used scarcely engage with the reality of the community.

According to the teachers, these limits and difficulties directly impact the construction of an antiracist education, as stated by teacher Valéria Silva:

*“The difficulties include the lack of adequate materials, the lack of pedagogical training, the absence of appropriate materials. We are the ones who have to make do; there is no adequate pedagogy, no appropriate antiracist thematic approach, as well as a lack of materials and institutional support”* (Valéria Silva, 2022, verbal information).

In the same vein, teacher Naita Nunes also stated:

*“The absence of teaching materials, Afro-centered literature in the library, and the lack of technological tools in the school make things very difficult. Even simple materials, such as A4 paper and poster boards—what we consider basic—we do not have in order to produce teaching materials and pedagogical activities with our*

*students. We need to conduct research, print materials and activities, show videos, and the school does not have technological resources. The precarization of work hinders many things; we need structural conditions in the school” (Naita Nunes, 2022, verbal information).*

As a consequence of this situation, teacher Naita Nunes reiterates that “*antiracist pedagogical practices are constructed in the school through individualized actions that stem from each teacher and their respective classes.*”

*“In my experience, I have sought to work with my class by first recognizing the existence of racism in our society. I have consistently emphasized this with my students, taking a stance and intervening in racist statements and perceptions expressed in the classroom, presenting references from Black/quilombola culture and African history through children’s literature, cartoons, feature films. When decorating the classroom, I am always careful to seek representativeness on panels and walls” (Naita Nunes, 2022, verbal information).*

Teacher Maria Carvalho, in turn, stated that “*at the school we always hold lectures and show videos, use children’s literature, posters, research activities with children, and receive visits from social assistance professionals and psychologists to listen to teachers. We also receive visits from regional coordinators every fifteen days.*”

Santomé (2009, p. 166) argues that “teaching and learning processes that take place in classrooms represent one of the ways of constructing meanings, reinforcing and shaping social interests, forms of power, and experiences, which always carry cultural and political significance.” In culturally differentiated contexts, such as *quilombola* communities, teaching and learning processes must be grounded in cultural references and collective memories, aspects already emphasized by the National Curriculum Guidelines for *Quilombola* School Education. This perspective requires the construction of alternative pedagogical practices (Walsh, 2009) and of a different curricular approach, so as to avoid producing what Santomé (2009) refers to as a “touristic curriculum.”

In *quilombola* school education, such forms of knowledge should become part of the socio-educational space in order to foster dialogue between school-based knowledge and local realities, valuing sustainable development, collective and individual work, and the struggle for the right to land, territory, and cultural difference. It is worth noting that Law No. 10.639/2003 officially established the theme of “*quilombola* identity” as part of the content to be addressed in basic education. This law emerged from a public debate that directly criticized an official

historiography which, for many years, allowed the history of Black populations, their cultures, and religious practices to be represented as inferior or relegated to a second-class epistemological status. The law also made explicit a striking reality of Brazilian society: the presence and active political participation of Black people in struggles against racial prejudice in both urban and rural contexts (Ribeiro, 2021, p. 7).

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Pedagogical practices and curricula must continuously reaffirm the sense of belonging (Macedo, 2012) of *quilombola* collectives [and other ethnic groups], as well as their “local knowledges” (Geertz, 2009). According to Macedo (2012, pp. 68–69), “in affirming a sense of belonging, individuals discover themselves collectively engaged in struggles for quality of life and recognition,” and thus, “belonging signifies an implicational mobilization within movements mediated by politically constructed symbolisms in the search for social spaces that dignify social and cultural conditions.” Furthermore, according to the author,

The notion of belonging has been particularly significant for social movements at moments when the cultural difference of peoples and ethnic groups is questioned by state power, for example, in relation to their territorial claims. When ethnic identity is weakened by national historical processes of oppression, an already established sense of belonging often becomes strengthened in the pursuit of recognition and territory (Macedo, 2012, p. 69).

The field of education for ethnic-racial relations, grounded in Law No. 10.639/2003, is aligned with the perspective of specific, differentiated, and intercultural education formulated in the National Curriculum Guidelines for *Quilombola* School Education. In this sense, schools in *quilombola* contexts must simultaneously combat racism, prejudice, and racial discrimination, reaffirm the ethnic-racial identities of these collectives, and value their traditions and cultural practices. These are expressed in forms of religiosity, the use of memory, practices of care and healing, the value attributed to land, and the struggle for the right to land and territory.

The statements of teachers at the Ailton Senna School reveal a field of tension concerning the development of differentiated and intercultural pedagogical practices, as well as the difficulties imposed on their construction—particularly in light of the determinations issued by the Serra do Ramalho Municipal Department of Education and



the eurocentric, homogenizing curriculum it prescribes. While these statements indicate an understanding of *quilombola* school education in accordance with the National Curriculum Guidelines (Brasil, 2012), they also denounce the municipal government's failure to comply with national and state legislation that guarantees these communities a differentiated and intercultural education—an achievement resulting from the historical struggles of Black populations in Brazil.

In this sense, the school makes explicit a field marked by tensions, contradictions, negotiations, and the perspectives and meanings that teachers and administrators construct regarding *quilombola* school education.

## 4 Final Considerations

In general terms, from the perspective of its residents and those who act more directly within it—such as the teachers—the school is understood as a community-oriented institution that serves the projects of the community. It is therefore seen as more than a space dedicated solely to learning reading and writing. The school is mobilized for the construction of collective citizenship, for struggles over rights and improvements for the community, and also as a pathway to access other spaces, codes, and relationships that go beyond everyday community life.

In the discourses of teachers, the school administrator, community leaders, and students' guardians, it was identified that there is a need for the municipal authorities to recognize the specificity of school education in a *quilombola* context. According to the teachers, the municipality of Serra do Ramalho seeks to impose a hegemonic curriculum rooted in a eurocentric tradition, which, in turn, hinders the construction of more meaningful and everyday dialogues between pedagogical practices, the school curriculum, and the community's knowledges and cultural practices.

At the same time that these subjects acknowledge the importance of the community's cultural practices for the construction of the school curriculum, they also identify and denounce a certain degree of authoritarianism on the part of the municipal



government and the Department of Education. They further denounce the lack of teaching materials aligned with the reality of the community, which, according to the teachers, makes it difficult to develop intercultural and anti-racist pedagogical practices, as established by the National Curriculum Guidelines for *Quilombola* School Education.

They also denounce the lack of pedagogical training for *quilombola* teachers, since, according to them, the Serra do Ramalho Department of Education has not provided such training. This absence has hindered dialogue between the community's knowledges and cultural practices and the school curriculum and pedagogical practices. Nevertheless, this dialogue has been made possible primarily through *samba de roda*, which has entered the school context. *Samba de roda*, as well as other cultural practices and expressions present in the community, is practiced with a certain frequency at the Airton Senna School, as students recognize in this cultural practice a sign of "belonging," since it has been transmitted and taught by older generations through orality.

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<sup>i</sup> **Romário Pereira Carvalho**, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2791-6783>

Prefeitura Municipal de Bonito-BA

Professor da rede de ensino de Bonito-BA. Mestrado em Ensino pela Universidade Estadual do Sudoeste da Bahia. Integra o Grupo de Estudos e Pesquisas em Etnicidades, Relações Raciais e Educação – GEPERRE (UESB/CNPQ)

Author contribution: escrita – primeira redação, pesquisa de campo e análise dos dados.

Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/6034517503617660>

E-mail: [romarioeducampo2020@gmail.com](mailto:romarioeducampo2020@gmail.com)

<sup>ii</sup> **José Valdir Jesus de Santana**, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7215-2562>

Universidade Estadual do Sudoeste da Bahia – UESB

Doutor em Antropologia. Professor Pleno da Universidade Estadual do Sudoeste da Bahia, do Departamento de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas. Professor do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Ensino e Programa de Pós-Graduação em Relações Étnicas e Contemporaneidade.

Author contribution: orientação, correção e análise dos dados.

Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/5087472600101533>

E-mail: [jsantana@uesb.edu.br](mailto:jsantana@uesb.edu.br)

iii **Reginaldo Santos Pereira**, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6169-9773>

Universidade Estadual do Sudoeste da Bahia

Doutor em Educação. Professor Titular da Universidade Estadual do Sudoeste da Bahia. Pró-Reitor de Graduação e no Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação (mestrado/doutorado).

Author contribution: revisão e edição do texto final, auxílio na análise dos dados.

Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/6548838603242766>

E-mail: [rpereira@uesb.edu.br](mailto:rpereira@uesb.edu.br)

iv **Edmacy Quirina de Souza**, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6712-1021>

Universidade Estadual do Sudoeste da Bahia

Doutora em Educação. Professora Titular da Universidade Estadual do Sudoeste da Bahia. Professora do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação (mestrado/doutorado).

Author contribution: revisão e edição do texto final; auxílio na análise dos dados.

Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/6674407947880299>

E-mail: [esouza@uesb.edu.br](mailto:esouza@uesb.edu.br)

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