



Quilombola school education and cultural identity: practices of resistance, belonging and appreciation of local knowledge

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Abstract

This theoretical-critical article analyzes the intrinsic relationship between Quilombola School Education (EEQ) and the strengthening of cultural identity in remaining quilombola communities in Brazil. Based on a documentary and bibliographical review, the article investigates how schools can become spaces for affirming belonging and valuing local knowledge. The historical and legal trajectory of EEQ is examined, highlighting the transition from omission in the 1996 Law of Guidelines and Bases to the enactment of the National Curricular Guidelines in 2012. The theoretical foundation adopts the concept of territory as an epistemological space, inseparable from knowledge production and collective identity. Decolonial pedagogical practices, such as oral history and cultural mapping, which challenge the traditional Eurocentric curriculum, are analyzed. The study also identifies structural, pedagogical and political-institutional challenges that limit the implementation of EEQ, highlighting a system of precariousness that perpetuates historical exclusions.

It is concluded that the consolidation of a transformative quilombola education depends on overcoming structural racism and implementing integrated public policies that ensure the material and pedagogical conditions necessary for the valorization of community knowledge and projects.

Keywords: quilombola school education; cultural identity; territory; local knowledge; decolonial pedagogy.

Abstract

This theoretical-critical article analyzes the intrinsic relationship between Quilombola School Education (QSE) and the strengthening of cultural identity in quilombo remnant communities in Brazil. Based on documentary and bibliographic review, it investigates how the school can become a space for affirming belonging and valuing local knowledge. The historical-legal trajectory of QSE is examined, highlighting the transition from its omission in the 1996 Law of Guidelines and Bases to the enactment of the National Curriculum Guidelines in 2012. The theoretical framework adopts the concept of territory as an epistemological space, inseparable from the production of knowledge and collective identity. Decolonial pedagogical practices, such as oral history and cultural mapping, are analyzed as challenges to the traditional Eurocentric curriculum. The study also identifies structural, pedagogical, and political-institutional challenges that limit the implementation of QSE, revealing a system of precarization that perpetuates historical exclusions. It concludes that the consolidation of a transformative Quilombola education depends on overcoming structural racism and implementing integrated public policies that ensure the material and pedagogical conditions necessary for valuing local knowledge and community-based projects.

Keywords: Quilombola school education; cultural identity; territory; local knowledge; decolonial pedagogy.

1. Introduction

Quilombola School Education (EEQ) emerges in the Brazilian scenario as a field of intense political and epistemological dispute, resulting from the historical demands of the movements



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Black social movements for recognition and reparations. More than a teaching modality, EEQ is configured as a project of resistance to the secular silencing and epistemicide suffered by black population in Brazil (NASCIMENTO, 2018).

This educational project seeks to rescue and value knowledge, practices and cosmologies historically marginalized by the hegemonic education system. EEQ, therefore, is not defined only because of the geographical location of schools in quilombola territories, but because of the commitment with a political-pedagogical project that directly engages with the culture, memory and struggles of these communities (TEIXEIRA; LIMA; SILVA, 2022).

In this context, the following problem arises: despite the normative advances that culminated in specific guidelines for EEQ, the daily reality of quilombola schools remains marked by a profound dissonance between norm and practice (OLIVEIRA *et al.*, 2025). Decontextualized curricula, lack of relevant teaching materials, teacher training insufficient and structural precariousness are barriers that compromise the transformative potential of EEQ.

Thus, the present investigation seeks to answer the following research question: what way school practices in quilombola territories can effectively catalyze the construction cultural identity and the appreciation of local knowledge, overcoming the challenges imposed by historical silencing and structural precariousness?

The general objective of this study is to analyze the relationship between EEQ pedagogical practices and the strengthening cultural identity and the sense of belonging in communities. To this end, the following specific objectives are proposed: to trace the historical-legal trajectory of the EEQ, with emphasis in Resolution CNE/CEB No. 08/2012; deepen the concept of territory as a foundation epistemological framework of EEQ; identify decolonial pedagogical practices that promote the appreciation of local knowledge; and diagnose the challenges that hinder the full implementation of EEQ.

This work is organized into sessions, which develop the argument in a cohesive and progressive, culminating in final considerations that summarize the results and point out implications for the educational field and for the fight for an anti-racist society.

2.1 Historical and Legal Milestones of Quilombola School Education: from Omission to Recognition

The trajectory of Quilombola School Education (EEQ) in Brazil is intrinsically linked to history of the struggle of black social movements for rights and recognition. The analysis of their legal path reveals a remarkable transition from a state of complete normative invisibility to the achievement of a specific legal framework. This progress, although undeniable, still faces



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major challenges in its implementation, highlighting that the EEQ legal framework is not a concession of the State, but a hard-fought achievement.

The enactment of the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB), Law No. 9,394 of 1996, represented a milestone for Brazilian education. However, in its original version, the LDB was notoriously negligent in relation to the educational specificities of the communities quilombolas, a significant gap considering that education has always been on the agenda of demands of black movements (NASCIMENTO, 2018).

Although the LDB, in its article 26, paragraph 4, mentioned in general terms the need for consider the contributions of different cultures, this generic determination proved to be insufficient to guarantee a targeted educational policy. The lack of explicit mention left these communities without specific legal support for 16 years, perpetuating a cycle of invisibility and educational precariousness (NASCIMENTO, 2018).

This gap between the enactment of the LDB and the establishment of specific guidelines for the EEQ was not a period of passivity. On the contrary, the absence of a legal framework drove quilombola movements to intensify their organization and articulate their demands in a more forceful. It was in this context of struggle and political mobilization that the foundations for the future recognition of EEQ (SOUSA, 2024; TEIXEIRA; LIMA; SILVA, 2022).

The turning point in this scenario of legal invisibility occurred on November 20, 2012, with the approval of Resolution CNE/CEB No. 08, which established the National Curricular Guidelines for Quilombola School Education. This document represents the main legal framework for EEQ, direct result of the political mobilization of the quilombola movement, which pressured the State to recognize its educational specificities (COSTA; ARAÚJO, 2024).

The approval of the Guidelines is therefore a significant milestone in strengthening the struggles quilombolas, as stated by Teixeira, Lima and Silva (2022). The document establishes principles fundamental that reorient the conception of education for these communities, determining that EEQ must take as reference its own pedagogies, histories, cultures and knowledge traditional.

This determination implies a break with the hegemonic, Eurocentric and decontextualized. We propose an education anchored in collective memory, cultural practices and in the oral repertoires that constitute the heritage of quilombola communities (NASCIMENTO, 2018; GOMES, 2012). From this new perspective, the school must be understood as an integral part of the political and cultural project of the community.

The combative genesis of the Guidelines informs their very nature, as they are not only pedagogical guidelines, but a political document that reflects demands consolidated over years of struggle. Therefore, its analysis and implementation must consider this history. The current challenges for

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 the implementation of the EEQ represents the continuation of the political dispute that led to its creation, opposing a vision of emancipatory education to the forces of exclusion (SOUSA, 2024).

Table 1 – Chronology of Legal and Political Frameworks for Quilombola School Education

Legal/Political Framework	Year	Description/Main Impact
1988 Federal Constitution (Art. 68 ADCT)		It recognizes the right to definitive ownership of land for the remaining quilombo communities, establishing the basis for territorial recognition and other rights.
1996 Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (Law No. 9,394/96)		It establishes the foundations of national education, but fails to address the specificities of quilombola education, creating a legal gap of 16 years.
2003 Law No. 10,639/2003		Amends the LDB to include the mandatory theme "Afro-Brazilian History and Culture" in the official curriculum, representing an important step towards valuing black history in education.
2003 Decree No. 4,887/2003		Regulates the procedure for identifying, recognizing, demarcating and titling lands occupied by remnants of quilombo communities.
2012 CNE/CEB Resolution No. 08/2012		It defines the National Curricular Guidelines for Quilombola School Education in Basic Education, being the main normative framework that guides the organization and functioning of this teaching modality.

Source: Prepared by the author (2025).

Analysis of the chronology presented in Table 1 reveals that the legal recognition of Quilombola School Education is a gradual process, marked by normative advances driven by social pressures, and not by spontaneous initiative of the State.

The 1988 Federal Constitution, by guaranteeing the right to land to the remaining quilombos (Art. 68 of the ADCT), established a foundational framework for the formulation of public policies aimed at these peoples. However, the 1996 LDB's omission regarding EEQ exposed the persistence of institutional racism, evidenced in the denial of the right to differentiated education and in disregard for the sociocultural specificities of these communities.

Only from 2003, with the enactment of Law No. 10,639 and Decree No. 4,887, a more systematic movement to include the quilombola agenda in the educational field begins and land ownership, albeit in a fragmented manner. CNE/CEB Resolution No. 08/2012 represents, finally, the normative consolidation of EEQ as a specific modality of basic education, giving it its own guidelines based on principles of historical justice, territoriality and cultural appreciation.

However, as authors such as Nascimento (2018) and Gomes (2012) warn, the existence of a legal framework does not guarantee, by itself, its effective implementation, requiring coordination between legal recognition and structural, pedagogical and training investments that ensure the materialization of the educational rights of quilombola peoples.

2.1.1 The school ground is the territory: the inseparable relationship between education, identity and belonging

The implementation of a Quilombola School Education that transcends mere adaptation curriculum requires a deep understanding of the centrality of the territory. For communities quilombolas, the territory is not just a geographical support, but the material and symbolic base on which identity, memory and ways of life are built. This chapter proposes an approach theoretical-critical analysis of the quilombola territory as an epistemological entity, arguing that a Authentic EEQ must be situated, both materially and epistemically, in this space.

The quilombola territory is a living and dynamic space, imbued with meaning, where the knowledge is produced, validated and transmitted between generations. In it the pillars of community identity, such as connection to ancestral land, spiritual practices and narratives that build collective memory (SANTOS, 2023). Thinking about quilombola education is, therefore, think from the territory, recognizing it as a living “textbook”, whose pages are composed of experiences of resistance, ancestry and traditional knowledge (CASTILHO, 2023).

In this sense, the school cannot operate as an enclave of exogenous knowledge and decontextualized. As Maroun (2021, p. 8) points out, EEQ requires “a close dialogue between the school, the community served and its territory”. The school institution must be constituted as an extension of the community's political-pedagogical project, in which local knowledge is not only content to be inserted, but the very foundations of knowledge construction.

The central conflict that emerges in this context is not reduced to a dichotomy between “knowledge school knowledge” and “community knowledge”. This is a clash between epistemological projects. While the hegemonic model operates from fragmentation, neutrality and universalization, Quilombola epistemology is anchored in the integration between spirituality, territoriality, ancestry and orality (SANTOS, 2023; MAROUN, 2021). This integration is incompatible with the assumptions of the Eurocentric curriculum and imposes the challenge of reconfiguring the paradigms current educational systems.

Due to its strategic position, the school located in quilombola territory occupies a place at a crossroads, with ambivalent potential. It can become a catalyst for strengthening identity and belonging or, conversely, an agent of alienation, if it reproduces the logic of cultural homogenization and the denial of black knowledge (SILVA, 2015; CASTILHO, 2023).

When schools ignore the history and culture of their students, they reproduce a silencing symbolic that compromises the formation of identity. The body, in this process, emerges as a sensitized territory, where cultural practices materialize. Dance, song, cuisine, medicine

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traditional and other expressions of knowledge are part of quilombola culture — and the school can both validate them as legitimate knowledge practices or repress them in the name of a standard exclusionary normative (MAROUN, 2021).

The case study of the Quilombola Municipal School Dona Rosa Geralda da Silveira (EMQDRG), located in the quilombo da Caveira (RJ), is emblematic of this transformative potential. In a community where identity markers were not fully visible, the school assumed a central role in the process of collective self-recognition. His presence conferred legitimacy to the struggle for quilombola identity, contributing to the strengthening of belonging and self-affirmation (MAROUN, 2021).

This experience demonstrates that, when aligned with the territory and the political project of community, the school can become a privileged space for the identity formation of children and young quilombolas. As Maroun (2021) argues, the school institution, by integrating the local knowledge and value the cultural experiences of the subjects, can act as an agent of social and cultural transformation, contributing to the construction of a future in which being quilombola be a reason for pride, resistance and belonging.

3. Material and Method

This study is configured as a qualitative research of a theoretical-analytical nature, whose The main objective was to understand the historical, legal and pedagogical milestones of School Education Quilombola (EEQ) in Brazil, as well as identify the contemporary challenges for its implementation. To this end, an interdisciplinary approach was adopted, articulating concepts of decolonial education, cultural studies and social rights.

The analysis was developed based on a systematic and critical review of documentary sources and bibliographical, including legislation, official resolutions, academic articles, books and reports recent developments related to EEQ. Special attention was given to legal documents such as the Guidelines Law and National Education Bases (LDB), the National Curricular Guidelines for School Education Quilombola (CNE/CEB Resolution No. 08/2012), and other regulations that configure the framework legal framework of quilombola education.

In addition, an analysis of case studies and field research reported in the literature, which highlights pedagogical practices and community experiences in the quilombola context. This triangulation allowed not only mapping legislative and political advances, but also reflecting critically about the structural, pedagogical and political-institutional challenges faced in implementation of EEQ.

To systematize the information, chronological tables and thematic matrices were prepared



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that facilitated the visualization of the main legal frameworks and current obstacles. The critical analysis of these data was based on authors who dialogue with quilombola epistemology, the decolonial pedagogy and critical theory of education, enabling the construction of a panorama that transcends mere description to engage with the symbolic and material disputes present in the quilombola educational field.

Thus, the adopted methodology prioritized theoretical deepening and critical reflection, based on diverse and updated sources, ensuring the coherence and relevance of the analyses developed in the different sections of the article.

4. Results and Discussion

Overcoming the hegemonic educational model and building a Quilombola School Education authentic requires pedagogical practices rooted in the epistemologies of the territories. It is not a question of just to insert “Afro” content into a curriculum that remains structurally colonial, but reorient the very act of teaching and learning from counter-hegemonic foundations. This session discusses concrete strategies that materialize a decolonial pedagogical approach and territorially referenced, focused on the valorization of local knowledge.

4.1 Crossroads Pedagogies: strategies for valuing local knowledge in everyday school life

One of the most powerful strategies for decolonizing the curriculum is the incorporation of oral history as a pedagogical methodology. This practice subverts the hierarchy of knowledge that privileges written and institutional culture, recognizing the elders of the community (guardians and guardians of memory), as legitimate producers of knowledge and masters of ancestral knowledge (SANTOS, 2023; SILVA, 2015).

By placing the words of the elders at the center of the educational process, the school not only enriches your resume, but strengthens intergenerational ties and reaffirms the value of ancestry. Oral history allows us to fill the gaps left by official historiography, which historically silenced the narratives of resistance and the contributions of the black population to the formation of society Brazilian (TEIXEIRA; LIMA; SILVA, 2022).

More than a pedagogical resource, oral history is a tool for reconstruction of collective memory. By transforming students into researchers of their own culture, a dialogical and politically significant formative process is created. The pedagogical value is in the act of active listening, in the recognition of historically excluded voices and in the exercise of epistemic justice (SILVA, 2015).



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Another fundamental pedagogical practice is cultural mapping, which consists of transforming the territory as object and subject of the teaching-learning process. This methodology invites students and educators to leave the physical boundaries of the school to investigate, record and value the knowledge expressed in everyday life: in the fields, in the river, in the flour mill, in spaces of celebration and prayer (SOUSA, 2024).

Cultural mapping legitimizes students' lived experiences as valid sources of knowledge, combating the effects of alienation caused by decontextualized teaching and normative (TEIXEIRA; LIMA; SILVA, 2022). This is a pedagogical movement that decentralizes the logic of the school as the sole locus of knowledge and reaffirms the territory as a field of production, circulation and transmission of knowledge.

The resulting map should not be understood as a product, but as a representation symbolic of a collective process of investigation. As in oral history, the pedagogical value is on the path: in collaborative research, in active listening, in intercultural mediation and in strengthening the sense of belonging. Mapping, therefore, becomes a resource for activate critical awareness about the territory and to mobilize actions of cultural appreciation (TEIXEIRA; LIMA; SILVA, 2022).

Oral history and cultural mapping practices are components of a pedagogical project broader: the construction of a decolonial pedagogy. This approach is not limited to the insertion of new content, but proposes the deconstruction of the epistemological structures of the school curriculum, shifting the axis of knowledge from the Eurocentric matrix to a horizontal dialogue between knowledge several.

Inspired by Paulo Freire and critical interculturality theorists, such as Candau (2009), the decolonial pedagogy is understood as a proactive educational insurgency, a practice that not only denounces oppression, but proposes new formative horizons. It operates through pedagogical relationships that recognize the epistemic dignity of local knowledge, promoting listening, reciprocity and mutual recognition.

This conception breaks with the paradigm of the superiority of scientific knowledge Western and proposes integrative practices that unite sustainability, ancestry and social justice. A concrete example is the integration of agroecology principles into the quilombola curriculum, connecting traditional agricultural practices to contemporary environmental debates, food sovereignty and popular knowledge.

4.2 Contemporary Challenges to the Implementation of the Right to Quilombola School Education

Despite a significant legal framework and the transformative potential of School Education



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Quilombola, the distance between formal law and the reality experienced in the communities remains profound. The implementation of the EEQ faces a multifaceted set of obstacles that are distributed by the structural, pedagogical and political-institutional dimensions. This chapter proposes a diagnosis critical of this gap, arguing that the obstacles faced do not constitute failures punctual or technical, but as expressions of a historically constructed system of negligence.

The material situation of quilombola schools is, in many cases, marked by precariousness extreme. The lack of basic infrastructure — such as adequate buildings, equipped classrooms, access to electricity, drinking water and sanitation — seriously compromises living conditions teaching-learning (OLIVEIRA *et al.*, 2025; CASTILHO, 2023). This deficit is not limited to physical facilities, but also affects fundamental logistical aspects, such as school transportation, often non-existent or insufficient, forcing students to travel long distances in adverse conditions, a factor that contributes significantly to school dropout (SOUSA, 2024).

Furthermore, the scarcity of libraries, leisure spaces and internet access deepens the educational inequalities, making it practically impossible to carry out pedagogical activities that require research, independent reading or the use of educational technologies. The systematic omission of public managers to register quilombola schools in specific financing programs worsens the situation of material exclusion, as Castilho (2023) denounces. It is, therefore, a institutionalized neglect, which transforms precariousness into the norm and perpetuates the exclusion of historically marginalized communities.

At the pedagogical level, teacher training represents one of the main bottlenecks for consolidation of an EEQ aligned with the principles of the National Curricular Guidelines. The Most initial training courses still operate based on a generic pedagogical matrix and universalist, ignoring the cultural, historical and territorial specificities of communities quilombolas (OLIVEIRA *et al.*, 2025; SOUSA, 2024). As a consequence, many teachers arrive at schools without adequate preparation to engage with local knowledge and, often, reproduce colonial and decontextualized educational practices (GOMES, 2012).

Added to this lack of training is the scarcity of teaching and supplementary materials that reflect the reality, memory and ways of life of quilombola communities. The books adopted by public networks, for the most part, follow a Eurocentric perspective and ignore the African and Afro-Brazilian contributions to the formation of society. Such invisibility pedagogical reinforces the feeling of not belonging and accentuates the symbolic exclusion of students quilombolas in the school space (ARAUJO; ALENCAR, 2021; CASTILHO, 2023).

The political-institutional sphere concentrates the deepest core of obstacles to the implementation of EEQ, as it concerns the State's capacity (or refusal) to operationalize public policies equitable manner. Although CNE/CEB Resolution No. 08/2012 establishes guidelines for the

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 organization of Quilombola School Education, the implementation of these standards is still fragmentary and, in many cases, non-existent. Several municipalities continue to treat EEQ as an agenda peripheral, when they do not ignore it completely, revealing a posture of disengagement that exposes institutional racism (Sousa, 2024).

This negligence manifests itself in the non-allocation of resources, in the absence of monitoring technical-pedagogical and the refusal to adjust school curricula to the cultural specificities of communities served. Furthermore, it is common to see educators with attitudes discriminatory or unprepared to deal with diversity, which further compromises the educational environment (Oliveira et al., 2025). Such situations show that structural racism does not is just a trace of the past, but an active force that operates in the reproduction of inequalities and in systematic denial of rights.

Table 2 – Matrix of Challenges to the Implementation of Quilombola School Education

Dimension of the Challenge	Concrete Manifestations
Structural	Precarious school infrastructure (buildings, improvised classrooms).
	Lack of basic sanitation, drinking water and electricity.
	Difficulty in physical access to schools and inadequate transportation.
	Lack of technological resources and internet access.
Pedagogical	Inadequate and generic initial and continuing teacher training.
	Shortage or absence of culturally relevant teaching and paradidactic materials.
	Eurocentric curricula that make local knowledge and history invisible.
	Resistance to the incorporation of own pedagogies and traditional knowledge.
Political-Institutional	Non-implementation of the National Curricular Guidelines (Res. 08/2012) by municipalities.
	Lack of political will and insufficient allocation of resources.
	Institutional racism and prejudice in the school environment and public administration.
	Failure of managers to register schools for access to specific programs and funds.

Source: Prepared by the author (2025).

Analysis of Table 2 reveals that the challenges faced by Quilombola School Education are not distributed in isolation or circumstantially, but are interconnected by a structural logic of historical exclusion. Material precariousness, pedagogical insufficiency and political neglect institutional dimensions that feed back into each other, resulting in a system that makes it unfeasible the full exercise of the right to education.

As Gomes (2012) argues, the absence of effective public policies aimed at Quilombola specificities are not the result of technical omissions, but an expression of racism structural that operates in maintaining inequality. The difficulties reported, from the lack of basic infrastructure to the negligence in implementing the National Curricular Guidelines, indicate that the Brazilian State still does not fully recognize quilombola territories as collective subjects of rights. More than operational gaps, the framework highlights a project exclusionary political, which continues to subordinate non-hegemonic epistemologies and ways of life (Santos, 2023; Castilho, 2023). Therefore, facing these challenges requires not only reforms



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punctual, but a break with the colonial model of education management, placing EEQ at the center of an agenda committed to social justice and historical reparations.

Final Considerations

At the end of this investigative journey, the central question that guided the study is returned to: what how school practices in quilombola territories can catalyze the construction of identity cultural and the valorization of local knowledge? The analysis undertaken allows us to affirm that the EEQ constitutes a political-pedagogical project with immense potential for cultural affirmation and community strengthening.

However, its promise is systematically undermined by a confluence of factors ranging from material precariousness to pedagogical inadequacy, all rooted in the structural racism that shapes the Brazilian society and institutions. The research demonstrated that EEQ's trajectory is marked by an ongoing struggle, from overcoming the silence of the 1996 LDB to the achievement of the Guidelines Curricular in 2012.

This legal framework, although fundamental, proved insufficient to guarantee, by itself, the transformation of the school reality. The implementation of a truly quilombola education depends on a profound reconceptualization of the school, understanding it as an integral part of the territory. Practices such as oral history and cultural mapping emerge as strategies powerful decolonial approaches to connect the school to community life, strengthening dialogue intergenerational and promoting respect for ancestry.

However, the realization of this ideal faces systemic challenges. The matrix of challenges presented highlights a self-reinforcing cycle of neglect: lack of investment, absence specific teacher training, the lack of relevant materials and political resistance institutional combine to perpetuate an exclusionary educational model, even under the label of "quilombola".

Responding directly to the research question, it is concluded that school practices only can become catalysts for identity when they are, at their core, decolonial, territorially grounded, and supported by robust public policies. It is imperative that we move forward from formal recognition to guarantee the material and pedagogical conditions that make the success of EEQ.

As implications of this work, it is suggested the need for future research that deepen the analysis of successful pedagogical experiences. In the field of public policies, it is recommended that financing mechanisms be created linked to the implementation of the Guidelines, as well as the development of national programs for teacher training and production



of teaching materials in collaboration with quilombola communities.

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