



HOLISTIC  
LEARNING  
INNOVATIONS

# WELCOMING PRACTICES

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Country: Brazil

Target Age: 10–15 Years

Learning Areas: Collaboration | Empathy | Reconciling Tensions |

Self Awareness | Respect for Diversity

## THE CONTEXT

The **Campo Limpo Integrated Center for Youth and Adult Education (CIEJA Campo Limpo)** is situated in the Capão Redondo neighborhood, located in the southern part of São Paulo, Brazil. The school is deeply rooted in Paulo Freire's pedagogical principles, which emphasize the importance of students' prior knowledge and lived experiences. This approach helps in creating strong connections with the Capão Redondo community.

Serving over a thousand young people and adults aged 15 and above, this public school is dedicated to those historically excluded from formal education. By focusing on learners who have encountered systemic educational barriers, the school provides a welcoming and inclusive environment that supports personal growth and academic success.

Capão Redondo is a culturally rich but economically challenged area, where residents often face obstacles to accessing quality education, stable employment, and essential public services. Many students experience social vulnerability, highlighting the school's critical role in expanding access to valuable learning opportunities.

Central to CIEJA Campo Limpo's mission is nurturing empathy and collaboration. Through action research, student participation is actively encouraged in decision-making processes and the co-creation of a flexible and dynamic curriculum. Initiatives like shared meals and school assemblies foster dialogue, social awareness, and community engagement.



The entrance of the Integrated Center for Youth and Adult Education (CIEJA) Campo Limpo welcomes everyone with a sign that reads, "How wonderful that you are here!"  
Photographer: Unknown (School archive)



Bringing the school community together to collaboratively discuss the Schools2030 action-research project.  
Photographer: Unknown (School archive)



Strengthening ties and sparking interest with a warm-up activity before the Schools2030 discussions.  
Photographer: Unknown (School Archive)

## THE CHALLENGE

### HOW MIGHT WE FOSTER EMPATHY AND COLLABORATION IN THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT?

CIEJA Campo Limpo faced the challenge of student dropout, disengagement, and the emotional toll of the pandemic. Many students returned feeling isolated and anxious, which impacted their learning and participation. To address this, the school prioritized socio-emotional development and a sense of belonging as key pillars for re-engagement.

Through interviews, classroom observations, and post-pandemic assessments, the school recognized an increasing need for inclusive, community-driven interventions. Welcoming strategies have proven to be essential in strengthening social connections and fostering democratic participation.

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*"I really like CIEJA. It feels like home—my second home. That's what CIEJA is to me. I feel great there. When I stay home, I feel unwell, but when I come to school, I feel truly happy."*

Ana Cristina, Primary School



## THE SOLUTION

# WELCOMING PRACTICES

The solution developed by CIEJA Campo Limpo revolves around welcoming practices, which are deeply embedded in the school's culture and pedagogical approach. These practices include shared meals, assemblies, and the election of generative themes, all of which are designed to foster empathy, collaboration, and a sense of belonging among students.

Shared meals serve as moments of sharing and community building, where students and staff come together to eat, discuss, and reflect, creating a space for informal interaction and mutual support. Assemblies, inspired by social movements, provide a democratic platform for students and staff to discuss important issues, make collective decisions, and plan school activities, empowering students to take an active role in their education. The election of generative themes, a process that begins with individual and group discussions and culminates in a school-wide vote, ensures that the curriculum is relevant to students' lives and addresses real-life issues, further encouraging empathy and collaboration.

These welcoming practices are particularly impactful for the school's target group—young adults and adults (15 years and older) in the Youth and Adult Education (EJA) program—many of whom have faced significant social and educational challenges. By creating an inclusive and supportive environment, these practices not only address empathy and collaboration but also indirectly promote leadership, self-awareness and creativity.

Despite challenges such as the emotional and social vulnerabilities exacerbated by the pandemic, the school has successfully implemented these practices through action research by intensifying its focus on flexibility, emotional support, and community-building activities, ensuring that students feel welcomed, valued, and empowered in their educational journey.



Students at CIEJA Campo Limpo gather for a school assembly, fostering dialogue, participation, and community engagement.  
Photographer: Unknown (School archive)



Collective meals, collective learning—CIEJA's shared snack time is a moment of connection, inclusion, and care.  
Photographer: Unknown (School archive)

# Competencies Targeted

The graphics below show the selected domains that Schools2030 Brazil have prioritised for each age group, in line with national curricula. Highlighted are the domains that this specific solution addresses.



## 5-year-old Domains

## 10-year-old Domains



## 15-year-old Domains

*In Brazil, each school has the opportunity to choose its own target competencies. Rather than being determined by learning levels, the selection process is a collective decision made by the school community. At CIEJA Campo Limpo, this process was democratic and participatory, conducted through a staff survey.*



Participation in action—CIEJA students engage in the democratic process of selecting the generating themes for their studies.

Photographer: Unknown (School archive)



Diego Elias (left) and fellow panelists at the S2030 2023 Global Forum in Porto, Portugal, discussing "Innovations and Alternative Pathways to Support Inclusive Learning Opportunities for Youth."

Photographer: Fernando Tavares

## THE IMPACT

# BUILDING BELONGING, SPARKING CHANGE

The action research at CIEJA Campo Limpo, initiated in 2023, focuses on the *Welcome* group, part of Cycle 1, which supports students in early literacy stages, especially those with limited or no prior formal education. Although the initiative is implemented across all classrooms, special emphasis is placed on the *Welcome* group, providing a nurturing environment for building foundational skills.

Data gathered through surveys, interviews, and informal conversations show improved student engagement, a stronger sense of belonging, and heightened awareness of social issues, highlighting the project's role in promoting inclusion and addressing wider societal challenges.

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*"We have gained the awareness that the experiences and challenges faced are not merely individual, but often stem from broader social processes impacting a specific group of people."*

Diego Elias, General School Coordinator

## Meet the Teachers



**Diego Elias**

*General School Coordinator*

### About me

My name is Diego Elias Santana Duarte, and I have proudly served as General School Coordinator for 7 years. I am passionate about working with people and enabling an education that truly makes sense and impacts our territory.

At my school, I strive to keep our projects active by implementing initiatives that address the specific needs of our students, fostering a welcoming environment focused on autonomy and social transformation. Locally, my ambition is to deepen connections within our regional networks to create collaborative actions that provide dignified services for our community. On an international level, I aim to build a network for Youth and Adult Education (EJA) that facilitates the exchange of experiences and enhances the work of each institution. I firmly believe in the constant need to publicize our work, so we can continue to advocate for our projects and ensure their long-term success.



## Meet the Teachers



**Jaciara Batista**

*Portuguese Language Teacher*

### About me

My name is Jaciara Batista Gomes da Silva, and I am a Portuguese teacher for both elementary and secondary education. Currently, I serve as a Special Education Support Teacher. What I love most about my work is the pleasant atmosphere fostered by a vibrant, active community—much like the lively plants that adorn our school—creating a space where people willingly come together to learn and share their experiences with genuine satisfaction.

At CIEJA Campo Limpo, we provide elementary education to individuals who, for various reasons, have not completed their studies and need a nurturing approach to address their unique challenges. Locally and nationally, the school stands as a beacon of exemplary practice in listening, inclusion, and the celebration of diverse knowledges, representing a significant segment of the Brazilian population that requires such support due to persistent social inequalities.

My ambition is for our school to continue addressing educational disparities, forming individuals who are happy, self-assured, and actively engaged as conscious citizens. I also see that many students are drawn to CIEJA because they feel valued, heard, and filled with hope for new horizons and opportunities.



## Meet the Teachers



**Ana Karina**

*Languages and Codes/Portuguese  
Teacher*

### About me

My name is Ana Karina, and I have been working at CIEJA Campo Limpo since 2007 as a Languages and Codes/Portuguese teacher. Over the years, I have led various extracurricular workshops focused on reading and writing, even incorporating theatrical games into my lessons.

What I love most about my work is the extremely welcoming environment at the school. From the moment students arrive, they are greeted in a way that positively influences their behavior—those who initially struggle eventually become warm and open-hearted. This atmosphere allows classes and other school activities to flow happily and productively, easing the frustrations that once hindered their learning. The respectful and caring relationships among students create a pleasant environment that truly enhances their educational experience. I also deeply value the collaborative spirit among the teachers, who work together in celebrating each other's successes and supporting one another in building knowledge in a positive way. Our team is very conscious of important issues such as ethnic-racial identity, gender, indigenous matters, and quality education. The autonomy and encouragement for projects provided by both the teachers and the management further enrich our educational community. Perhaps what enchants me most about CIEJA Campo Limpo is witnessing the transformation in the lives of our students. They not only earn their diplomas but also gain knowledge that fosters personal development, positively impacting their families and, ultimately, society as a whole.

Looking ahead, my greatest ambition is for Youth and Adult Education (EJA) to be recognized for its unique characteristics. The rules designed for children and adolescents should be reconsidered rather than simply applied to EJA students. These students, who lead adult lives with various commitments, have a different learning rhythm and require an approach tailored to their needs. It is also important to emphasize that the demand for Youth and Adult Education should encompass all Brazilians and citizens living in Brazil—not just those who currently seek enrollment—so that everyone in need of this education can be supported.



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