

CIESPI

**INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR
RESEARCH AND POLICY ON
CHILDHOOD**

**In association with the
Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro**



concerned about children throughout the world

Annual Report, 2013

CIESPI

International Center for Research and Policy on Childhood

CIESPI is a center for research and policy studies and a reference center, on issues affecting children and adolescents, their families and their communities. Its goal is to assist the elaboration of appropriate policies and practices to assist the full development of young people and the protection of their rights.

Principal activities:

Developing interdisciplinary studies and social projects to contribute to the policy and practice debates and decisions in the areas of childhood, youth, families and communities;

Organizing debates, courses and seminars to discuss and disseminate the results of its own research and policy practices in Brazil and abroad;

Disseminating research, data and methodologies from national and international studies;

Providing courses and training to students and professionals in a wide array of fields with interests in children and youth;

Active participation in forums, councils, meetings and events to contribute to the improvement of public policy and the implementation of children's rights.

Prioritizing early childhood in Brazil

The goal of this project is to contribute to prioritizing early childhood policies in Brazil and helping to shape policies that promote young children's full development

The project has three main components:

- ✓ Contributing to the construction and implementation of the Rio de Janeiro Plan for Young Children by the Rio Children's Rights Council
- ✓ Using this experience to contribute to the development of such plans in other municipalities and at the national level through the National Coalition for Early Childhood
- ✓ Collecting and disseminating national and international studies on early childhood.

The Construction of the Municipal Plan for Children by the Children's Rights Council of Rio de Janeiro

On November 11, 2014 the general assembly of the Children's Rights Council of Rio de Janeiro debated and approved the Municipal Plan for Early Childhood. Rio is one of the first municipalities in the country to approve such a plan through the federally mandated Children's Rights Councils. Such Councils have the responsibility for formulating, approving, and implementing policies on children in their cities and states, and at the national level.

This action was the result of much analysis, deliberation and advocacy in 2012 and 2013, and CIESPI was involved in every stage of those activities. In May 2012, CIESPI convened a meeting of all the Rio members of the National Coalition on Early Childhood with a view to developing a local, municipal plan. The local group started to collect and debate material on early childhood and CIESPI contributed a guide to the most important research on early childhood development. The group then developed an outline of a possible Plan for Children paying special attention to the development of a small number of concrete, actionable and monitorable provisions.

The group met throughout the first half of 2013 and in June participated in a General Assembly of the Rio Council in which CIESPI director Irene Rizzini made the case for a municipal plan for early childhood. In consequence, at that meeting the Assembly established a working group to construct a draft Plan with all deliberate speed.

In the following months, the local group continued to meet in order to recruit additional organizations to support the development and adoption of the Plan and to discuss its provisions with the key municipal secretariats. At a General Assembly meeting on November 11, the plan was approved.

The priorities enunciated in the plan are:

Implement strategies to reduce the rates of neo-natal and infant mortality and the principal childhood diseases that threaten life.

Improve access to and the quality of prenatal care and early childhood health care with particular reference to such groups as adolescents, low-income families, families living on the streets, black women, and women with few years of education.

Make records of each child's key growth data and data on immunization.

Guarantee all children the appropriate neo-natal and early childhood tests, and the vaccinations recommended by the federal minister of health and the municipal secretary of health.

Undertake activities in health clinics and in the community to strengthen the connections between parents and children and promote debate about child-raising without violence and in a culture of peace.

Throughout this process, CIESPI provided data on early childhood, and policy and strategy ideas, and acted as convenor and secretary of the Rio group. That group is now developing strategies for promoting the implementation of the Plan including petitioning the Council to establish an implementation and monitoring working group.

Tools for Promoting the full development of children aged 0-6

The goal of this project is to increase the opportunities for children in early childhood by producing a series of tools to assist key actors to formulate and implement policies that assist and give priority to children 0-6. The broader content of the tools CIESPI produces is described below.

Participation in the National Network for Early Childhood (RNPI)

CIESPI has participated intensively in the National Network for Early Childhood (RNPI). In December CIESPI was re-elected to a two year term as part of the management committee of the Network. Participation in this Network allowed CIESPI to bring to national attention the process of developing the Plan for Early Childhood in Rio de Janeiro.

In July, CIESPI staff Irene Rizzini and Malcolm Bush participated in a research seminar at University College Ostfold, Norway, as part of a joint scientific collaboration between PUC-Rio and Ostfold University. The subject under discussion with our Norwegian colleagues, Kaare Torgny Pettersen and Trond Heitmann, was indicators of vulnerability for children and adolescents in Brazil.

Other activities included participation in the Week of the Baby events organized by P and G Brazil and UNICEF, the 1st. Circle of Debates: the Prevention of Violence in Early Childhood organized by The Brazilian Association of Terra des Homens and the Van Leer Foundation in association with the municipality of Duque de Caxias, RJ.

Increasing opportunities for children and young people in the situation of the streets and in contexts of vulnerability

From its inception, CIESPI has had a major interest in improving the condition of children in the situation of the streets and children who grow up in conditions of vulnerability. In the last five years, CIEPSI has concentrated its efforts on various initiatives to construct and implement positive policies for street children. (For CIESPI and for much of the international community, children in the situation of the streets refers both to those young people who live on the streets twenty-four hours a day and those who migrate to the streets during the day to hustle for small change. Most of the latter are disconnected from school and are in danger also of disconnecting from family and home community.)

Children in the situation of the streets:

In 2009, CIESPI organized and convened a group that successfully pressed for the passage of the Policy on Street Children by the Children's Rights Council of Rio de Janeiro. This was the first example in the nation of such a policy passing through the Children's Rights Council process. As with the Policy on Early Childhood, this policy contains practical, concrete actions to improve the condition of street children.

Through 2013 CIESPI continued to be a member of the Council's Commission on Monitoring the Implementation of the Policy which after several inactive years became active again. CIESPI actively search out new institutional allies to assist the call for implementation.

CIESPI continued to disseminate its prize winning documentary "When Home is the Street" (Quando a Casa é a Rua) which was made in 2012 with the assistance of the street children organization CODENI in Mexico and with the support of the Fetzer Institute in Michigan, USA.

The film, which was directed by the well-known Brazilian director, Tereza Jessouroun, followed the stories of several street children in Rio and in Mexico City to show how they emerged from life on the streets. One of the main purposes of the film is to show street children as fully human in contrast to the perceptions of those who seek to demonize them.

CIESPI continued to organize showings of the documentary across Brazil and in several foreign countries. In Brazil, the film was shown at a meeting of the Federal Ministry of Social Development and Combat Against Hunger, and a seminar in Brasilia organized by the National Campaign For Children Don't Belong on the Streets and the Little Nazarene, and the Center for the Defense of the Rights of the Child and the Adolescent in Rio de Janeiro. The film was also shown at the Graduate School of Social Work at Boston College, Boston, Massachusetts, and the New School University in New York.

The film has also been shown at the Brazilian International Film Festival, and the International Feminist Film Festival.

In December 2013 it was shown at the 8th Annual Film Show for Human Rights in South America it was elected best film in the category of Media in the Area of Human Rights

CIESPI staff also participated in the State Front on Drugs and Human Rights which focuses on the impact of the mega events in Rio (the visit of Pope Frances, the World Cup and the Olympic Games) on vulnerable youth especially street children. The state and municipality of Rio de Janeiro have the practice of picking up youth on the streets before and during these events and placing them in internment. CIESPI participates in the Front's campaign, Forced Internment, Bad Policy.

CIESPI was heavily represented at the 20th Anniversary of the police murder of eight street children in front of the Church of Candelaria, Rio de Janeiro on July 23, 1993. The anniversary was organized by the group, Candelaria, Nunca Mais, Candelaria, Never Again. CIESPI distributed pamphlets at various stages of the events which pointed to the existence of a new policy on street children and the need to implement that policy.



Children growing up in contexts of vulnerability

CIESPI also has a deep concern for children and youth growing up in contexts of vulnerability. Some of these children may end up on the streets but many of them are at risk of not reaching their potential because of the dangerous, poverty stricken and haphazard conditions in which they are raised.

CIESPI has developed several projects and activities in this area. In order to understand the daily lives of these children, CIESPI started a project to interview parents and others responsible for children and youth in the low-income community of Rocinha in Rio de Janeiro. (Rocinha is a reference community for CIESPI where from a history of many contacts and interactions CIESPI staff learns about the day to day realities of lives of low-income children.) In a number of focus groups, staff talked with local residents about their concerns in caring for their children especially the vulnerabilities connected with the passage from childhood to adolescence. Staff is in the process of writing up the information which came from these focus groups.

The CIESPI staff was then invited to show the film *When Home is the Street* at the third annual Adolescent Exhibition, *Vem pra Casa*, (Come Home). A vigorous debate followed the showing of the film.

The conversations with parents were buttressed with a unique encounter with a group of young people in the community. As a result of these activities, a group of young people connected with the municipal secretariat's initiative *Rap da Saúde* (Rap for Health) in the program *Espaço Joven Paulo Freire* (the Paulo Freire Space for Youth) began to discuss with CIESPI staff the questions what it is like to stop being a child, and why is it so difficult to mover from childhood to adolescence to the point that some young people leave their families and communities to live on the streets. Out of these conversations came the idea for constructing a theatrical presentation of the themes of the movement to adolescence in contexts of vulnerability. These discussions led to the writing, production, theatrical presentation, and video, *Na Corda Bamba, On the Tight Rope*, which showed in a series of sketches written, presented and acted by the young people the variety of dangers and the sources of support in the passage from childhood to youth.

As part of this area of concern, CIESPI continued to build its publicly accessible data base on children and youth in contexts of vulnerability updating the tables and creating an English language version in addition to the Portuguese language version. This data base is designed to be useful to a wide variety of users.

Tools for promoting the well-being of children, youth and families in their communities

Some of these tools have been mentioned above but they form a unique contribution of CIESPI to help the range of people interested in improving the well-being of the target populations.

The data base is currently focused on general demographics of children and youth in Brazil, children 0-6 and children and youth growing up in contexts of vulnerability. The data are, in general, presented with ten year comparisons to point to changing trends in the well-being of children and youth.

The legal data base contains all Brazilian laws relating to children and items relating to children in the Brazilian Constitution, decrees, accords, and international treaties and agreements. It is updated every year.

International studies about the well-being of young children summarizes in brief the most important research from around the world about the impacts of various contextual deprivations on the current and future development of those children. While the enormous impact of broad environment conditions, including poverty, on young children is now widely understood, in Brazil there has been less emphasis of this aspect of young people's lives than elsewhere.

The Environment of Early Childhood: This is a virtual guide to key issues in early childhood and the site was completely revised in 2013 (see www.ciespi.org.br). The site provides basic information about priorities for early childhood in Brazil to assist key actors and decision makers. The site contains a multi-media map of how issues related to young children can be visualized and advocated at the level of the community. The exemplary community is Rocinha, the largest low-income community in Rio de Janeiro.



Participations in cultural, educational and other community projects

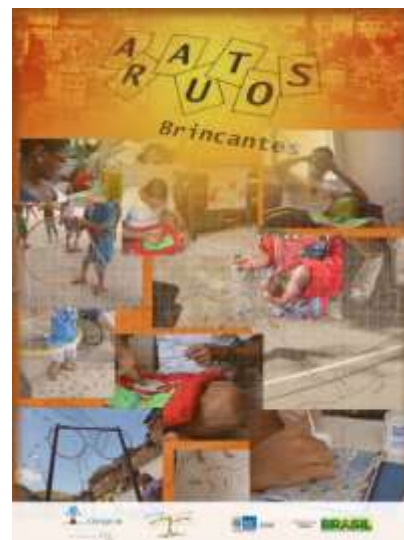
It has always been a part of CIESPI's mission to respond to and create opportunities to assist community groups, particularly in lower-income neighborhoods, in their cultural and educational projects. Such participation allows CIESPI to experience the day to day realities of lower-income communities, gives expression to CIESPI's interest in the whole child and in the importance of family and community supports to children and youth, provides opportunity for CIESPI to give technical assistance to community organizations and enriches the lives of CIEPSI staff. The following are examples of active participations in 2013.

The Cultural, Educational and Play Center of Rocinha

This center (www.centroludicorocinha.org.br) was established in 2004 with the assistance of CIESPI in association with PUC-Rio and professionals and youth in the community of Rocinha who were active in the areas of educational and culture.

In 2013, this partnership continued with CIESPI involvement in the project Playful Journeys in Rocinha which featured a travelling play show and included celebrations of Rocinha's history. There were also special events held in crèches, and a continuing participation in Rocinha's Come Home festival.

The Among Points of Culture federally assisted project continues as staff from the Play Center visited friends and partners in other Points of Culture. One of these visits was in a rural area of the state of Rio involving children from local public schools.



The Play Center also participated in the 13th of May celebrations organized by the Quilombo Sao Jose in Valencia, RJ. as part of the project African Mothers of Rocinha.

The Playfulness of Memory project, started in 2012 and continued in 2013, is an archive of CIESPI's nine year project, the Play and Learn Network. The archive celebrates participatory activities in the communities of Rocinha and Horto in times of rapid change in both communities. Information about the archive can be found at <http://ludicidadedamemoria.wordpress.com/>.

CIESPI is also contributing to the development of two museums that record local struggles in the communities of Horto and Rocinha in Rio de Janeiro: the Museum of the Memory of Sankofa and of the History of Rocinha, and the Museum of Horto. In January CIESPI staff participated in a meeting for both communities to collect residents' stories of their life histories and local struggles which will be part of the museums' collections.



Supporters:

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The Brazilian Institute of Museums

The Secretariat of Culture, the Government of Rio de Janeiro

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