

**The International Center for Research and Childhood at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro and community residents celebrate the development of community demands for improving early childhood conditions in Rocinha, Rio de Janeiro.**

**A photo essay.**

Dateline: October 16, 2023

For four years, CIESPI at PUC-Rio University, and Rocinha residents and professionals have been exploring how to improve the context for early childhood learning and development in Rocinha. During that time CIESPI researchers conducted fifty-six extensive interviews with parents, residents and teachers in the community as part of the international project *Safe, Inclusive Participative Pedagogy (SIPP)*<sup>i</sup>. The research team also interviewed in play and conversation sessions thirty children aged 3-7. Details of the research can be found at <https://en.ciespi.org.br/>.

Rocinha, a community of 150,000 people in the southern zone of the city of Rio de Janeiro, is a low-income, densely crowded area stretching up a steep mountain and plagued by high levels of drug-trafficker, and police violence. It also has a very active commercial life, over forty early childhood education centers and a number of nonprofit organizations.

During 2023 participants held five community wide meetings to debate the research findings and start to develop a community wide agenda for early childhood. The main topics addressed in these meetings were: child development and the quality of life; mental health; anti-racist education and priority actions for the local agenda.

**The fifth meeting, held on October 16, 2023 was a celebration of the work so far and planning for the future.**



***The Sports Complex on the lower boundary of Rocinha where the meetings were held with Rocinha in the background***



*Just across the street, high-income community of São Conrado next to the beach*





***CIESPI staff and residents promoting the event in the community***



*Participants line up to register*





**Leonardo Castro, the CIESPI researcher, Rocinha resident, and community organizer who chaired the event**



***Irene Rizzini, president of CIESPI, welcomes participants***

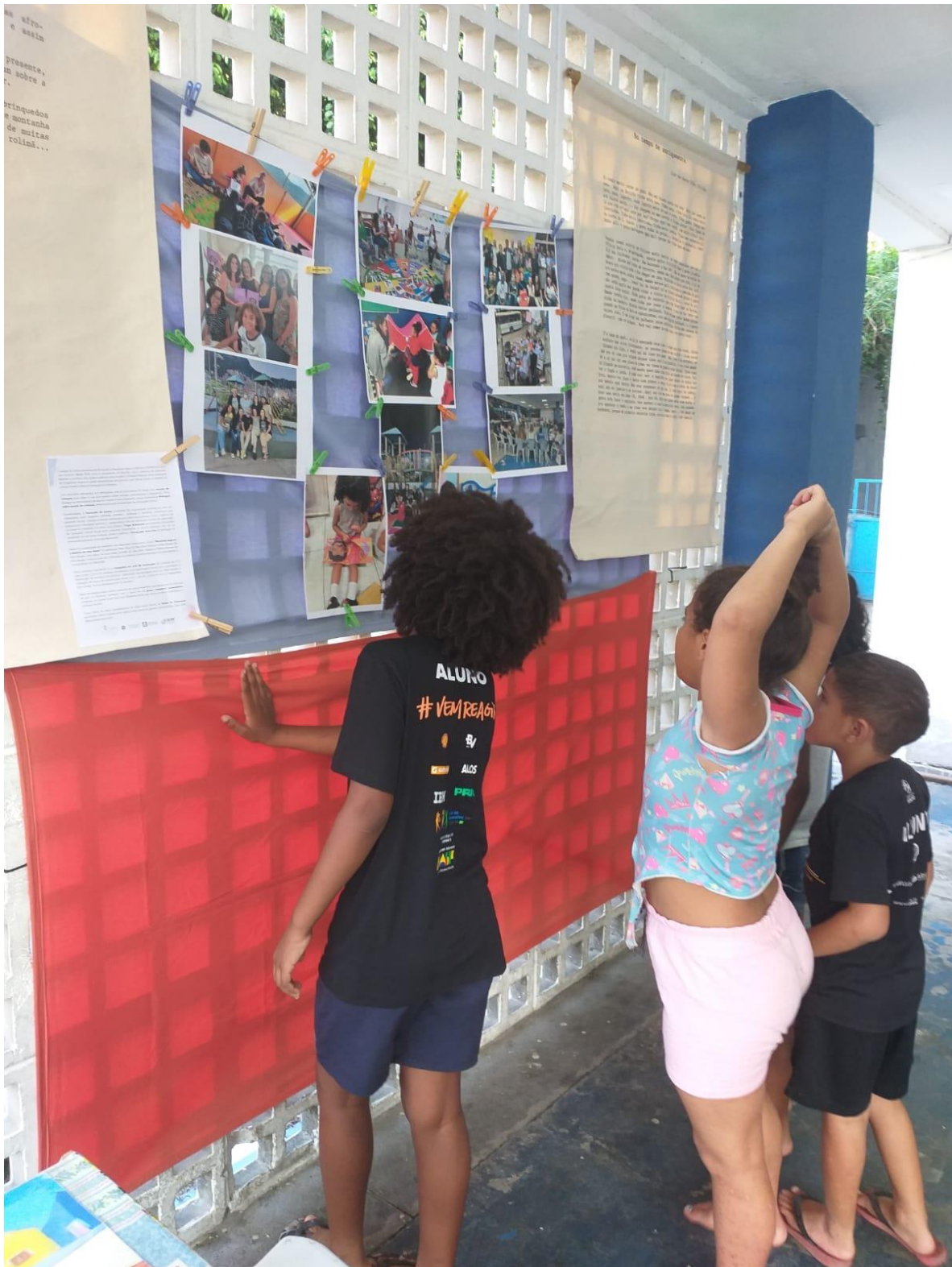


***A young mother talks about the difficulties of raising young children with disabilities***





*Children present at the project photo exhibit*



*Eliane, part of the CIESPI team, introduces the parents who contributed to One Photo, One Sentence*





***During the four years, CIESPI trained young people to interact with, read to, and listen to young children. They attended the event to play with and read to the young children present***





## ***Some of the community demands in its collective letter in defense of early childhood including an increase in the number of early childhood education center places***



### **CARTA COLETIVA DA ROCINHA EM DEFESA DA PRIMEIRA INFÂNCIA**

Moradores, lideranças locais e profissionais representantes dos espaços de atendimento às crianças pequenas da Rocinha, mobilizados em defesa da Primeira Infância,

**CONSIDERANDO** que é prioridade absoluta garantir os direitos fundamentais de crianças e adolescentes, conforme estabelecido pelo **art. 227 da Constituição Federal**, regulamentado pela **Lei nº 8.069** de 13 de julho de 1990 – Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente.

**CONSIDERANDO** a prioridade plena em garantir os direitos da criança, do adolescente e do jovem, que suscita como dever do Estado o estabelecimento de políticas, planos, programas, e serviços para a primeira infância que atendam as especificidades dessa faixa etária, buscando assegurar seu desenvolvimento integral, conforme as diretrizes do art. 3º da Lei 13.257 de 8 de março de 2016 – **Marco Legal da Primeira Infância**.

**CONSIDERANDO** que a Lei 13.146 de 2015, Lei Brasileira da Pessoa com Deficiência, assegura a presença do profissional de apoio escolar (mediador), sendo a sua função direcionada tanto para as atividades de alimentação, higiene e locomoção, quanto nas atividades escolares.

**CONSIDERANDO** a importância da implementação da **Lei 10.639 de 2003 e da Lei 11.645 de 2008**, que alteram a Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação – LDB, para incluir a obrigatoriedade do ensino da história e cultura afro-brasileira, africana e indígena nas escolas. Ressaltando a importância da cultura negra e indígena na formação social brasileira, sendo um importante instrumento para construção de uma Sociedade antirracista.

**CONSIDERANDO** as consultas realizadas pelo Centro Internacional de Estudos e Pesquisas sobre a Infância (CIESPI/PUC-Rio), no âmbito do **“Projeto Primeira Infância Participativa e Inclusiva”**, que, entre 2020 e 2023, realizou 56 entrevistas junto a moradores da Rocinha e profissionais que atuam no local; consultou 30 crianças com idades entre 3 e 7 anos; realizou 4 rodas de conversas que reuniram mais de 200 pessoas; contribuiu para a formação de um grupo consultivo comunitário; e lançou 10 informes de pesquisa **“Se liga na Rocinha!”**, destacando os resultados do projeto e os principais desafios da comunidade abaixo relacionados.

**CONSIDERANDO as seguintes questões levantadas pela comunidade sobre a qualidade de vida e bem-estar das crianças pequenas:**

- O número de vagas em creches e pré-escolas públicas na Rocinha é insuficiente para atender a demanda da comunidade;
- Falta diálogo entre pais e profissionais de creches e pré-escolas;
- Importante cuidar das crianças com respeito à diversidade, com profissionalismo e ampliando as oportunidades de diálogo entre instituições e famílias.

**SOLICITAMOS aos órgãos públicos:**

- **Ampliação urgente do número de vagas em creches e pré-escolas públicas na Rocinha ou no seu entorno.** É importante que seja garantido às crianças pequenas e suas famílias acesso à escola próxima de sua residência, evitando gastos com transporte e tempos excessivos de deslocamento.
- **Fortalecimento do diálogo com as famílias pelos equipamentos públicos de atendimento às crianças da Rocinha.** Os moradores apontam a falta de escuta, de acolhimento e de uma melhor compreensão sobre os diversos arranjos familiares que compõem a Rocinha, o que dificulta a participação dos moradores nesses espaços.
- **Formação continuada dos profissionais das áreas de educação, saúde, assistência social, esporte e lazer,** com objetivo de qualificar os espaços de atendimento às crianças pequenas da Rocinha, buscando percebê-las e ouvi-las em sua relação com o seu território, com sua comunidade e com suas famílias, respeitando a diversidade das infâncias.

*Some of the participants at the end of evening*



*And the CIESPI team present*



***As part of the project, staff constructed a guide in Portuguese entitled *Dialoguing with children: sensitive seeing and attentive listening*. The team now hopes to prepare it for an international audience.***





## ***This, the last of the series of bulletins about the project sums up the four community meetings and the final meeting***



**Listen to your children Rocinha!**

Project Bulletin No. 10, October 2023. Safe, Inclusive Participative Pedagogy  
Improving Early Childhood Education in Fragile Contexts  
International Center for Research and Policy on Childhood  
at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro - CIESPI/PUC-Rio, Brazil  
Moray House School of Education and Sport, University of Edinburgh, Scotland  
CIESPI Director: Irene Rizzini | Executive Coordination: Maria Cristina Bó  
Authors: Carolina Terra, Irene Rizzini, Leandro Castro e Renata Brasil | Translated by Malcolm Bush  
Editors: Renata Brasil, Irene Rizzini and Malcolm Bush

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This issue addresses four years of research capped by four community meetings that focused on priorities for improving the early childhood learning environment. Between 2020 and 2023, CIESPI researchers conducted 56 interviews with parents, residents and teachers in Rocinha as part of the project Safe, Inclusive Participative Pedagogy: Improving Early Childhood Education in Fragile Contexts (SIPP)<sup>1</sup> aimed at discovering ways to improve the early childhood learning context in the community. They also talked with thirty children between the ages of three and seven on the same topic.

To complete this process of discovery, the team organized with neighborhood residents and professionals four open, at large encounters to discuss key issues that arose from the research. A total of 200 people attended these meetings at the Sports Complex of Rocinha including residents, teachers, professionals at various service agencies, and members of collectives, social cultural projects and local associations. These were the first large scale meetings ever held in the community to discuss early childhood.

CIESPI invited people to bring their children to the meetings and while the adults talked, our group of young activists who had played and talked with children during the research, the Play Troupe<sup>2</sup>, looked after the children with games and reading in a specially prepared room.

**First meeting:  
Development and the quality of life**

In the meetings we used questions, and visual aids such as photos and books to get the attendees to participate in the conversation. While CIESPI staff including residents of the community guided the discussion, we also invited residents of and professionals in the community to comment on the themes.

In the first meeting on May 22nd 2023, we examined the question of what was necessary for the healthy development of young children in the community and whether children, in fact, had access to these resources. Two community professionals led this discussion. One mother with three children diagnosed as being on the autism spectrum emphasized the importance of love, and this reply was echoed by other commenters. Several other mothers were bothered by what they saw as a lack of welcome in the schools and the difficulty schools had including children with handicaps as a result of the absence of support professionals. The support of such professionals is a right guaranteed by the Brazilian Law for the Inclusion of People with Disabilities<sup>3</sup>. One mother said, "I struggle every day against a system which does not have inclusion".

In response, some of the teachers present said they understood these concerns but they pointed out the difficulties schools had because of the lack of resources and adequate training.

The discussion touched on other aspects of child development important to all children including the necessity for welcoming environments, respect for the individual, consideration for different socio-economic and cultural realities, and the importance of continuing training for teachers.

Participants talked about their concerns with violence which could incur inside a home and with the absence of safe places outside the home. A collective effort was needed to overcome these and other violations of rights. Collective efforts among family, school, the community and public bodies were necessary to guarantee a healthy and safe development for children.



Photograph: Leandro Castro

The examination of several photographs of the community elicited responses. One that showed Rocinha from the top produced the responses that the community was very dense but beautiful and the comment that it was necessary to walk through the community to see what residents were talking about. The photos illustrated the absence of safe places for children to play. Some older residents said that now they did not see children playing with kites and marbles as they did in the past. One photo showed a child crossing an open sewer on a piece of wood and people commented on the historical struggle of the community for basic sanitation.

A photo of a child sleeping on a gym mat in an early childhood education center (ECEC) aroused

### **Accessible at:**

<https://en.ciespi.org.br/media/files/fc1d9cd8d2c4d811ecbe6e5141d3afd01c/fb615b770782611ee976d71393b4c16ff/sipp-project-bulletin-no-10-ciespi.pdf>

**For more information please contact: [ciespi@ciespi.org.br](mailto:ciespi@ciespi.org.br)**

<sup>1</sup> This project was developed with the support of the UK Global Challenges Research Fund of the United Kingdom. The international principal investigator is Professor Kay Tisdall at the Moray House School of Education and Sport at the University of Edinburgh. The project is coordinated in Brazil by Professor Irene Rizzini of the Department of Social Work at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro and director of the International Center for Research and Policy on Childhood at PUC-Rio. Photo essay created by Malcolm Bush and Carolina Terra.