

HISTORY OF INDIGENOUS EDUCATION IN CEARÁ BASED ON THE LIFE OF RAIMUNDINHA TREMEMBÉ

História da educação indígena no Ceará a partir da trajetória de Raimundinha Tremembé

Historia de la educación indígena en Ceará a partir de la trayectoria de Raimundinha Tremembé

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Abstract: School education was imposed on Indigenous peoples from the early days of colonization, with the aim of domination and assimilation. It was only from the 1970s onward, through the actions of the Indigenous Movement and the promulgation of Brazil's 1988 Federal Constitution, that Differentiated Indigenous Education emerged, recognizing the traditional ways of life of these peoples. This study examines the history of Differentiated Indigenous Education in the state of Ceará, situating the life story of its main protagonist, Raimunda Marques do Nascimento, known as Raimundinha, of the Tremembé ethnic group, founder of the first Differentiated Indigenous School in 1991, within the field of the History of Education. The objective is to write a biography of the Indigenous teacher Raimunda Marques do Nascimento, emphasizing her educational work within the social, cultural, and political context of Indigenous Education in Ceará during the 1990s. The methodology adopted was Hybrid Oral History, based on theoretical sources articulated with oral narratives from Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals, complemented by documentary sources. The findings reveal that Raimundinha developed an innovative educational practice motivated by the negative experiences she and her people faced in non-Indigenous schools, which led to the establishment of the first Differentiated Indigenous School in the state. Through her leadership, the struggle for Differentiated Indigenous Education expanded, resulting in its official recognition and implementation, as well as the creation of other differentiated schools for Indigenous peoples.

Keywords: Differentiated Indigenous Education; History of Education; biography; women educators from Ceará.

Resumo: A educação escolar foi imposta aos povos originários desde os primórdios da colonização, tendo por objetivo a dominação e assimilação. Somente na década de 1970, surge, com a intervenção do Movimento Indígena e com a promulgação da Constituição Federal de 1988, a Educação Indígena Diferenciada, que reconhece os modos de vida tradicionais desses povos. Desse modo, remete-se à História da Educação Indígena Diferenciada no estado do Ceará, situando no campo da História da Educação a história de vida da protagonista dessa modalidade, Raimunda Marques do Nascimento, conhecida como Raimundinha, da etnia Tremembé, que fundou em 1991 a primeira Escola Indígena Diferenciada. Objetiva-se, portanto, biografar a professora indígena Raimunda Marques do Nascimento, dando ênfase à sua atuação educativa, na interface com o contexto social, cultural e político da Educação Indígena do Ceará na década de 1990. Como metodologia, foi adotada a História Oral Híbrida, amparando-se em fontes teóricas entrecruzadas com narrativas orais de indígenas e não indígenas, complementadas com fontes documentais. Destarte, pôde-se constatar que Raimundinha teceu uma prática inovadora que foi motivada pelas experiências negativas vivenciadas por ela e por seu povo em escolas não indígenas, fundando a primeira Escola Indígena Diferenciada do estado. A partir do protagonismo da educadora, a luta pela Educação Indígena Diferenciada foi ampliando-se com o reconhecimento e implementação oficial dessa modalidade de educação e a criação de outras escolas diferenciadas para os povos indígenas.

Palavras-chave: Educação Indígena Diferenciada; História da Educação; biografia; educadoras cearenses.

Resumen: La educación escolar fue impuesta a los pueblos indígenas desde los inicios de la colonización, con fines de dominación y asimilación. Solo en la década de 1970 —con la intervención del Movimiento Indígena y, posteriormente, con la promulgación de la Constitución Federal de 1988— surgió la Educación Indígena Diferenciada, que reconoce las formas de vida tradicionales de estos pueblos. Este artículo revisita la historia de la Educación Indígena Diferenciada en el estado de Ceará, situando la trayectoria de una pionera de esta modalidad, Raimunda Marques do Nascimento (Raimundinha), del pueblo Tremembé, quien fundó la primera Escuela Indígena Diferenciada en 1991. El objetivo es elaborar la biografía de la profesora indígena Raimunda Marques do Nascimento, destacando su labor educativa en relación con el contexto social, cultural y político de la educación indígena en Ceará en la década de 1990. La metodología adoptada fue la Historia Oral Híbrida, basada en fuentes teóricas entrelazadas con narraciones orales de personas indígenas y no indígenas, complementadas con fuentes documentales. El estudio muestra que Raimundinha desarrolló una práctica innovadora motivada por las experiencias negativas vividas por ella y su pueblo en escuelas no indígenas, lo que llevó a la creación de la primera Escuela Indígena Diferenciada del estado. A partir de su liderazgo, la lucha por la Educación Indígena Diferenciada se amplió con el reconocimiento e implementación oficiales de esta modalidad y la creación de otras escuelas diferenciadas para los pueblos indígenas.

Palabras clave: Educación Indígena Diferenciada; Historia de la Educación; biografía; educadoras cearenses.

INTRODUCTION

Let's go to Cuiambá, ô ariguê is part of a song from Torém, the sacred ritual of the Tremembé indigenous people. With this phrase, everyone is called to drink mocroró (a sacred drink made from sour cashews, also called "água de manin") and practice Torém. In analogy, we begin this article with an excerpt from this song to invite you to read this scientific article, to Cuiambá!

The history of Indigenous School Education in Brazil is often divided by researchers who undertake studies in this field into two periods or trends. The first period, known as assimilationist, aimed at the assimilation of European culture and values by indigenous peoples. It began with the Portuguese invasion, which subjected indigenous peoples to the traditional school model, and lasted until the mid-1970s, marked by schooling initiatives aimed at the domination and assimilation of indigenous peoples. The second period, known as emancipatory (Bergamaschi & Medeiros, 2010), was strengthened by the struggle of the Indigenous Movement and the establishment of the Federal Constitution (Brazil, 1988), which inaugurated a new educational archetype, proposing the cultural valorization of these peoples with a differentiated, intercultural, bilingual, and specific Indigenous Education.

From the emancipatory perspective, Differentiated Indigenous Education emerged, marked by a worldview that not only recognizes the specificities of indigenous ways of life, but also advocates for an education that differs from dominant Western schooling models, in which the culture, knowledge, and ways of organizing and living of indigenous peoples are recognized, respected, and valued. With the vision that indigenous education should have its own pedagogical practices, curriculum, and teachers, Raimunda Marques do Nascimento became a leading figure in the fight for Differentiated Indigenous Education in Ceará.

Situated in the field of History of Education, this scientific research examines the life story of Raimunda Marques do Nascimento, an indigenous woman of the Tremembé ethnic group, also known as Raimundinha, or Raimundinha Tremembé, an educator whose life was marked by her leading role in Differentiated Indigenous Education in Ceará. Her biography allows for a greater understanding of the educational practices and representations woven by one of the most prominent indigenous leaders among her ethnic group. Furthermore, it is through a biographical study that it is possible to reconstruct the social context of a given period, based on New Cultural History, which has broadened the understanding of historical sources and subjects (Burke, 1992).

In this context, the following question was raised: what contributions did Raimunda Marques do Nascimento make to the educational landscape of the state of Ceará? The objective is to write a biography of the indigenous teacher Raimunda Marques do Nascimento, emphasizing her educational work in relation to the social,

cultural, and political context of Indigenous Education in Ceará in the 1990s. The chosen time frame is justified because it encompasses the years of the first initiatives in favor of Differentiated Indigenous Education by the Tremembé people, especially those developed by the subject of this biography.

The investigative challenge of writing a biography of a female educator is relevant because it can reveal not only her particularities as a woman, an indigenous person, and a teacher, but also the still little-explored context of Differentiated Indigenous Education, especially in the state of Ceará, by problematizing the paradoxes arising from Raimunda Tremembé's social and educational journey and discussing the nuances and singularities that permeated this process.

We also justify this investigative intent due to the invisibility and obscurity surrounding the indigenous presence in the state of Ceará, especially with regard to indigenous women's activities. The narratives about indigenous women, often silenced or rarely referenced in historical records, allow us to go against the invisibility in which they have been placed since the colonization of Brazil. After all, the history of our country still reflects the absence of these female characters, and what can be said is that little is known or recorded about the significant participation of indigenous women in the social and political struggles of this country.

This initial explanation introduces Raimunda Tremembé, the subject of this biography, her importance to the history of indigenous education in the state of Ceará, the issues involved, and the objective of the research. Next, in the section "Methodological frameworks of a biography," we explain the theoretical and methodological basis of the study, addressing New Cultural History, biography, oral history methodology, and other sources used for analytical cross-referencing. Next, in "That's why I am a Tremembé Indian," we explore the birth of the subject of this biography, the constitution of her family cradle, her first contact with schooling, and her move to the city of Fortaleza. In the following section, "Alegria do Mar: The Tremembé school is born of struggle and reinforces the struggle," we infer the writing from her return to Almofala, emphasizing the beginning of Raimundinha Tremembé's teaching at the Alegria do Mar School, with her leading role in favor of Differentiated Indigenous Education and her educational practices. Finally, in the "(Non) Final Considerations," we return to the problem and objective of the proposed study, reflect on the main ideas discussed, and point out limitations and suggestions for new research.

METHODOLOGICAL WEAVINGS OF A BIOGRAPHY

Weaving is the act of gathering threads and intertwining them on a loom. Thus, we can understand the development of the methodology outlined in this research,

which aims to produce a biography based on the intertwining of oral and documentary historical sources.

The study, situated within the field of History of Education, is based on the perspective of New Cultural History (Burke, 1997), as it considers sources other than official documents and does not seek to glorify heroes or record major events. In contrast to traditional history, which relied solely on official written sources, without the need to question documents or interpret them and cross-reference them with other sources, such as oral ones, this research reveals traces that have been historically invisible, taking indigenous oral traditions as the epicenter of the investigation.

Considering that this research aims to develop the biography of the indigenous educator Raimundinha Tremembé, it is necessary to understand what is meant by the biographical genre, as well as the importance of studies on the life stories of educators. According to Dosse (2009), hermeneutic biographies, unlike stories of heroic and obsequious lives, seek to reveal the subject with their characteristics inserted in a real context. In this vein, we seek to portray the Raimunda Tremembé with her joys, successes, imperfections, problems, and conflicts, experienced in the historical context in which she was inserted, in interface with her collective (Sousa & Fialho, 2023). However, we do not lose sight of the female teacher and her contributions to the educational scene in Ceará, especially with regard to the emergence of Indigenous Education, where Raimundinha Tremembé was a leading figure. The methodology for conducting the biographical research will be guided by Oral History, as it values the memories and narratives of historical subjects and enables dialogue with other documentary, image, and legal sources—laws, opinions, and decrees—books, scientific articles, among others (Pinsky, 2006). However, the choice of Oral History should not be driven by the lack of documentary sources, as it allows for cross-comparisons between the statements of individuals and other sources, taking into account the memories and forgetfulness inherent in memory.

Thus, as a tool for data collection, we adopted the free interview in Oral History (Meihy & Holanda, 2017), in which no pre-prepared script of questions was used, allowing the interviewees to narrate the life story of Raimundinha Tremembé according to the relevance they attributed to their memories. For this methodology, we needed to consider subjective aspects, such as silences, forgetfulness, gestures, the interviewees' expressions, and everything that could enrich the narrative, as these are important aspects in the analysis.

To this end, visits were made to the village of Almofala, in the municipality of Itarema, Ceará (CE), in the first months of 2021, to conduct the interviews. The following people were interviewed: Raimundinha Tremembé's children, Janiel Marques do Nascimento, and Maria Samires do Nascimento Sousa; her aunt Maria de Jesus Sobrinho (Dijé), with whom she lived during her childhood; Maria Gilsa do

Nascimento, her student at Escola Alegria Mar; and José Getúlio dos Santos, current director and teacher at Escola Indígena Tremembé Maria Venância.

Based on previous conversations with the Tremembé themselves, they indicated non-indigenous individuals who could provide accounts of Raimundinha Tremembé's work. Among the non-indigenous individuals interviewed were: José Mendes Fonteles Filho (known as Babi Fonteles), professor at the Federal University of Ceará (UFC), researcher of Tremembé Indigenous Education who served as coordinator and liaison for the Tremembé Indigenous Higher Education Program; Edileusa Santiago do Nascimento, a researcher among the ethnic group, personal friend, and teacher of Raimunda at the Tremembé Indigenous Teaching Program (MIT); and Gerson Augusto de Oliveira Júnior, professor at the State University of Ceará (Uece), first MIT teacher at the secondary level, and researcher among the ethnic group.

All interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed in full, validated, and analyzed to enable the biographing of indigenous teacher Raimundinha Tremembé, with an emphasis on her educational work.

The ethical procedures, the objective of the research, how the data would be collected, the non-preservation of anonymity, the dissemination of the results, the risks and benefits were explained to the participants interviewed based on the reading of the Free and Informed Consent Form (FICF), which was subsequently signed by the collaborators.

THAT IS WHY I AM AN INDIGENOUS TREMEMBÉ INDIGENOUS¹

Raimundinha Tremembé is the eldest daughter of Francisco Marques do Nascimento (Chief João Venância) and Lúcia Ferreira do Nascimento. She was born on Sunday, June 13, 1971, in the municipality of Acaraú, following a normal delivery (Sobrinho, January 31, 2021). Raimunda Tremembé's family still consists of eight siblings, seven children of the same father and mother and one child from her father's relationship with Claudevanda dos Santos.

Regarding Raimundinha's childhood, at the age of 2, she went to live with her paternal grandmother, Maria Venância, and her paternal aunt, Maria de Jesus Sobrinho, known as Dijé, who raised her. Thus, there were only three women in the house, as Dijé and Maria Venância did not have husbands. Dijé also explains that Raimundinha Tremembé was raised by her and her grandmother because João

¹ This phrase is mentioned in a statement by Raimunda Marques in "The tradition behind creation - Primer of the Tremembé people." Statement by Raimundinha in June 1997. Retrieved from: <http://www.digitalmundomiraira.com.br/Patrimonio/CulturaPovosIndigenas/ComunidadesIndigenas/Povo%20Trememb%C3%A9/Cartilha%20Tremembe%20-%20Itarema.pdf>

Venâncio and Lúcia Ferreira were very young and Lúcia became pregnant again. “[...] When we wanted to give the girl back, her mother claimed her right as a mother, but the girl no longer wanted to accept her real mother, so she stayed with her paternal grandmother” (Sobrinho, January 30, 2021).

Dijé also says that Raimundinha Tremembé began studying between the ages of 9 and 10 (mid-1981 and 1982) at the Maria Clarice de Andrade Municipal Elementary School, located in Almofala, in the municipality of Acaraú-CE². At that time, Almofala had only two schools: Maria Clarice de Andrade and Escola da Colônia dos Pescadores, which only offered primary education up to the 4th grade (currently equivalent to the 5th grade of elementary school). In this regard, it is necessary to highlight that, in the early 1980s, the 1971 Law of Guidelines and Bases for National Education (LDBEN) was in force, in which Primary Education, according to the law: “[...] primary education is understood to be education corresponding to primary school and secondary education to secondary school. Primary education shall last for eight school years [...]” (Brazil, 1971). The eight school years comprised grades 1 through 8; to enter primary education, students had to be at least 7 years old.

Raimundinha Tremembé, daughter of uneducated parents, was the first in her family to attend school. Regarding her schooling, she recounts some memories of her time as a student and mentions the use of the “ABC Letter” or literacy primers, which were a widely used teaching resource in the 1970s and 1980s, aimed at helping students identify graphic symbols—letters, syllables, and words (Fonteles Filho, 2003).

Raimunda Tremembé did not study for long at the Maria Clarice de Andrade Municipal Elementary School due to the way she was treated, remaining there for just over a year. Sobrinho (01/30/2021) recalls that people laughed at Raimundinha Tremembé because she was indigenous, and students asked her if she ate lizards³. It is possible to see how indigenous people were treated in formal educational institutions, with stigmatization, prejudice, in a derogatory and disqualifying manner, or without due recognition and appreciation of their identities. Raimundinha Tremembé then went on to study at the home of a lady named Maria Alice dos Santos Carneiro, since she had not adapted to school.

Sobrinho (January 30, 2021) recalls that a very striking characteristic of Raimundinha Tremembé since her childhood was the fact that she was “bold,” that is, fearless and unwilling to silently accept insults. This can be seen in the fact that she did not accept the way she was treated at school and decided not to return. It should be noted that, at that time, there was no legislation requiring parents or guardians to

² It is important to note that, at the time of Raimunda’s birth, Almofala was not yet part of the municipality of Itarema, as Itarema was a district of Tanque do Meio and belonged to the municipality of Acaraú. Itarema was only separated from Acaraú and elevated to the category of municipality in 1985, in a process of political emancipation (Itarema Municipal Social Security Fund, n.d.).

³ Reference to a species of lizard.

send their children to school, which allowed Raimundinha Tremembé to have her way. Sobrinho (January 30, 2021) adds that she was raised with complete freedom because her family loved her so much that they thought this was the best way to educate her. In fact, while still a teenager, Raimundinha Tremembé began dating someone who was not liked by her family, but she did not give in to pressure to end the relationship and left for Fortaleza, the capital of the state of Ceará.

Nascimento (2009) describes that when Raimundinha Tremembé's father still lived in the capital, his daughter also migrated to work as a domestic worker in the Cidade 2000 neighborhood and studied there until the 4th grade of elementary school. According to Dijé's accounts, which do not mention dates, she lived in Fortaleza twice. The first time was because they found her a job at Ondina's (Dona Dina) house. The second time, Gerson Augusto de Oliveira Júnior (Oliveira Júnior, 02/24/2021) explains that Raimundinha Tremembé went to live with Professor Maria Bruhilda Telles de Souza, a professor at UFC and researcher among the ethnic group. During this period, after her workday, Raimundinha Tremembé studied at night at the Lídia Bezerra Elementary School, where she completed the 4th grade of primary school (Fonteles Filho, 2003).

Fonteles Filho (January 28, 2021) reported that working as a domestic servant was the reality for many Tremembé girls and women. This situation regarding moving to the capital was due to the difficult economic conditions in which they lived. Similarly, many other girls and adolescents from her village went to work in Fortaleza as domestic workers, nannies, or even to live with other people in a more favorable economic situation. As mentioned by Gondim (2016, p. 32): "She, like many other young women, especially those of her generation, went to work as a domestic worker in the state capital, because jobs are rare in Almofala."

In 1988, on her second trip to Fortaleza, Raimundinha Tremembé became pregnant and stayed in Fortaleza for a short period. Sobrinho (January 30, 2021) mentions that he answered a phone call in which she was crying a lot and saying that she wanted to leave, asking if she and her grandmother still wanted her back, because she had already tried to "do something stupid," that she was pregnant, that the "man didn't want her," and that people mistreated her.

Meanwhile, during the 1980s, the Tremembé were in the process of fighting for indigenous education, holding meetings to discuss this process. They even had some previous school experiences with teacher Conceição Moura from Aldeia Varjota, but without yet establishing the identity of a Differentiated Indigenous Education (Cabral, 2014).

Nascimento (2009) explains that when Raimundinha Tremembé returned permanently to the village of Almofala after seven years, she said she did not want to spend her whole life working in the kitchens of non-indigenous people, but wanted to

fulfill her dream of teaching in her village, which, with the help of the community, she managed to achieve. Gondim (2010, p. 43) explains that:

Especially after the political reorganization of the indigenous peoples, the coexistence of indigenous and non-indigenous people in conventional schools became even more problematic. According to testimonies, non-indigenous children and even teachers and staff at these schools were often involved in land ownership conflicts. Thus, the need for a separate indigenous school, as stated in the 1988 constitution, became extremely urgent at that time.

It was based on her previous negative experiences of discrimination in non-indigenous people's homes and conventional schools that Raimunda Tremembé reinterpreted her return to the village, becoming a leading figure in Indigenous Education in Ceará in the 1990s. It is also important to note that Raimundinha Tremembé is described in Maria Aurineide Pequeno dos Santos' accounts as the daughter of João Venâncio in whom he placed the utmost trust. So much so that, after her return to Almofala, João Venâncio was teaching her to be a chief (Fernandes, 2020).

ALEGRIA DO MAR: THE TREMEMBÉ SCHOOL IS BORN OUT OF STRUGGLE AND REINFORCES RESISTANCE

The statement considered by Fonteles Filho (2017) as the maxim spoken by indigenous educator Raimundinha Tremembé corroborates the struggle for recognition of the Tremembé's indigenous identity, intertwined with the struggle for land, which is affirmed through education.

Since the 1980s, the Tremembé have been in full discussion about the recognition of their identities and, consequently, of the land they inhabit. This decade was also a milestone for the struggle of indigenous peoples with the promulgation of the 1988 Constitution, which guaranteed constitutional rights, defined in Title VIII, "The Social Order," which is subdivided into eight chapters, notably Chapter VIII, "The Indians," with Articles 231 and 232. In addition, the Constitution lists the right to difference in the educational processes of indigenous peoples, described in Chapter III, "On Education, Culture, and Sports," in Section I, "On Education," which is mentioned in Article 210: "§ 2 Regular elementary education shall be provided in Portuguese, with indigenous communities also being guaranteed the use of their native languages and their own learning processes" (Brazil, 1988). It is significant to note here that the Tremembé were in Brasília to participate in the drafting of the 1988 Constitution (Leite, 2020), so that this guarantee was a process permeated by power struggles and power relations, disputes that were not easy for the indigenous people.

When Fonteles Filho (2017) recounts how the maxim spoken by indigenous educator Raimunda Marques returned from Fortaleza, the Tremembé were already discussing the problems faced with the schooling of their people and its specificities. Cabral (2014) mentions that the school arose from the needs faced by the Tremembé, highlighting the account of leader Diana, from the village of Varjota, about the beginning of the struggle for the Differentiated Indigenous School, as well as the work of indigenous missionary Maria Amélia Leite, an important figure in the Tremembé organization since 1986.

Maria Amélia mentioned that the Tremembé had long been calling for a different kind of school and that she insisted that they create such a school. The missionary was also a great motivator for the leaders of the Tremembé and other indigenous peoples of Ceará in the search for conditions that could contribute to Differentiated Indigenous Education (Leite, 2020).

The discrimination that Raimundinha Tremembé suffered as a child and that caused her to drop out of school were not isolated incidents in her personal life story. In the meetings reported by Cabral (2014), several Tremembé mentioned the discrimination and mistreatment that indigenous children and young people suffered in conventional schools. Maria Amélia says that in 1986, when she met the Tremembé, she heard "[...] endless stories of discrimination against children in schools" (Leite, 2020, p. 39) and that, at the time, Vicente Viana, the former chief, had told the missionary about the Tremembé's dream of having a school where their children would not be discriminated against and mistreated. Chief Vicente Viana reports that they did not want much, they just wanted their children to learn to read and tell stories so that the same thing that had happened to their elders, who, because they could not read or count, were deceived, would not happen to them (Leite, 2020). At that time, school dropout rates among the Tremembé were so high that, according to Fernandes (2020), the number of people who were literate could be counted on one hand.

The Tremembé then began to organize themselves, and after several meetings, a consensus emerged to call on two young Tremembé indigenous women who knew how to read and write to be the first teachers: Raimundinha Tremembé and Raimunda Ferreira dos Santos (Silva, 2010). Raimundinha Tremembé began teaching at the school as a volunteer, and in mid-January 1991, they named the school "Alegria do Mar" (Joy of the Sea) (Fonteles Filho, 2003). Sobrinho mentioned that while they were making handicrafts, they began to talk about the possibility of having their own school, and Raimundinha Tremembé said:

[...] "if I had another partner, I would have the courage." We came up with the idea in our heads. We built a house, gathered some wood, the men put up a house, we covered it, we turned the straw and put the students in. And the mother who was going to put that student in paid two cruzeiros [...]. Then we talked to João Venâncio,

who is her father, and other men, and we arranged it, and we did it, and she was one of the participants who, when we built this shed, this house for these students to study in, girl, this Raimunda threw a party, she loved it, she cried, she thought it was so beautiful... It was just a shed... (Sobrinho, 01/30/2021).

It is also important to note that it was Raimundinha Tremembé who named the school. Regarding the name given to the school, Gerson Júnior said that she:

[...] had a reference, a mark, I believe I can speak of it, the joy, the joy that came from the sea, which is why the school was named, perhaps that is why, Alegria do Mar (Joy of the Sea), because one cannot speak of the indigenous school in Almofala without speaking of Raimunda's joy, seriousness, and commitment. One cannot fail to mention her trajectory (Oliveira Júnior, 02/24/2021).

According to Fonteles Filho (2003), this was the first experience of a Differentiated Indigenous School in Ceará, with Raimundinha Tremembé being the protagonist of this type of education.

Regarding the construction of the school, Maria Aurineide mentioned in a report, described by Fernandes (2020, pp. 185-186), that:

One morning, Aurineide was seasoning flour in her kitchen when she heard a commotion outside. It was Raimundinha's voice, talking to a group of boys, giving orders about something. In a corner of the yard, a pile had been made with carnauba straw. She shouted from her door: "Hey, sister-in-law, are you going to build a house?" Raimundinha was pregnant with her first child. "It's not my house, woman. It's the school. I got this straw and some sticks. The boys are helping. We're going to build a school for the children."

We see that Maria Aurineide's account is consistent with Sobrinho's previous account of Raimundinha Tremembé's leadership. The school structure was a straw shed with a sand floor, and the tables and chairs were made from coconut tree trunks. Nascimento and Jacinto (2014, p. 13) report that, "In this school, the students felt very happy because there was no discrimination."

It is crucial to highlight that, in 1991, during Fernando Collor's administration, Indigenous School Education was transferred from the jurisdiction of the National Indian Foundation (Funai) to that of the Ministry of Education (MEC), "[...] with state and municipal education departments responsible for its implementation, in accordance with the MEC's National Education Department" (Paula & Mendonça,

2001, p. 181), as a result of Decree No. 26/1991, which provided for Indigenous Education in Brazil (Brazil, 1991).

In the same year, Interministerial Ordinance No. 559/1991 of the Ministry of Justice and MEC was also published (CIMI, 2004), which provides for School Education for Indigenous Populations and the creation of the General Coordination of Support for Indigenous Schools within the then Secretariat of Elementary Education (SEF) of the MEC. This coordination body was created with the aim of coordinating Indigenous Education in accordance with the principles established by the 1988 Constitution, as well as promoting the initial and continuing training of indigenous teachers, the production of teaching materials, and the dissemination of indigenous issues in schools.

The Alegria do Mar School in the state of Ceará inaugurated the mobilization for a Differentiated Indigenous Education with the leadership of Raimundinha Tremembé. Pereira (2018, p. 55-56) reports that, "[...] in the absence of a blackboard, for example, she wrote the first letters in the sand on the beach." Sobrinho (January 30, 2021) mentioned that Raimunda:

[...] gathered all these students, put them in a circle, everyone, that circle, and she sat in the middle of that circle, and she would tell the story, a narrative that went like this, that cassava was planted like this, that corn grew like that.

Raimunda Tremembé engaged her students with the knowledge of the Tremembé people and, without conventional teaching resources, developed what no other teacher had built: a teaching method with unique practices and content.

Nascimento (January 30, 2021) also reported that, at the beginning of school, one of his aunts, who was a student of Raimundinha Tremembé, wrote on a sheet of paper from the ciameira tree, because, at the time, the school was short on materials, as it had no pencils, pens, or paper. "So, we would take the leaves of the ciameira tree with a coconut stick and do our activities." She also reported that the school was called Alegria do Mar (Joy of the Sea), "[...] because Raimunda herself, who was a teacher, took the students to the beach to dance the sacred ritual [...]." On the sand, she also wrote letters and words with sticks, using the waves as a natural eraser.

Fonteles Filho (2013) reports that the Alegria do Mar School had only one class of 28 children and young people. Raimundinha Tremembé was not paid to teach the classes. "In addition to teaching reading and writing, she also taught the culture of the Tremembé people: every day, when class was over, she and her students would go to the beach to dance the Torém" (Nascimento & Jacinto, 2014, p. 13), as we can see in Image 1. This statement provides an initial insight into the implementation of Differentiated Indigenous Education, as the indigenous educator did not only teach

her students to read, write, and count, but also passed on the knowledge of her people, including the sacred ritual, the Torém (Pereira, 2023).

Santos (March 23, 2021) says that the process of Differentiated Indigenous Education began with Raimundinha Tremembé, as it was through the educational practices she developed those elements of Tremembé culture entered school education. Nascimento (January 31, 2021) reported that Raimundinha Tremembé was not very literate, knowing only the basics (reading, writing, and rudimentary mathematics), but she had a great knowledge of Tremembé culture. Raimunda Tremembé taught children to read and write in Portuguese, since the Tremembé do not live in isolation, but in close proximity to non-indigenous society, and speak Portuguese. However, it is clear that she taught much more than that, building a bridge between her culture and school education, as the cosmology of her ethnic group was transmitted through the educational practices she undertook.

Raimundinha Tremembé also made feather costumes for the children to dance the Torém, as the Tremembé adorn themselves with paintings made from annatto and genipap and dress in these traditional clothes to characterize themselves (Pereira, 2023).

Figure 1 – Students from the Alegria do Mar School dancing the Torém with teacher Raimundinha (right)



Source: Fonteles Filho (2003, p. 586).

Raimundinha Tremembé, in addition to teaching Torém, taught "[...] the guaxuré dance, traditional foods, and songs" (Sousa, January 30, 2021), among other dances, such as the spider and the hunter. She also explained the history of each of the Tremembé songs, invited the "old trunks," who are the oldest people of the ethnic group, to tell old stories, and took students to visit and explore places in the

community, such as the mangrove and the beach, explaining that Almofala was the land of the Tremembé people (Fernandes, 2020).

Raimunda Tremembé is always described in the reports as strict in her teaching style, as she did not tolerate disorder or disrespect for culture. The educator's demands and discipline when passing on the knowledge of the Tremembé people at the Alegria do Mar School, especially with the sacred ritual of Torém, was something considered serious and deserving of respect. Santos (March 23, 2021) recounted how Raimundinha Tremembé was firm in her decisions because, in his words, she exuded firmness and was a person of great strength, capable of facing problems head-on.

When Raimundinha Tremembé spoke, everyone listened to her, because she was a person who had a lot of knowledge about the indigenous struggle and because she was the founder of the first indigenous school. The community admired her, even though she was often impatient, especially when her people took too long to make a decision. Raimundinha Tremembé was very restless, so she had a lighthearted way of wanting to fulfill demands. Therefore, her haste and impatience sometimes made it difficult for the people to make decisions.

Cabral (2014) mentions a narrative by Maria Neide, an indigenous teacher, who reports a second structural formation of the Alegria do Mar School, since the hall had collapsed and they had built a second space for the school. In this structural formation, according to Nascimento (2009), neither the Itarema city government nor the Ceará State Government had assumed any expenses, as it was the students' parents who gave fish and the equivalent of one cruzeiro to the teacher so that she could support herself and maintain the school. It was difficult for Raimundinha Tremembé to survive on this help, as she still had to set aside part of the amount she received to buy chalk, colored pencils, and other basic teaching materials for her classes.

When the school building deteriorated, it could not be rebuilt in the same place due to the mobility of the nearby dune that invaded the land, as well as the difficulties faced by the children's parents in providing the minimum conditions for maintaining the school. As a result, "Classes ended up being interrupted due to the parents' lack of resources to purchase teaching materials and pay the teacher, due to the fishing crisis. This interruption (in 1992) lasted about three years" (Fonteles Filho, 2003, p. 114).

During the Fernando Collor administration, in the same year, Ordinance No. 60 of July 8, 1992, was instituted by the MEC and the National Secretariat of Basic Education, establishing the National Committee for Indigenous School Education within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Brazil, 1992) with the purpose of subsidizing the educational actions of indigenous peoples, referencing state and municipal projects, indicating that, little by little, at the national level, Indigenous School Education was taking on more specific and favorable contours.

Without a school, Raimundinha Tremembé resumed teaching in her father's kitchen. Fonteles Filho (2003) mentions that the school was only rebuilt after João

Venâncio took the school proposal to be discussed at meetings and gatherings he attended in the city of Fortaleza.

Francisca Adelaide (non-indigenous), secretary of Operação Tremembé, an organization that existed at the time to fight for the rights of the indigenous movement, took the initiative to send a letter to the Presbyterian Church of Maringá, in Paraná, to request financial support. The pastor of the church replied that he could not help financially, but that he would send a couple, Silvana and Walter, to work on the education of the Tremembé people of the village of Praia de Almofala. Francisca Adelaide did not accept that they work directly on education, as she had asked for financial help. "Everything was settled at a meeting held at Sister Helena's [or Iolanda's?] house, attended by Pastor Nivaldo of the Presbyterian Church of Maringá. [...] After several months, the couple arrived" (Fonteles Filho, 2003, p. 114).

From the outset, the couple established direct contact with the Tremembé, seeking acceptance and legitimacy, but this was not what happened at first, as Francisca Adelaide still did not accept them. Then, a meeting was held with the leaders and mothers of the students from Aldeia da Praia. Aldeia do Panã was also invited, but no one showed up because they did not agree with the couple's presence, even claiming that they "were believers." The result of the meeting, even without the attendance of Aldeia do Panã and the non-acceptance of Francisca Adelaide, was the acceptance of the couple's work (Fonteles Filho, 2003).

The third structural formation of the school was built in mid-1997, near Dijé's house, which had two rooms and a kitchen.

We made a wood fire, and it was voluntary, the teachers and volunteers [...] who made the snacks. We already got one snack and we went after more, looking for anyone who could donate something at that time [...] (Sobrinho, 01/31/2021).

At that time, Samanda helped Raimunda, as the number of students had already increased. Then Samanda left, and Dijé joined to help (Cabral, 2014, p. 49).

Samanda Carneiro dos Santos was the granddaughter of leaders from Aldeia da Praia. Even though school activities had been suspended for some time, and despite the difficulties, Raimundinha Tremembé already dreamed of a larger school with more teachers. She wanted the Tremembés to be able to teach their own people. This intention stemmed from her childhood memories, from the day she told her father that "[...] she would no longer go to the white people's school: 'They make fun of me, saying I'm an animal'" (Fernandes, 2020, p. 311).

Maria Aurineide said that she had returned to school when she had to live in Fortaleza, and Raimundinha Tremembé asked her to return to Almofala with her

brother so that Aurineide could become a teacher at the school (Fernandes, 2020). Maria Aurineide was surprised by the request, but Raimundinha Tremembé explained that she needed the school to grow because there were many children who needed schooling but were not studying because they were mistreated in the municipal educational institutions (Fernandes, 2020). She also said that Raimundinha Tremembé told her that they had first hired Juliana, the niece of Uncle Zé Raimundo, brother-in-law of Chief João Venâncio, as a teacher, but that it had not worked out. “Then we hired Samanda, who ended up going into healthcare. And now we need someone strong to take care of this, and I can only think of you [*sic*] for that [...]” (Fernandes, 2020, p. 311). Maria Aurineide accepted the invitation and also became a teacher at the school, taking on the class of young children in early April 1997 (Fonteles Filho, 2003). Maria Aurineide also did not want non-indigenous people teaching at the school, so she mobilized the Tremembé who had some schooling to become teachers.

Sobrinho (January 31, 2021) said that, in this new structure, the Presbyterian Church also provided meals for the students, but both the person who prepared the meals and the teachers were volunteers, working without pay and facing many difficulties. Because of this, “Dijé left and Aurineide and Silvana (a missionary from the Methodist church) joined to collaborate in the teaching process” (Cabral, 2014, p. 49).

As we can see in Image 2, the third structural formation of the Alegria do Mar School was built with carnauba straw, the floor was loose sand, there were four rooms, a kitchen, bathroom, a wood stove, and coconut tree trunk tables, as these materials were accessible to the Praia Community (Silva, 2010).

Figure 2 – Raimunda and the students of the Alegria do Mar School



Source: Babi Fonteles' personal collection.

In early 1997, there was another change, as the "school was renamed Escola Indígena Diferenciada Maria Venância (Maria Venância Differentiated Indigenous School) in April 1997, in honor of Maria Venança⁴ [...]" (Fonteles Filho, 2003, p. 306), mother of João Venâncio, chief and father of Raimundinha Tremembé.

Nascimento (2009) also reports that the Venança family was growing and becoming increasingly stronger in its role among the Tremembé ethnic group and that the new generation was being associated with a matrix of important leaders. Maria Venância is associated with strategic innovation in resistance, and Raimundinha Tremembé with a commitment to Indigenous School Education linked to the continuity of the Torém da Lagoa Seca, continuing a matriarchal lineage of struggle and resistance among the Tremembé. What can be said here is that Raimunda Tremembé may not have been aware that she was creating something totally new, but she knew her mission was to keep alive the tradition of her ancestors from Lagoa Seca.

"According to Professor Maria Andreína, this first school built in Aldeia da Praia served as a reference for other communities and ended up initiating a process of change and struggle that reflected beyond the village" (Silva, 2010, p. 165). Raimundinha Tremembé's pedagogical reach was only the beginning for the Tremembé to continue their struggle for a Differentiated Indigenous Education. And it was with the help of some partners that, in 1997, schools were created in villages in other locations: Passagem Rasa, Tapera, Mangue Alto, Saquinho, and Varjota.

The Alegria do Mar School also served as a reference for other indigenous peoples to establish their own schools. At the beginning of the organization of Differentiated Indigenous Education in the municipality of Crateús, the indigenous women Maria Helena Gomes (Helena Potiguara, from the city of Crateús) and Antônia de Maria (from the Tabajara ethnic group, from the city of Poranga), through a partnership between the Pastoral Raízes Indígenas (Indigenous Roots Pastoral) and the Associação Missão Tremembé Association (Amit) (led by Maria Amélia Leite), in 1993, carried out a 12-day exchange experience with the Tremembé people to create their own schools (Pinto & Fialho, 2024).

Even with the initial recognition process, Nascimento (February 26, 2021) said that the Tremembé were proud of and grateful to Raimunda Tremembé for creating the school, "[...] but, around them, non-indigenous people, especially those who opposed the community, ridiculed the school, and therefore also tried to discredit her. Not only her, but the school and the entire community." What we can infer is that the prejudiced process that Raimunda Tremembé and her people faced with school education was not

⁴ Venança is the colloquial form of Venância. Hence the different spelling. Just as we have the masculine spelling (João Venâncio or João Venança) and the feminine spelling (Maria Venância or Maria Venança). It should be noted that this spelling appears in various ways, including in the name of the school, which is sometimes referred to in documents as Maria Venância, sometimes as Maria Venâncio, and sometimes as Maria Venança.

yet over. Even with the creation of their own school, indigenous peoples still face many battles, especially for the recognition and appreciation of their culture.

In 1997, the Ceará State Department of Education (Seduc) held meetings with indigenous peoples to discuss Indigenous School Education in the state. At that time, the First Seminar on Indigenous School Education in Ceará was held, and the discussions with Seduc led to other developments for Indigenous Education in the state of Ceará in the following years, such as the recognition and official implementation of this type of education and the creation of other specialized schools for indigenous peoples.

FINAL REMARKS

This research in the field of the history of education set out to examine the biography of the educator Raimunda Marques do Nascimento, better known as Raimundinha Tremembé, an indigenous educator from the Tremembé ethnic group who dedicated herself to promoting differentiated indigenous education in Ceará. To this end, we chose Oral History as our research methodology, which made it possible to shed light on indigenous memories about the emergence of the first Tremembé school in Ceará and its restructuring until the consolidation of Differentiated Indigenous Education.

Raimundinha Tremembé was recognized for founding the first Differentiated Indigenous School, Escola Alegria do Mar, located on Almofala beach in the municipality of Itarema. The Differentiated Indigenous Education developed by the educator focused not only on teaching reading and writing, but also on passing on the culture of her people to the children in her classes. It was differentiated because she used Torém, a Tremembé ritual, and its main diacritical sign to weave her educational practices, in addition to using natural resources as teaching materials, valuing indigenous customs.

Initially, with volunteer work and help from the community, the Alegria do Mar School had only Raimundinha Tremembé as a teacher, but children excluded by prejudice in regular schools, attended by non-indigenous children, kept coming. In fact, the school's precarious structure collapsed twice, and it was only in the third construction that it was able to accommodate a larger number of students and count on the solidarity of other indigenous teachers. The entire 1990s were marked by Raimundinha Tremembé's relentless struggle to offer differentiated indigenous education to the children of the community, who could learn with her in a contextualized way, considering the rites, myths, and customs of the Tremembé people, without external prejudice.

Her educational legacy not only made it possible to teach children to read and write in a contextualized manner, but also allowed the Tremembé culture to be preserved and valued. As a result, her leadership gained prominence among other indigenous communities, who even went to see Raimundinha Tremembé's successful work in order to also obtain a school with differentiated education for their peoples.

By highlighting women's trajectories in the history of education, especially those of indigenous women, we also delve into the contrasts with the ideological, political, and social struggles experienced by lay teachers who reinvented themselves to serve their communities educationally without any government support. In this way, the trajectory of Indigenous Education intertwined with the life of Raimunda Tremembé gives rise to other narrative perspectives that value female protagonism in the teaching profession in the history of education in Ceará.

Biographies do not reveal the whole picture of a subject, nor do they allow for generalizations, but they do shed light on ordinary subjects who have been silenced and made invisible, even though they have contributed significantly to the educational context in which they were inserted. Women's movements in education, in their various temporalities, with plural life stories, as well as the positions occupied within their social and political contexts, help to understand more complex forms of the constitution of professional teaching identity and how individual stories intersect and articulate with collective stories, providing a better understanding of the history of education.

Starting from the central theme of writing the biography of the indigenous teacher Raimundinha Tremembé, emphasizing her educational work in the social, cultural, and political context of Indigenous Education in Ceará, we were able to gain a broader understanding of a unique context and outline the historical and social scenario of the beginning of Indigenous Education in the state. By intertwining oral, legal, and visual sources, we narrate the genesis, originality, and pioneering spirit of the biographed educator with the Alegria do Mar School.

Without losing sight of Raimundinha Tremembé's life story, we consider this to be a biographical writing, which involved the particularities of both aspects of her personal life, such as family issues, and the educational practices that she undertook in such a specific way. Based on her experience of exploitation as a domestic worker and her frustration at not being able to remain in regular schools, a fact that was common to her people as a whole, Raimundinha Tremembé was encouraged to create the first Differentiated Indigenous School in the state of Ceará so that other indigenous children and young people would not have to go through the same problems she experienced, including valuing the uniqueness of her ethnicity and giving meaning to the Tremembé worldview.

The study aims to conceal the presence of indigenous women in the history of education. In order to deconstruct this silencing, this work allows us to bring visibility

to the indigenous woman Raimundinha Tremembé as a political intention: to record and preserve the history and memory of women who contributed greatly to education and who were relegated to the background in historiography.

Given this ongoing construction, it is suggested that further research be conducted to deepen the preamble themes that have emerged, which can only be awakened by the restlessness and brilliance necessary for scientific research, especially on indigenous women. Finally, we conclude with a striking and poetic phrase that perhaps sums up Raimundinha Tremembé's trajectory: "With joy! It was because it was Raimunda, the one who made the boys dance in Alegria do Mar" (Oliveira Júnior, 02/24/2021).

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