

## **Clube de Leitura ODS em língua portuguesa: possibilidades e contradições**

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### **Resumo**

O artigo apresenta e analisa a proposição do Clube de Leitura ODS em Língua Portuguesa — Capítulo Brasil, cujo catálogo, elaborado pela Fundação Nacional do Livro Infantil e Juvenil, seção brasileira do International Board on Books for Young People, é composto por livros de literatura e de não ficção para crianças de seis a doze anos de idade. Com base numa perspectiva crítica de educação de e pela literatura, examinam-se a apresentação e a exploração de temas previamente definidos à luz dos pressupostos dos Objetivos do Desenvolvimento Sustentável, a produção sobre os usos dos livros de literatura na escola e a leitura literária em sua perspectiva formativa, descrevendo e analisando os documentos atinentes ao tema e suas implicações político-pedagógicas. O artigo conclui, reconhecendo os riscos implicado na iniciativa, que é possível criar fissuras em seu escopo e se valer da iniciativa para a formação de crianças no ambiente escolar.

**Palavras-chave:** Clube de leitura ODS. Desenvolvimento sustentável. Leitura escolar. Leitura literária.

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## **SDG Book Club in Portuguese: possibilities and contradictions**

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### **Abstract**

The article presents and analyzes the proposal of the SDG Reading Club in Portuguese Language — Brazil Chapter, whose catalog, prepared by the National Children's and Youth Book Foundation, Brazilian section of the International Board on Books for Young People, is composed of literature books and non-fiction for children aged six to twelve. Based on a critical perspective of education from and through literature, the presentation and exploration of previously defined themes are examined in light of the assumptions of the Sustainable Development Goals, the production on the uses of literature books in school and literary reading in its formative perspective, describing and analyzing documents related to the topic and their political-pedagogical implications. The article concludes, recognizing the risks involved in the initiative, that it is possible to create cracks in its scope and use the initiative to train children in the school environment.

**Keywords:** SDG Book Club. Literary reading. School reading. Sustainable development.

## **Club de Lectura ODS em português: possibilidades y contradicciones**

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### **Resumen**

El artículo presenta y analiza la propuesta del Clube de Leitura ODS em Língua Portuguesa – Capítulo Brasil, cuyo catálogo, elaborado por la Fundação Nacional do Livro Infantil e Juvenil, sección brasileña del International Board on Books for Young People, está compuesto por libros de literatura y no ficción para niños de seis a doce años. La reflexión considera la presentación y exploración de temas previamente definidos a la luz de los presupuestos de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible, la producción sobre los usos de los libros de literatura em la escuela y la lectura literaria en su perspectiva formativa, describiendo y analizando los documentos relacionados con el tema. El artículo no presenta resultados, pero concluye que, a pesar de las contradicciones existentes en la propuesta, es posible crear fisuras en su alcance y utilizar la iniciativa para educar a los niños en el ámbito escolar.

**Palabras clave:** Club de lectura ODS. Desenvolvimento sustentável. Lectura escolar. Lectura literaria.

## Introduction

On June 7, 2011, during an interview on the *Paiol Literário* project of *Jornal Rascunho*, Curitiba, discussing literary reading in schools, the writer Bartolomeu Campos de Queirós stated: "Literature is not servile. Literature serves nothing, and the school was made to serve someone, or a political party, or an ideal, while literature was made only to enchant others" (BARTOLOMEU..., 2011, online).

More than five years later, in October 2016, during her participation in the *Caro Leitor* project at Sesc Palladium in Belo Horizonte, writer and illustrator Angela Lago confirmed Bartolomeu Campos de Queirós' statement but made a significant deviation, saying that literature does not serve to teach anyone anything, yet readers learn (LAGO, 2016).

In a different elaboration, the learning that Angela Lago claimed as inherent to literary reading is also present in Bartolomeu Campos de Queirós' thought. Despite his resolute rejection of pragmatic uses of literature, especially with children and adolescents, he celebrates its offerings to childhood and youth from a formative perspective:

For its ability to provide reflection, awareness, knowledge, and pleasure, literature has been invited to effectively inhabit educational spaces. Not merely as a form of entertainment but as a means of promoting knowledge and capable of engaging with the fantastic imagination that everyone possesses (QUEIRÓS, 2012, p. 87).

The understanding that literature is not servile, as professed by both Queirós and Lago, seems to be solidified by writers, illustrators, editors, educators, and researchers who, since the final years of the military dictatorship in Brazil, have invested in literary books as instruments of education, beyond the demands and inappropriate pedagogical uses in the school environment. In this view, literary reading would serve as an exercise in understanding time, space, and human relationships, creating a symbolic repertoire for readers to recognize themselves, both individually and collectively, as historical subjects, marked by their concrete conditions of existence, but also as political, economic, and cultural agents in their context.

This perspective is well articulated in the well-known text by Antônio Candido on the understanding of literature as a human right:

In our societies, literature has been a powerful tool for instruction and education, entering curricula and being proposed as both an intellectual and emotional resource. The values that society upholds or considers harmful are present in various manifestations of fiction, poetry, and dramatic action. Literature both confirms and denies, proposes and denounces, supports and challenges, providing the possibility of dialectically engaging with problems. Thus, both sanctioned literature and proscribed literature are indispensable: the literature suggested by authorities and the

literature emerging from movements that oppose the prevailing state of affairs (CANDIDO, 1994, p. 175)

However, while the investment in literary reading as a formative exercise has, to some extent, been legitimized by its establishment, embraced by many publishing houses, and intensified in the academic sphere over the past three decades directly influencing teacher training and, in a few cases, librarianship<sup>4</sup>, the reading practices in schools and related projects seem significantly marked by instrumental-pragmatic perspectives. This approach often makes literature a means of instructing behaviors and developing disciplinary content. Indeed, many initiatives promoting and teaching reading, even when explicitly recognizing the autonomy of art, simultaneously and conflictually operate with two forces: on one hand, advocating formation as a principle, affirming the uniqueness of the aesthetic experience; on the other, carrying out operational exercises pointing in a different direction.

The observation of conflicting orientations in the provision of literature for children in schools literary reading as a tool for teaching Portuguese language and other disciplinary fields versus literary reading for the formation of individuals through literature as an expression of human experience provides a basis for reflecting on the Club of Reading for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Portuguese — Brazil Chapter.

It is important to highlight that, although not exclusively directed towards educational institutions, the catalog considers them one of its primary interlocutors:

These publications will help promote knowledge about the Goals, encouraging action from publishers, bookstores, libraries, schools, and especially from children and their parents. It is also an opportunity to ensure that these books become bibliographic references in both public and private schools. (CLUBE..., 2021, p. 13).

[...] With the mission of promoting the actions of the UN in the country, the United Nations Information Centre for Brazil (UNIC Rio) believes that this catalog is an important tool for sector professionals to learn more about the SDGs and to use the works in teaching children (CLUBE..., 2021, p. 13).

Even though mentioned alongside other institutions (publishers, bookstores, libraries), its creators understand that schools, both public and private, are of special concern for the project. Considering that the vast majority of Brazilian children, particularly those from poorer segments, have the school as their primary and often only means of accessing science, art, and prestigious

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<sup>4</sup>Fonseca and Paje (2021), analyzing the pedagogical projects of Library Science programs in the North and Northeast regions, found that although the programs offer some courses on reading, the number of these courses is low relative to the total course load. This confirms that a "technician" perspective on reading education prevails in library science training.

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cultural goods, there is no doubt that schools are one of the main targets of the SDG Reading Club<sup>5</sup>.  
For this reason, this article focuses on literary reading in the school environment.

In this context, the objective is to analyze the proposal of the SDG Reading Club in Portuguese — Brazil Chapter, which consists of titles of literature and non-fiction books for children, focusing on the presentation and exploration of previously defined themes — the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) — in light of the literature's use in schools and the complexity the topic demands.

To achieve this, the first part of the study discusses the relevance and multidisciplinary contributions suggested by the field of reading studies in schools, aiming to enable children to understand the time we live in, the space we inhabit, and the relationships we participate in from both individual and collective perspectives. We explore whether and how literature helps to understand and develop awareness of issues such as climate change, poverty eradication, reduction of inequalities, gender equality, quality education, among others.

In the second part of the article, we examine the propositions of the SDG Reading Club in Portuguese — Brazil Chapter, presenting its conceptual foundations, history, objectives, and functioning.

The third part introduces the National Foundation for Children's and Youth Books (FNLIJ), the institution responsible for selecting the titles that make up the catalog of Brazilian publications, detailing its history and activities.

In the fourth part, based on the considerations about literary reading in schools and the pressing need to understand key issues concerning democratic society, including the need for children's education and institutional qualification, we analyze the relevance, conflicts, and contradictions present in the proposal of the Club of ODS Reading in Portuguese — Brazil Chapter.

## **Literary Reading in Schools**

Literary reading has been a subject of academic research, public discourse, and some investment in educational and cultural development policies in Brazil over the past decades. Understandings of its relevance in schools vary and have evolved, or merely been renamed, over time. What is common across all instances, at least formally, is the recognition that literature is necessary for the development of children and young people.

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<sup>5</sup> It is important to note that the SDG Reading Club in Portuguese — Brazil Chapter catalog does not exclusively include literature books, as it also features non-fiction titles, which are more commonly classified as informative. However, given that literature books constitute the majority of the catalog, we will focus on them in this reflection.

While there may be a consensus on the importance of literary reading, the justification for its relevance and the objectives and extent of its provision in schools are supported by very different rationales, making the topic a contested field. Although marked by gradations, two seemingly opposing lines of thought emerge as central to the discussion.

The first, closer to traditional educational concepts, is grounded in the idea that literature serves to teach various things: spelling and grammar rules, moral values and socially appropriate behavior, natural phenomena, historical moments, and ethnic and social diversity. The second, influenced by liberal-progressive or historic-critical ideas, views literary texts and reading as valuable in themselves, with no commitment beyond intellectual and aesthetic development. This perspective limits itself to instrumentalizing students for reading without imposing additional obligations.

On one hand, there is the traditional school view of reading as a progressive educational activity, guided and carried out through literary texts. On the other hand, there is the expansion of a "modern" social discourse that envisions the democratized use of reading, free from formative guidelines and applied to all types of texts. The power of this new social discourse pressured schools to the point of influencing their conceptions and modifying many of the reading practices that were being developed within them. (COLOMER, 2007, p. 23).

This shift in perspective began in the late 1970s in Brazil (ZILBERMAN, 2008). The weakening of the civil-military dictatorship and the movements for democratization created a favorable environment for the establishment of graduate programs in Education and for the production of critical knowledge about schools, teaching practices, and power relations in formal education. In this context, ideas from various countries and theoretical currents were incorporated into Brazilian research, fostering diverse reflections, almost all of which rejected the authoritarianism and dismantling that occurred during the years of repression.

Between the final years of the Military Dictatorship and the early years of the democratic regime, there was significant growth in educational literature in our country. This growth was driven not only by the needs of our society, which indeed saw education as a real problem from both qualitative and quantitative perspectives, but also by the emergence of a graduate education system master's and doctoral programs that fueled the production of academic theses and dissertations, which subsequently became books (GHIRARDELLI JR., 2009, p. 127).

In this context, reflections on education include a differentiated perspective on reading practices in Brazilian schools, which began to be considered, albeit sporadically, from a viewpoint that would transcend mere repetition. This perspective regards the literary text as valuable in itself, contrary to its use as a pretext for teaching disciplinary knowledge. An example of this shift is the article "*O texto*



SDG Book Club in Portuguese: possibilities and contradictions *não é pretexto*” (The Text is Not a Pretext) by Marisa Lajolo (1982), published in a book organized by Regina Zilberman (1982), which had a significant impact in the last two decades of the previous century. The very title of the book— *“Leitura em crise na escola — as alternativas do professor”* (Reading in Crisis at School — The Teacher's Alternatives)— aptly represents this movement.

Emerging from the same historical moment, Brazilian literary creation for children underwent renewal in the late 1970s and 1980s, following trends in other arts, as noted by Nelly Novaes Coelho:

The explosion of creativity, which in the previous decade had occurred in the field of Brazilian Popular Music, manifests in the 1970s with Children's and Youth Literature (as well as with Children's Theater). The so-called “boom of Children's Literature” reverberates beyond borders. [...] In addition to numerous “continuators” who follow established paths, dozens of writers and writers of “higher art” emerged, aligned with the new watchword: experimentation with language, narrative structure, and textual visualism; a shift from confident/secure literature to restless/questioning literature that challenges the conventional relationships between children and the world they live in, and also questions the values on which our society is based. (COELHO, 2010, p. 283, author's emphasis).

Slowly, especially through public programs for the acquisition and distribution of bibliographic collections to schools, the books of literature produced during the “boom” began to circulate in classrooms and other educational spaces (sometimes actual libraries). Even during the dark period of the military dictatorship, some educators tried to circumvent the technicist and productivist perspective imposed by the regime on school education, which focused on training professionals for a limited and submissive labor market, by betting on reading and writing as a means to spread critical thinking and attitude:

Among the groups of education professionals who dreamed of the restoration of democracy, some were dedicated to providing students with critical competence in reading texts with complex structures, generating social transformations through the product of their development. The student should be able to produce texts marked by vocabulary variety, a certain refinement in textual structure, and the revelation of prior knowledge from which cultural manifestations could emerge, as an attempt to encourage more critical and creative writing. In this context, the key concepts are: mastery of reading and writing, essential for the development of critical consciousness. (ROSING, 2012, p. 97).

In the school environment, however, the ways of reading and teaching reading have not easily renewed. Even today, the conception of literature as a pretext for teaching other things (the disciplinary content outlined in lesson plans, now subsumed under curricular frameworks) prevails in classrooms, textbooks, teaching practices, and school library activities. This approach has been identified and sometimes criticized by academic research, which points to the inefficiency of such practices in developing readers.



In contrast to using literary texts to teach content unrelated to their nature and in alignment with what Bartolomeu Campos de Queirós and Angela Lago advocated, the perspective we envision involves offering literature in schools through the development of diverse ways of reading, at different levels and depths, in a continuous learning process. This approach creates conditions for children and adolescents to engage with language in its many forms: narrating, speaking, rhyming, organizing, questioning, whispering, and even remaining silent. This relationship with literary texts could, without guarantees or automatism, expand the possibilities for naming, understanding, questioning, and re-signifying the world.

From a critical perspective, which rejects both instrumental use and mere affirmation of a self-centered subjectivity while acknowledging the necessity of art (here referencing Ernest Fischer, 1987), two complementary movements can be adopted in pedagogical work with literary texts: the teaching of literature and the teaching through literature. The teaching of literature, or "literary education", a relatively uncommon term in Brazilian bibliographic production focused on reader formation and literature teaching assumes an understanding of the aesthetic object and its possibilities for appreciation. However, this takes place within the historical-social context that defines both the conditions of production and reception of knowledge, specifically the aesthetic object that literature represents;

In summary, this can be considered the ongoing task of literary education: to view reading, especially literary reading, as a social, cultural, and historical practice. It involves intellectual exercise through which individuals, drawing on their experiences and prior knowledge and utilizing linguistic skills, engage with narratives created by humanity over time and space, while understanding this process. Beyond accessing the narratives and poetic constructs presented in a text, what is at stake is its historical, social, and linguistic understanding in the act of reading—understanding writing as a product, with its place, time, and conditions of production, its objective marks, and, most importantly, the possibilities it offers for subjective appropriation. (FARIAS, 2018, p. 180-181)

While the "teaching through literature" approach suggests that through reading and the reflection it inspires, readers learn about language, the world, time, space, human existence, nature, and imagination. In this way, reading literature becomes a means to engage with and understand these broader concepts

as an instrument for understanding and questioning the world from social, cultural, economic, individual, and collective perspectives. Literature becomes a proposition of experience for the reader, offering elements to understand the relationships we are embedded in, the economic interests we are subjected to, and the beliefs or truths upon which these constructs are based (FARIAS, 2018, p. 180)

Learning, therefore, manifests in the very act of reading, producing, and comparing meanings, based on linguistic knowledge and symbolic repertoire; and, of course, in the experience of making reading a continuous act of living, as part of an educational project that:

produces, in individual persons, humanity; that is, educational work achieves its purpose when each individual appropriates the humanity produced historically and collectively, when the individual acquires the cultural elements necessary for their formation as a human being, essential to their humanization (DUARTE, 2012, p. 50).

Thus, literary reading in the school environment would constitute, from early childhood, the offering of symbolic elements to children for the recognition of their historicity, creating fissures in the foundational structures of the established order and the common, and broadening possibilities for reorienting the destinies previously determined for each of us, both individually and collectively. This understanding of the purposes of literary reading in school can be regarded as a knowledge project, "a unique and fundamental form of knowledge".

I understand knowledge as comprehensive procedures through which thought representatively perceives an object, using various investigative resources (such as intuition, contemplation, classification, measurement, analogy, observation), which, being historically produced, depend on the philosophical and scientific models that originated them. Knowledge has been produced in – and with – human history and has enabled humans to shape themselves – both as individuals and as a group – and to mold the place of their existence (BRITTO, 2012, p. 128).

In this perspective, literary reading in schools would be part of a formative process that considers human existence and the power struggles (economic, political, historical, social, cultural, linguistic, religious) that determine it as the subject of experience. More than just stories to be read and discussed with children and adolescents, literature and its marks of creation, production, and circulation would serve as tools for understanding the world: who we are, how we live, where we are, and what relationships we are part of.

In their journey, which is altered and reoriented with each reading, students whether children, youth, or adults are expected to engage in experiences related to linguistic, identity, ideological, and metaliterary aspects. These experiences together shape their reading narratives, in an exercise that

requires attention, memory, concentration, capacity for relation and association, spatial vision, some mastery of vocabulary and syntax of the language, knowledge of narrative codes, patience, imagination, logical thinking, ability to formulate hypotheses and build expectations, time, and effort. (BÉRTOLO, 2014, p. 48)

In this perspective, reading literature offers itself as an exercise in identity and expansion of boundaries, as children and adolescents in the classroom and school library recognize themselves and their feelings and values in the stories read. At the same time, depending on the mediations, they

experience a shift from this individual and intimate view to a broader and collective dimension, bringing their literary and cultural references into the construction of meaning for their readings.

From early childhood, in Early Childhood Education, it is valuable to invite children to experience literary narratives in less obvious ways, beyond mere playfulness (though engaging in it), paying attention to what words and illustrations, together, create in the pages: stories, feelings, images, sounds, tensions, absences, encounters, relationships... All of this with the active contribution of teachers and librarians, considered as material for experience and knowledge construction.

We reaffirm the need for the school in this process. For the vast majority of Brazilian children, school is the space for dialogue about issues outside their daily lives, with some suspension of productive time and, in some ways, protected from distractions, especially from mass communication products. Therefore, school education should be considered the most intense and structuring opportunity for dialogue and reflection with children, who are there with their attention and time suited to pedagogical propositions.

It is within the horizon of literature as knowledge and in light of studies dedicated to literary reading in schools, while also considering the need to reflect with children on the themes organized in the Sustainable Development Goals that affect us all such as climate change, poverty eradication, reduction of inequalities, gender equality, quality education, among others that we analyze the *Clube de Leitura ODS em Língua Portuguesa — Capítulo Brasil* (SDG Reading Club in Portuguese — Brazil Chapter).

## **SDG Reading Club in Portuguese — Brazil Chapter**

In recent years, we have witnessed a renewed interest in book clubs in Brazil. Created and held in various spaces and formats, including virtual ones, due to different interests, book clubs are a significant activity centered around books and reading.

In Brazil, there are book clubs in a wide range of formats and operating modes, with in-person or virtual meetings, and varying by gender, age, and selected texts (some focus on foreign language texts, others on literary canon works, bestsellers, or comic books). Their origins also vary, with some forming in educational institutions like schools or universities, and others operating as online groups. There are community and thematic clubs, such as those linked to bookstores and publishers, as well as those with specific reading focuses, like *Leia Mulheres*, which aims to encourage reading works written by women. Generally, most book clubs center around the reading of literary works (PALMA, 2020, p. 12).

There are many formats and objectives for book clubs, leading to a range of different initiatives under the broad term. There are also book clubs, often referred to as reading clubs, that are primarily

SDG Book Club in Portuguese: possibilities and contradictions commercial in nature, even though their communication and sales strategies aim to make consumers feel part of a group.

In its basic definition, book clubs are understood as "a group that meets periodically to discuss a book that has been agreed upon for reading" (ARANA-PALACIOS; GALINDO-LIZALDRE, 2009, p. 58). New types of clubs are constantly emerging, with common features only being the promotion of books and some form of engagement around them. This is the case with the SDG Reading Club in Portuguese — Brazil Chapter, a catalog of books for children and adolescents focused on specific themes.

The SDG Reading Club is an initiative of the United Nations (UN) aimed at introducing children aged six to twelve to the SDGs — a set of 17 goals that UN member countries have committed to achieving by 2030, described as "a global call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity" (UNITED NATIONS, 2022, online). These goals are: 1) No Poverty; 2) Zero Hunger and Sustainable Agriculture; 3) Good Health and Well-being; 4) Quality Education; 5) Gender Equality; 6) Clean Water and Sanitation; 7) Affordable and Clean Energy; 8) Decent Work and Economic Growth; 9) Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure; 10) Reduced Inequalities; 11) Sustainable Cities and Communities; 12) Responsible Consumption and Production; 13) Climate Action; 14) Life Below Water; 15) Life on Land; 16) Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions; 17) Partnerships for the Goals.

The project exists in the six official languages of the UN — Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, French, English, and Russian — and, with the Brazil Chapter, now includes a Portuguese-language initiative in Latin America.

In Brazil, the project is coordinated by the Brazilian Book Chamber (CBL) and is supported by the Brazilian Federation of Children's and Youth Books (FNLIJ) and the Brazilian Federation of Library Associations, Information Scientists, and Institutions (FEBAB). FNLIJ is responsible for selecting the titles that make up the catalog, while FEBAB manages the dissemination of the initiative to librarians nationwide and verifies the technical aspects of the submitted works. The *Leiturinha* publishing house contributed by covering the costs for creating the virtual platform for book submissions, and the Brazilian Publishers project, which maintains a partnership between CBL and the Brazilian Agency for Export Promotion and Investments (Apex-Brasil), funded the production of the project's catalog in both Portuguese and English.

Participation in the selection of titles for the Brazilian catalog was free and open to all interested publishers and authors. To participate, books had to address one or more Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), be aimed at children aged six to twelve, be published between January 1, 2016, and October 30, 2020, and have an ISBN and a cataloging record in accordance with relevant legislation. Submissions were made online via the CBL website from November 16 to December 16, 2020.

A total of 1,111 titles were submitted, of which 986 were deemed eligible according to the established rules. From these, 175 books were selected by FNLIJ to be included in the SDG Reading Club in Portuguese — Brazil Chapter, organized by SDG in the catalog available on the CBL website.

### **The National Foundation for Children's and Youth Literature (FNLIJ)**

The FNLIJ is the Brazilian section of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY). The institution, headquartered in Switzerland, has 80 national sections and is dedicated to promoting reading and children's books through various initiatives worldwide. Established in 1968, the FNLIJ is based in Rio de Janeiro and has voting members across all regions of the country. Over its 54-year history, it has developed a trajectory of valuing the creation and editorial production for children in Brazil, including reading promotion and library projects, manifested in seminars, conferences, courses, and primarily through the FNLIJ Prize — The Best for Children and the FNLIJ Children's and Young Adults' Book Fair. It holds a valuable collection of books published for children and young people in Brazil, which also includes theoretical studies on the subject, formed by donations from publishers when registering their titles for each edition of the FNLIJ Prize.

As a member of IBBY and anchored in a long-standing and systematic monitoring of national editorial production, FNLIJ nominates Brazilian candidates for the two categories, writing and illustration, of the Hans Christian Andersen Award, the highest distinction granted to children's book creation worldwide. Three of its nominations have been honored: Lygia Bojunga in 1982, Ana Maria Machado in 2000, and Roger Mello in 2014. The FNLIJ is also responsible for creating the Bologna Catalogue, an annual selection of titles aimed at promoting Brazilian writers, illustrators, and editorial production at the Bologna Children's Book Fair, the largest global event in the sector.

In recent years, due to the political, social, and economic instability in Brazil, which has had immediate repercussions on public policies in Education and Culture, FNLIJ has faced difficulties in maintaining its activities and proposing new projects. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the already challenging situation but did not halt the institution, which continued to organize the FNLIJ

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Prize, prepared the catalogue for the SDG Reading Club in Portuguese — Brazil Chapter, and held seminars, including one on the SDG Reading Club in September 2021.

In 2009, alongside *Instituto C&A*, *Casa Azul/Flip*, and *Centro de Cultura Luiz Freire*, the foundation was part of the creation of the *Movimento por um Brasil Literário* (Movement for a Literary Brazil), marked by the publication of the *Manifesto por um Brasil Literário*, written by Bartolomeu Campos de Queirós. This document presents literature as a tool for understanding the world and a possibility for fantasy, from an inclusive and democratic perspective of creation:

It is in the possible world of fiction that man is truly free to think, configure alternatives, and let fantasy act. In literature, liberated from practical action and necessity, the subject travels through another possible world. Without prejudices in its construction, and hence its intrinsic potential for inclusion, literature welcomes us without ignoring our incompleteness. This is what literature offers and opens to anyone who wishes to surrender to fantasy. Thus, the power to create, imagine, recreate, and break the limits of the probable is democratized. Its reflective foundation allows the reader to turn inward and establish a prose between the real and the idealized (MANIFESTO..., 2009, p. 1).

By endorsing the *Manifesto for a Literary Brazil*, FNLIJ validates its understanding of offering literary reading to children and adolescents, as present in the conduct of its activities over time. The criteria adopted in the FNLIJ Award, the organization of the FNLIJ Children's and Young Adult Book Fair, the reflections proposed in its seminars and training activities, and its positions on issues related to its institutional work point to a conception of literary reading consistent with that presented in the *Manifesto*, similar to those articulated by Bartolomeu Campos de Queirós in *Paiol Literário* and by Angela Lago in *Caro Leitor*.

Historically engaged in promoting quality books for children and adolescents, FNLIJ, mobilized by IBBY and CBL, was responsible for the selection process of titles that make up the Brazil Chapter catalog, establishing as work guidelines the criteria used in the FNLIJ Award, described in item 5.2.1 of the regulations that guided the selection of works: "the originality of the text, the originality of the illustration, the artistic and competent use of the language and the illustration, the quality of translations, considering the concept of book-object, which includes editorial and graphic design" (CAMARA BRASILEIRA DO LIVRO, 2020, p. 4).

To leave no doubt about its understanding of the nature and horizons of literary reading, including its offer to children and young people, the institution, confirming its trajectory and echoing the position of its voting readers, states:

FNLIJ emphasizes that the inclusion of these SDGs should not imply a utilitarian reading of the works, that is, a limited and limiting reading, especially of those works where the literary character is predominant. The correlation established between the



works and the SDGs is merely the acknowledgment that texts for children and young people — whether literary or not — can offer pathways for necessary discussions for the formation of children and adolescents as global citizens and inhabitants of the planet. (CLUBE..., 2021, p. 105).

Thus, even though it responds to a demand that goes beyond its scope of reader formation by guiding the use of literature to discuss pre-established themes such as those comprising the SDGs, FNLIJ maintains its understanding that the literary text should be read as such.

## **SDG Reading Club in Portuguese – Brazil Chapter: Possibilities and Contradictions**

The presence of the SDG Reading Club in Brazil invites reflection. There are many aspects of the project to observe and possibilities for contributions to the formation of children and educators to evaluate. The task is more complex than it initially seems and requires a dialectical approach.

Firstly, it is necessary to reflect on the ideological foundations of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their concrete conditions of application, that is, capitalist society. Although apparently endowed with good intentions, the SDGs are anchored in a vision of sustainability that overlooks the ways in which capital operates. There is a glaring contradiction in proposing goals such as eradicating poverty, reducing inequalities, and combating hunger through sustainable agriculture, among other objectives, while maintaining the unjust distribution of wealth, labor exploitation, ecological degradation, and social inequalities core aspects of capitalism.

Despite its commitment to social justice, the dominant assumptions of sustainable development ignore the fact that the capitalist organization is inherently based on principles of inequality, typically expressed in the appropriation of the means of production, division of labor, specialization, and hierarchy (VIZEU, MENEGHETTI, SEIFERT, 2012, p. 579).

The insatiable quest for capital accumulation and financial profit, and its critique, are not addressed by the SDGs. In other words, the SDGs do not consider the structural causes of the problems they aim to mitigate, ignoring the impossible reconciliation between capitalism and human development, understood as ensuring the well-being of people and promoting their opportunities and freedoms. It is not possible to eradicate poverty largely generated by job precariousness and unfair production relations when poverty itself is a condition that favors exploitation and accumulation. Similarly, it seems contradictory to address hunger through sustainable agriculture in a context of environmental aggression driven by agribusiness.



Without addressing these contradictions and conflicts present in each of its goals, the SDGs serve as a placebo for the problems affecting our supposed civilization, with no genuine commitment to human development, which requires, among other things, consistent and socially distributed economic development. Without altering the structures that perpetuate social injustices and contribute to the degradation of life on the planet, the SDGs and all mobilization in their favor seem limited to conciliatory discourses and ineffective measures.

This brief reflection serves as the foundation for the critique of the SDG Reading Club in Portuguese — Brazil Chapter. If the sustainable development propositions presented in the SDGs are so fragile and form part of conciliatory discourses that make capitalism more palatable to the common sense, does it make sense to promote them among children and educators?

A superficial response, devoid of deep reflection, would say no, that there is no point in promoting discourses that obscure real problems and suggest solutions disconnected from contemporary historical, social, economic, and cultural conditions. However, if we consider the presence of such a project as a potential fissure within its own scope, there may be formative dynamics that could be stimulated and valued in classrooms and libraries.

The SDG Reading Club in Portuguese — Brazil Chapter could be an invitation to students and educators engaged with the theme, using it as an exercise in formation, understanding of the world, space, nature, time, and the relationships we participate in beyond their appearance, as Theodor Adorno advocates in his formulation of emancipation:

What characterizes consciousness properly is thinking in relation to reality, to content—the relationship between the forms and structures of the subject's thought and what the subject is not. This deeper sense of consciousness or faculty of thinking is not merely formal logical development; it literally corresponds to the capacity to have experiences. I would say that thinking is the same as engaging in intellectual experiences. In this sense and in the terms we have sought to present, education for experience is identical to education for emancipation. (ADORNO, 1995, p. 151).

Taking the assumptions of the SDGs to understand the reality we live in and create symbolic conditions to act within it constitutes the realization of the intellectual experiences advocated by Adorno in his emancipatory perspective, which aligns with the understanding that Bartolomeu Campos de Queirós and Angela Lago present of literary reading: a source of reflection and sensitization, knowledge construction, and dialogue with the imagination in experiences that do not offer themselves as teaching but through which we learn. The same vision is posited by the Manifesto for a Literary Brazil, which grants literary reading the space for thought, suspended from practical action and mundane needs.

In critiquing the SDG Reading Club in Portuguese, one must also consider the fragile circulation of books in Brazil, with insufficient numbers of school and public libraries and limited training of a significant portion of education professionals, many of whom lack higher or specific education in their field. The availability of a catalog like the one created by FNLIJ represents an opportunity to access information about children's literary production in the country.

For obvious reasons, including school dynamics oriented towards teaching disciplinary content through literature books and the central proposition of the SDG Reading Club, the Adornian horizon of emancipation, as well as the educational work advocated by Duarte (2012), is not an easy or quick task. The possibilities inherent in literary reading, combined with the idea of quality that has guided FNLIJ's work over time, open paths and make the readings suggested by the project an exercise in criticism and learning, despite and against what is desired to be taught and the existing conditions for such. Hopefully, this learning includes the urgent need to understand who we are and how we live, how we inhabit the planet and move through places that should be ours, ensuring that all people have conditions for a dignified and just life.

## **Final considerations**

The reflection proposed in this article, of a conceptual nature, points to the necessary inquiries about initiatives that use literature and its reading in schools to teach or discuss disciplinary content, often to the detriment of the experience with art through literary reading and its horizon of knowledge about the world. As emphasized in the body of the work, art should not be simply used as a tool for something else whether it be mere pleasure, instructional procedures, or the affirmation of values. The formative role of literature does not align with conventions that is, what would be considered a well-established value by society. In fact, its strength lies precisely in its nature as "not an innocuous experience, but an adventure that can cause psychological and moral problems, much like life itself, of which it is an image and transfiguration" (CANDIDO, 2004, p. 175).

It follows that any political-pedagogical initiative entails risks (whether acknowledged or not by its proposers) that go far beyond good intentions and noble objectives, such as the dissemination of a set of ideals for a better world. Among these risks, especially when the objective contradictions of an unequal and conflicted society are ignored, is the trivialization of both the ideas and the objects used for their dissemination.

The SDG Reading Club in Portuguese — Brazil Chapter, was proposed and, with its characteristics, is implemented in an unequal society where formal education is fragile and the objective and subjective conditions for reading and writing are systematically and objectively precarious. Educators' knowledge of Brazilian publishing is limited, and thus, a catalog produced in this context, endorsed by a significant institution dedicated to children's and young adults' books in the country, can be of great value, contributing to the enhancement of education and social life.

However, it must be noted that the worldview and interests underpinning the SDG proposal, in various spheres of social life, are often obscured by the naive desire, especially in the field of education, to address problems that seem insurmountable within the current economic model, especially if the profits and advantages that drive its mechanisms are not effectively challenged. Highlighted in school readings, these problems gain visibility and become subject to innocuous mobilizations, creating the illusion that something, even if minimally significant, is being done.

Depending on the decisions and actions of schools and their educators, the SDG Reading Club in Portuguese — Brazil Chapter could become an instrument of reflection within the school environment, both regarding the nature of literary reading with children in school and in projects like the SDGs, which cynically address the issues causing inequality and injustices worldwide.

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