

History of Indigenous School Education in Brazil

Section: Art and culture

written by Elias Nazareno | October 5, 2024



The history of indigenous education in Brazil is marked by three main phases, which began with the Portuguese colonization in the 16th century. The first phase, known as the process of assimilation, aimed to integrate indigenous peoples into Western values through Christianization and formal education, led by the Jesuits. These missionaries introduced transitional bilingualism, using the indigenous language to convey Christian values. However, this approach disregarded the indigenous forms of learning.

In the second phase, starting in the late 18th century, the Portuguese crown implemented the process of integration, which aimed to incorporate indigenous peoples into society as labor. Although religious orders continued to manage education, Protestant orders also emerged starting in the 19th century. In 1910, the Indian Protection Service (SPI) was created, which lasted until 1967, when it was replaced by FUNAI, following allegations of corruption. During the military dictatorship, the Indian Statute was enacted, treating indigenous people as incapable and allowing the operation of NGOs linked to Protestant churches.

The third phase began in the 1970s, with the mobilization of indigenous peoples and the political transition in Brazil. The 1988 Constitution officially recognized the country's ethnic

and linguistic plurality, resulting in significant changes in indigenous education. In 1996, the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education (LDB) regulated indigenous education, ensuring that it was based on the indigenous peoples' own learning processes. Since then, undergraduate courses in Intercultural Education have been established to train indigenous teachers. Despite these advances, the evaluation of the impacts of these courses is still scarce, indicating a need for systematization and analysis.

