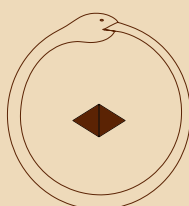


FOURTH LIVING SCHOOLS REPORT

December 2022 to
February 2023

Cristine Takuaí



WHAT HAS BEEN DONE IN EACH LIVING SCHOOL?

Reports from the coordinator

SHUBU HIWEA HUNI KUIN LIVING SCHOOL

Guardian: Dua Busê Huni Kuin

Over the last few months, Dua Busê has been concentrating in the forest, in his village Coração da Floresta [Heart of the Forest], in the Upper Jordão River. This has been a time of concentration and a lot of work to organise and structure the community. One of the priorities that Dua Busê had been dreaming about was the remodelling of the Kupixawa, a sacred space for prayer and meetings. In December, he completed the construction and held a baptism in the sacred house, with singing and much celebration.



During the baptism of the new house, Kupixawa, there was singing, storytelling and a lot of joy.



Traditional paintings with *jenipapo* for the baptism day of the new Kupixawa.

As well as finalising the new house, Dua Busē has dedicated himself to looking after the community's medicine park and food garden, to ensure that young people and children continue to learn about the plants that heal and enliven our lives and their stories. There are many dreams to be realised by 2023 in Aldeia Coração da Floresta and Dua Busē is gradually organising himself to make these dreams come true.



The Living School seeks to value sensitive and ancestral knowledge.

During the month of January, Dua Busē and his family worked hard to organise the community, the medicine park, constructions, gardens and handicrafts. During this period, produce from the gardens is scarce, and ensuring that everyone is fed requires a great deal of effort.

In January, the Coração da Floresta village was visited by a young man from Rio de Janeiro called Erik, who came to support Dua Busē in recording the songs and stories of his living school. Dua Busē is much sought after by artists, researchers and medical scholars who learn from him about the sciences of the forest and the ancestral knowledge he holds.

Dua Busē dreams of publishing a book and an audio album containing a transcription of the original chant. According to him, this record will serve to preserve the knowledge so that children and young people never let this memory fall asleep.



Daily practices, dialogue and ancestral activities (Photos: Erik)

During the first few days of the year, Dua Busē and Nete Teresa, his wife, realised the importance of strengthening the transmission of knowledge about *kenes*, weaving techniques, cotton and the stories related to this knowledge. That's why they are starting a weaving school called Una Shubu Xinã Kuin. Nete Teresa is a master weaver and a connoisseur of 26 *kenes* [sacred graphics] from the Huni Kuin tradition, which dates back to the time of the Shenipabu (an ancient people). Together with Dua Busē, they are opening this traditional school to teach the 13 young craftswomen in the community how to apply the *kenes* she knows, so that the ancestral ritualistic wisdom (rites, songs, customs) and graphics are preserved, and so that the young mothers (and some grandmothers) can have an opportunity to support their families and gain autonomy through their work.



Weaving practices, kenes studies (Photos: Erik).



Huni Kuin women's Coração da Floresta Village collective, students of Nete Teresa (Photos: Erik).

During this month, Dua Busē has been identifying the medicinal plants in the parks and putting up signs so that the young people don't destroy them when digging up to grow crops. He plans to open another flowerbed and organise a new centre at the Kumaru Ferro Tree in the new village. He also has some infrastructure dreams and goals, such as building a Dieta House to further his teachings so that community members, other relatives, friends and partners can have a place to study together in his living school. To this end, he intends to build a meeting space in a place away from the movements of the village, for research and also to receive people for treatment and care who need isolation.

Dua Busē also plans to build a dining hall and improve the water collection system by installing a water pump, so the women don't have to climb up and down the ravine with litres of water on their heads. There is a water hole in the village where this water pump can be installed and a point pulled up for a dining hall and kitchen structure.

Dua Busē plans to build a guest house to receive relatives, work groups and possible future experiences, as well as an Art House, so that the women can store their materials and have space to weave, stretch the threads and further their studies at the Weaving School.

In February, the Coração da Floresta village was visited by members of Associação Povos da Terra (APOTI) [Peoples of the Earth Association], who carried out support work to improve water collection and install solar energy panels. They brought bricks and cement to build a well and install a water pump that will lift clean water to the village. This will help the women not to have to carry weights every day to fetch water from the river.

Dua Busē's dream and goal is to build a craft house, but first he wants to build a dining hall. They also urgently need to buy a boat, as their old canoe sank while they were travelling upriver. Dua Busē wants to invest in a 12-metre aluminium canoe equipped with a canopy so he can travel more peacefully. Throughout the month, the women continued to study weaving with Nete, preparing threads and organising the materials to make traditional pieces.

Dua Busē carried out a bawe baptism on the new moon, so that the women can quickly learn the kenés of the boa constrictor.



Life in the forest has its charms, but also many challenges. For example, if the plough isn't plentiful, there's a shortage of food. Climate change and a series of other situations have unbalanced and affected traditional plough in all four corners of Brazil. Dua Busê's family has been looking for ways to strengthen the farmland through agroforestry techniques and planting native fruit trees to guarantee food security for the children and everyone in the village.



Coração da Floresta village (Photos: APOTI - Nadja Marin).

At the end of January, Kawa, a young Huni Kuin who supports the dialogues with Dua Busê, went up to the Coração da Floresta village to bring news and information to the community, as well as a video I shot talking about the work, the plans for this year and asking for news from the forest. At the beginning of February, Kawa came back to the municipality of Jordão with news from Dua Busê, Nete and their community. It was great to hear that he was well and doing a lot of strengthening work.



APNE IXKOT HAMHIPAK FOREST SCHOOL VILLAGE OF THE MAXAKALI PEOPLE

Guardians: Sueli and Isael Maxakali

Between 12 and 15 December 2022, I visited the Aldeia Escola Floresta [Forest School Village], a visit which was also attended by Carlos Papá, coordinator of the Escola Viva Guarani [Guarani Living School], Paula Berbert and Anai Vera, anthropologists and collaborators with the Escola Viva Maxakali [Maxakali Living School], and Katarzyna Mich, a councillor with the Saúva Jataí Association, a supporter of the Living Schools Action. There were many moments of exchange, where we were able to walk around the territory and talk about the actions to be developed in 2023. There are many needs for structuring the space and the village, but the main focus of Aldeia Escola Floresta's work is on the process of revitalising and reforesting the territory, bringing the forest back, freeing the natural course of the waters so that the practices of Good Life [buen vivir] are possible.



On this visit, I took some native Atlantic Forest seedlings from the nursery I look after in my community to share with Isael and Sueli Maxakali. The seedlings were *jaracatiá*, *embiruçu*, *ingá* and *araçá*, which were planted during the walks through the territory. Other seedlings were also planted, which Isael and Sueli had brought back from an exchange programme at the end of November.



Walks in the Aldeia Escola Floresta territory to plant seedlings.

On this occasion, the Maxakali women received their dresses, which formed part of the installation exhibited at the 34th São Paulo Biennale, entitled “Kumxop Koxuk yõg” (The spirits of my daughters). The Biennale installation was made up of a set of objects, masks and dresses that refer to the mythical universe of the Yãmiyhex, spirit women. All the work for the exhibition was carried out jointly by the women and girls of the village, under the coordination and curatorship of Sueli Maxakali. In the community, each woman looks after one of these Yãmiy. The return of the dresses was very meaningful and important, a long-awaited and emotional moment for the women.



Emotional moments when the dresses were returned.

During the days we spent with the families at the Maxakali Living School, we saw the beautiful art produced by the women, girls and elders. They are great masters of the art of beading and braiding with *embaúba* and cotton fibres. The colours, shapes and narratives are present in each piece.



Exhibition of artwork made by Maxakali women.

The territory where Escola Floresta Village is today has still not been recognised by the federal government. There are many challenges and expectations for this new administration and all the mobilisation of the indigenous movement with the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples so that the Indigenous Lands can be homologated and the indigenous peoples can live and practise the Good Life in its multiple dimensions. Water is a very delicate factor in this region, and they dream that with the help of the current federal deputy elected from Minas Gerais, Celia Xakriabá, who has had strong political and spiritual support from the Maxakali, they will get this right to a territory in which to live and practise their spirituality in peace.



At the beginning of January, the women of the Aldeia Escola Floresta organised themselves to make traditional Maxakali dresses, painting the fabrics and then sewing them together.

Many cultural activities, games and storytelling took place throughout the first few days of 2023. The community is very much looking forward to going to Brasília, Brazil's Capital, for the Acampamento Terra Livre [the Free Land Camp] to be held in April, to demand that the territory where the families live today be recognised by the government.

In the village, they are also organising and requesting a budget to buy materials to build a space for art workshops.



In Maxakali culture, when children are sick or they need to perform spiritual strengthening ceremonies, it is customary to perform the *Yamiyxop Xunim* [ritual of the Bat Spirit], which brings healing and protection to the territory.



In February, the Aldeia Escola Floresta held several empowerment rituals. To this end, community members prepared the Mimãñãm [religious stick] to perform the rituals of Mogmoka [hawk spirit] and Xunim [bat spirit].

In the village, organisational meetings were held about the work to be done and renovations were carried out on the houses that had been damaged by the strong winds. Many activities were carried out with children and young people, such as dances and games.

Sueli, the coordinator of the Maxakali Living School, is organising a renovation space where the school currently stands so that it can be restructured. She is also organising the labour for the construction and the purchase of some materials for this new space.



“MBYÁ ARANDU PORÃ” CULTURE POINT OF THE MBYÁ GUARANI PEOPLE

Guardian: Carlos Papá

During December, the coordinator of the Guarani Living School, Carlos Papá, accompanied visits to the Tukano and Maxakali Living Schools. It was a journey of many lessons learnt and perceptions that were opened through the exchange of experiences. Carlos Papá accompanied all the trips, recording the dialogues and interviews with the coordinators of each Living School visited. We were able to come up with many guidelines and proposals for work to be carried out over the next year in each territory.



Meetings with Maxakali Living School



Walks with Tukano Living School coordinators

During the month of December, the Guarani Living School went on walks with some of the children to look for seedlings and seeds in the forest. We went to the ancient village on the banks of the Silveira River, where we looked for seeds of embiruçu and pacuri and yvaro seedlings, a very important plant in traditional Guarani medicine. The aim of this search was to strengthen the nursery of fruit and medicinal plants that we are looking after in our family nucleus. The Nhe'ery, the Atlantic Forest, is one of the most endangered biomes on the planet, and nurseries are very important in guaranteeing its regeneration, so that we can produce native seedlings, especially fruit trees, so that the animals have food and the forest recovers.



On 19th, 20th and 21st of December we took part in the Assembly of the Conselho Aty Mirim [Aty Mirim Council] of the Museu das Culturas Indígenas [Museum of Indigenous Cultures]. There were many days of dialogue and in-depth study of concepts such as memory, collections, museology and archaeology. We also discussed the future exhibitions that will take place in 2023, one on indigenous resistance and presence in the state of São Paulo and the other on the spirits that inhabit the Nhe'ery [Atlantic Forest]. On the 20th, we received a visit from two Mapuche elders from Chile, Rosa Huenchulaf and Miguel Treumun, who spoke about their experiences at the Mapuche Museum and their work in education.

On the 21st, the Secretary of Culture was present to sign the decree creating the Conselho Aty Mirim, strengthening the essence of shared management.



On 22nd of December, Carlos Papá and I took part in a meeting at the Museum of Modern Art (MAM) in São Paulo. The event, called “Being with Ibirapitanga [brazilwood]”, took place in Ibirapuera Park, with Bel Falleiros, an artist, and Flavia Aranha, a sustainable fashion designer.

These were very special moments of connection with the sacred being “brazilwood”. We sang around the trees to greet the sun and then took part in a drawing workshop using natural paints made from brazilwood.





On the 28th of December, we welcomed a couple of Mapuche elders from Chile, Rosa Huenschulaf and Miguel Treumun, to Escola Viva Guarani, who visited us together with Lucas Maciel, an anthropologist friend. We were able to talk about various aspects of the cosmology of the native peoples, and they told us a little about the education and museology work they do in their territories.

There were rich exchanges and a lot of emotions in sharing an exquisite fish broth with chilli and cassava.

At the beginning of January, Escola Viva and Ponto de Cultura Arandu Porã received the coordinators of Selvagem – cycle of studies about life – Anna Dantes and Madeleine Deschamps, accompanied by their dog Bino and their families. We held a planning meeting for this year's work and talked about living schools, our dreams and challenges.

The week we received their visit, we were preparing for the Yy Karai, the water baptism ceremony in which the children receive their spiritual names. Every year we perform this Nhemongarai, following the ancestral tradition of the Guarani people. This year was a very special and deeply sensitive ceremony, as Carlos Papá, the spiritual leader of our community, through divine enlightenment, led the naming of the children we had delivered the previous year. For the first time we experienced this magical and enchanting moment. Seven children were named during the course of the evening, with much prayer, concentration and spiritual strength.



In the same week, we also received Anai Vera, anthropologist and collaborator with Selvagem. We were also visited by Valéria Macedo, anthropologist and professor at Unifesp who is a friend of the community, and who made it possible for the spiritual leader Sebastião and his wife Iraci, from Jara-guá village, to visit us. They all took part in the Nhemongarai ceremony, which lasted until dawn.

The following week, we received a visit from a team from the Museum of Indigenous Cultures of São Paulo, from members of the Communication Working Group, from the Education Working Group and from the Masters of Knowledge Sonia Ara and Claudio. They were accompanied by Alberto Álvares, a Guarani filmmaker, who recorded and interviewed them about the concept of *Nhe'ẽry* and about spirituality. They spent many days in dialogue, walking through the forest. During the meeting, we were able to talk about cinema and indigenous art and the dreams we have to strengthen the vision for the Museum, which we did by walking through the territory and listening to the leaders, prayers, midwives and children.



At the end of January, Escola Viva Guarani [Guarani Living School] took part in the 5th Education Meeting “Em busca de uma aldeia contemporânea - uma Pedagogia do Fazer com Sentido e com Amor” [In search of a contemporary village – a Pedagogy of Doing with Meaning and Love], which took place at the Associação Comunitária Monte Azul [Monte Azul Community Association] in São Paulo, a Escola de Resiliência [School of Resilience] created by some educators and Mario Zorik, a great promoter of education.

This is a welcoming school that combines care and overcoming practices through literacy and learning trades such as agroforestry, as Ailton Krenak pointed out in a conversation we had a few days after visiting this transformative and admirable space.



At the beginning of February, Arandu Porã Culture Point and the coordinator of the Guarani Living School, Carlos Papá, received an invitation to take part in a meeting of ICOM - the International Council of Museums, which took place at the Museu da Língua Portuguesa. At this meeting, a red list of Brazilian cultural objects at risk was presented. These lists were conceived as practical tools for combating the illegal trade in cultural goods. As a result of working with the Museum of Indigenous Cultures and participating in the Conselho Aty Mirim, we found ourselves in a deep reflection about memory, museology, collections and educational practices in museums, feeling the need to decolonise this mental monoculture that prevails in our society.



On the new moon of February, a great tragedy took place on the north coast of São Paulo, where the Guarani Living School is located, in the Ribeirão Silveira Indigenous Land, in the middle of the Nhe'ẽry [Atlantic Forest]. The tragedy of 18th February devastated part of the region, left at least 48 dead and went down in history as the heaviest rainfall on record in Brazil. Many were left homeless and lost family members.

The earth shook and fell
But not for nothing
It's giving its message
We need to relearn to tread softly on the Earth
If we don't respect it, we're all going to die...
The big rain left a lot of destruction and wounds
in the womb of the Earth.



Many blamed climate change for all the tragedies that have occurred. I've been thinking about hidden and silent environmental racism, where property speculation and social injustice prevail, weakening and making part of society vulnerable.

Due to this whole situation, which has greatly weakened our community, representatives of the state and federal government were in the village to see and think together about how to collaborate. We took the opportunity to ask the representatives to pay attention to the process of ratifying the Ribeirão Silveira Indigenous Land, which has been stalled for over twelve years. Minister Sonia Guajajara, Funai president Joênia Wapixana and federal deputy Célia Xakriabá were present, and we handed them a document asking the Supreme Court to speed up the process. Demarcating our territories means keeping the forests standing and guaranteeing life for all forms of life.



During these days there were many mobilisations to support the directly affected families and to think up strategies to recover the hill that collapsed next to the prayer house.

When the hill collapsed, a bush of ka'a, a mate grass that had been planted, was also hit, and Dje-guaka went there to recover and replant it. Kauê, reflecting on the heavy rain and all human relations in this tragedy, produced some drawings showing us how much common sense is lacking when we talk about solidarity and ethics in relations with society. It wasn't just humans who were affected by the tragedy, but also plant-beings, animal-beings and mineral-beings.





We are studying a plan to recover the slopes of the hill in order to stop erosion and ensure that our *opy'i*, house of prayer, our true school, a space for healing and ancestral learning, is preserved.

To do this, we'll first have to make some contour lines and then staple them down with mesh. Subsequently, some terraces will have to be made with super adobe at some specific points to give the soil more steadiness, and then some species will have to be planted, such as vetiver and non-spreading bamboos, even brachiaria at times, which we can use for rooting. We are looking for partners and supporters to make this possible.



BAHSERIKOWI INDIGENOUS MEDICINE CENTER OF TUKANO, DESANA AND TUJUKA PEOPLES

Guardian: João Paulo Barreto

Visit of the Living Schools team to the Bahserikowi Indigenous Medicine Centre.

On December 6th, 7th and 8th, I visited the Bahserikowi Indigenous Medicine Centre together with Anai Vera, anthropologist and collaborator of the Living Schools, Katarzyna Mich, councillor from the NGO Saúva Jataí, the association supporting the action, and Carlos Papá, coordinator of the Living School of the Guarani Mbya people. As part of the Living Schools team, we had the opportunity to learn about the work carried out and to experience health care with *bahsese* [therapeutic blessing formulas]. The programme was quite special, with a regional breakfast – açai, buriti and umari porridge – prepared exclusively by Ms. Sandra of the Tukano people.

During the visit, in a round table discussion, the Bahserikowi team presented the story of the founding of the Bahserikowi Indigenous Medicine Centre. The idea arose from an experience of great pain due to an act of discrimination that took place in 2009, when doctors predicted that the niece of the Centre's coordinator would have her foot amputated due to a poisonous snake bite. The girl's family had proposed a joint treatment between biomedicine (allopathic) and indigenous medicine, before the final decision was made to amputate the girl's foot. But the head doctor of the team looking after the girl said: "I'm not going to allow the pajé [shaman] to enter the hospital singing, jumping, dancing, playing the maraca, drumming and making smoke to perform a healing ritual, because the hospital is a place for the sick and a place for silence". In this speech, they realised that health professionals have a mistaken and prejudiced view of indigenous specialists, labelled as pajés.

It was from this sad episode that the Bahserikowi Centre for Indigenous Medicine was conceived. But a few years passed and the Centre was founded in 2017. Today, Bahserikowi represents the resistance and existence of indigenous medicine, as well as being a reference point for indigenous peoples.

In the long conversations we had with the whole team at the Centre, we saw that Bahserikowi was created mainly to show non-indigenous society that the peoples of the Upper Rio Negro have their own medicine, practised for millennia by their ancestors. We also saw that the space is not restricted to a health treatment centre, but is also a cultural space for indigenous peoples, where they meet to

share songs and dances, teachings about bahsese, and other knowledge. We had an experience with the *kumu* specialist Anacleto (Tukano people), when we received *bahsese* for protection.

The Centre also shares space with “Biatüwi, Casa de Comida Indígena” [Biatüwi, Indigenous Food House]. According to chef Clarinda Ramos, from the Sateré-Mawé people, food should nourish both the body and the soul. It was a very special time to enjoy this rich traditional cuisine.

The Coordinator of the Bahserikowi Indigenous Medicine Centre, Ivan Menezes Barreto, at the invitation of the Indigenous Council of Roraima - CIR, took part in the Indigenous Medicine Workshop of the people of Roraima in Boa Vista.



Biatüwi, Indigenous House of Food

The following day, the founder and the coordinator accompanied us to a community near Manaus, where Jacinto Tuyuca, a specialist baya (music and dance master), lives. He is one of the partners who has also been following the struggles and journeys of the Medicine Centre. The purpose of the visit to the baya was to show the way of life, the way of feeling and experiencing the dances, rituals and *bahsese* within a small maloca.

On the last day, the Bahserikowi team recorded testimonies about the founding and permanence of the space, the difficulties and achievements and the future objectives that the Centre aims to achieve. Testimonies were also recorded about the running and maintenance of the centre. We from the Living Schools team had the opportunity to live in the environment and witness a few moments of Bahserikowi's daily life.



Dialogues with the Medicine Centre team.



Talking to João Paulo Barreto



Visit to specialist Jacinto Tuyuca

Makira E'ta Women's Planning

On the 16th of December, a meeting was held to organise the year 2022 accounting of the women participating in MAKIRA E'TA – the Indigenous Women's Network of the State of Amazonas, at the Medicine Centre, which always provides the space for the network's monthly and annual planning. The space is open for various types of activities and meetings on indigenous medicine, culture and education.



Indigenous Sports

The football team and FIRN (Rio Negro Indigenous Fund) represent the 23 indigenous peoples of the Upper Rio Negro. The team is made up of young athletes who left their home communities to study or look for alternative jobs in the city of Manaus, where the Medical Centre is located. Bahserikowi supports the team because the young indigenous people love to play football, and in this way it provides a space and an opportunity for leisure and entertainment in the urban context. The team was founded in 2016 to welcome young people from the communities.



Master's students of Federal University of Amazonas UFAM

On the 17th of December, the Centre for Indigenous Medicine provided the space for an anthropology class, given by Professor Agenor from UFAM, for master's students in anthropology. The students were told about the importance of healing practices and *bahsese* for life. There was also a small demonstration with the Anacleto Tukano *kumu*.



Visit from SEMSA's team of professionals

On the 23rd of December, the Medical Centre was visited by a team from SEMSA (Manaus Municipal Health Department), who came to see the work being done at Bahserikowi. The Bahserikowi team welcomed the visitors, and the founder, Dr João Paulo Lima Barreto, gave them a brief talk about *bahsese* and how the idea of building the medical centre came to be, about living with the *kumu* and how health treatments are carried out.

The dialogue and the team's visit took place with the intention that a partnership could be built in the future, and that indigenous medicine could be included in the public health system, with specialists being respected and recognised as great professionals on the same level as Western doctors.



Visit from university medical students

On the 19th of January, the Centre for Indigenous Medicine welcomed university students from UFAM studying medicine to give a lecture on traditional healing practices. The Centre's coordinator shared information about the importance of the indigenous medicines of the Upper Negro River and spoke about the need for the Centre to enhance dialogue with Western doctors and university students, as he believes this could strengthen the work carried out at Bahserikowi. The coordinator began his speech by commenting on the importance of the stages of training to become a specialist. He explained that specialists are not born with this gift, but that they first go through a preparation of the body and only then begin some practices, obeying the rules and diets that those in charge propose to them. The techniques and knowledge are passed on orally at various times during the

ceremony, which begins with a circle where they drink and eat *ipadu*. Then there are the nightly preparations, at bedtime, and finally the moment when they begin to put their knowledge into practice.

The medical university students were instructed to look at indigenous health with new eyes, so that when they leave Bahserikowi they can have a different perspective and get to know each item that makes up the indigenous space, their stories, the medicines that are produced and how they are used in the practice of *bahsese*. They were also guided to understand that the graphics that make up the *bahsese* contain many meanings, in order to learn about their importance for each people, along with their products and their medicinal healing symbolisms.

Visits from medical students have started to become more frequent, especially those at the beginning of their medical course. In these dialogues, it becomes possible for them to look at our medicine without prejudice, and we make the most of these opportunities to tell them how different our practices are, because they are based on other foundations of care for the body and spirit.



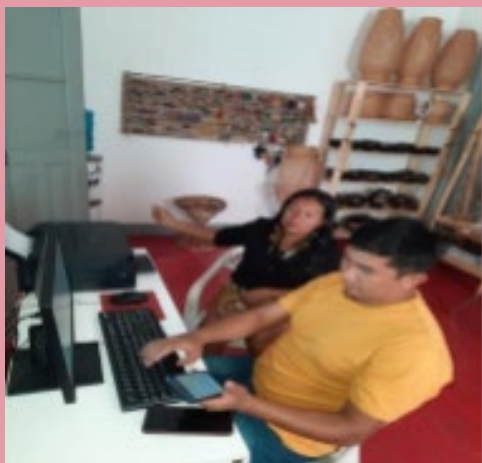
Meeting with Tabihuni

On the 18th of January, a meeting was held with TabiHuni to close the Brazil Fund project “Resistindo com quem resiste” [Resisting with those who resist], which ran from August to December of 2022.



Preliminary design development

In January, after many conversations with partners, support was organised for an employee of the Centre for Indigenous Medicine so that she could take part in the selective process for the Master's degree course in Social Anthropology at UFAM (Federal University of Amazonas).



Report by A Crítica TV

On January 21st 2023, the Centre for Indigenous Medicine was visited by the television station A Crítica. A reportage was made with the aim of gathering information about the activities carried out at the Centre, indigenous medicine in the Upper Rio Negro and how it is practised to cure illnesses. Ivan Barreto, the Medicine Centre's coordinator, gave an interview in which he commented on the objectives behind the creation of Bahserikowi and also told us about their struggle and the five years the Centre has been in operation.



All of the Centre's activities are aimed at spreading indigenous medicine, and it is a struggle to break down the prejudices and the imaginary that society has created in regards to indigenous health care practices. On a daily basis, Bahserikowi continues to see people, and the *kumuã* look after them with *bahsese* [blessing] and medicinal plants. Most of the people who visit the Centre for Indigenous Medicine are from outside the state of Amazonas. In addition, the Centre also receives visits from indigenous leaders passing through Manaus, who also dream of inspiring more initiatives to found indigenous medicine houses.

Participation in the 3rd Amazon Pagan Meeting

At the beginning of February 2023, the Bahserikowi Centre for Indigenous Medicine received an invitation to take part in a lecture at the III Encontro Pagão Amazônico [Amazonian Pagan Meeting], on the theme "In the cauldron of Amazonian Magic". Coordinator Ivan Barreto took part in the event with a presentation entitled "Tuoñase: Bahsese practice in the Bahserikowi". He spoke about the importance of *bahsese* in the Upper Rio Negro and the indigenous knowledge it is based on: *kihti ukuse*, *bahsese* and *bahsamori*. He spoke about how each people of the Upper Rio Negro has its own way of thinking, of practising rituals with songs and dances, as well as their knowledge about the practise of blessing and the healing formulas for illnesses. There are currently two main types of specialists in the Upper Rio Negro: the *kumuã* and the *baya*, who take care of the region's social cycle. With the arrival of the colonisers in the area, the *yai* specialists [shamans] were exterminated because they thought their practices were demonic.

The coordinator's presentation was very important, as he also had the opportunity to talk about the creation and founding of the Centre for Indigenous Medicine. He told the story of the conflicts between his family and the doctors who worked in the hospital where his cousin was hospitalised with serious injuries to her leg as a result of a jararaca snake bite, and that, at the time, the doctors said it was necessary to amputate the girl's leg. This led to a great struggle to get a joint treatment between an indigenous specialist and Western doctors, as the family would not accept the leg amputation. This event spurred the family to create a treatment and healing centre using the indigenous medicines of the Upper Rio Negro. This space made it possible to prove that indigenous medicines exist and are valid. In the Upper Rio Negro, before the arrival of colonisation, the ancestors used medicinal plants exclusively, the forest being a great pharmacy. At the end of the talk, Ivan commented on his blessing name, Kümarõ, which means "person responsible for communicating with the Sun about the temperature of the climate".

Also taking part in the event was the administrator of the Centre for Indigenous Medicine, Carla Fernandes, who spoke about the importance of taking care of women from childhood until they have their first period. She also commented on their rules and diets so the body is not vulnerable to disease. *Bahsese* is permanently present in women's lives. Specifically during pregnancy, the specialist, the *kumü*, performs *bahsese*, preparing the female body to generate a life, transforming the uterus into a very cosy house, so that there are no problems until the child is born. To end the talk, Carla spoke about how the Centre for Indigenous Medicine works and the activities that are carried out in addition to the care and treatment of illnesses, such as the little shop where medicinal herbs, T-shirts with indigenous graphics, books written by indigenous anthropologists, handicrafts and accessories produced by her and the space's collaborators are sold. All these products have a connection with *bahsese*, since behind each product you can find a healing formula. She also mentioned that the Centre for Indigenous Medicine not only serves indigenous people, but that it has served people from all over the world since it was founded; and that Bahserikowi has become a reference point for all indigenous peoples.



Encouraging young indigenous LGBTQIA+ people

On the 10th of February, a planning meeting was held at the Centre for Indigenous Medicine with the Miriã Mahsã Collective, founded in October 2021. The collective had already held two other events at the Centre's headquarters. The first was a fair and a round table discussion, with the participation of the Municipal Department of Social Assistance and Citizenship. The second was a large round table discussion, attended by several indigenous LGBTQIA+ young people, all of whom told of their difficulties in being accepted in society. The young people are currently planning a larger event with the Miriã Mahsã Collective, possibly at the beginning of April this year.

The support of Escolas Vivas for the Centre for Indigenous Medicine is essential to enable the development of activities and other types of support for young indigenous people, initially from the Upper Rio Negro and in the future for other young indigenous people from Amazonas state.

In a way, the local indigenous movement has not embraced the LGBTQIA+ cause. Even though there are many people who recognise themselves as such within indigenous communities, the indigenous movement seems to ignore them. In view of this, Bahserikowi has been supporting the presence, existence and strengthening of the indigenous LGBTQIA+ community in order to give it greater visibility in society.



Participation of the Bahserikowi Indigenous Medicine Centre for the photographic exhibition on indigenous protagonism

On the 7th of February, the National Day of Struggle for Indigenous Peoples, the team from the Bahserikowi Indigenous Medicine Centre was invited by the director of the City Museum to the opening of the photographic exhibition on indigenous protagonism, which aims to highlight indigenous peoples in Manaus. Ivan Barreto, the coordinator of the Centre for Indigenous Medicine, was interviewed and spoke about the struggle and resistance of the indigenous peoples who have been present on this land for more than 15,000 years, about the struggle and resistance to continue existing and protecting their lands, their knowledge, their languages and everything that the colonisers tried to exterminate in the past. He expressed his joy at knowing that there are now indigenous representatives in the ministries and that these previously unprecedented cases are helping to strengthen the struggle of indigenous peoples.

Carla Fernandes also took part in the interview. She pointed out that Bahserikowi was a great achievement, being the first Centre for Indigenous Medicine in the Amazon. She said that it wasn't enough to talk or write about indigenous knowledge, but that it was necessary to found the Centre to prove to non-indigenous society that indigenous medicines are just as valid as other medicines.



Bahserikowi's participation in the Italian-Brazilian Laboratory

The founder of Bahserikowi, João Paulo Lima Barreto, was invited to take part in a collective health workshop organised by the Italian-Brazilian Laboratory in Italy. He travelled to the University of Bologna, Parma and Rome to give talks about his experiences at Bahserikowi.



This report counts with the collaboration of Anai Vera.

I am CRISTINE TAKUÁ, of the Maxakali people, educator, mother, midwife, thinker, and I like to take care of plants and learn from them. I am the director of the Maracá Institute and together with other leaders I have been developing projects for cultural strengthening. I studied Philosophy at UNESP (São Paulo State University), at Marília's Campus, and I have been thinking for years about Amerindian philosophies and the possibilities of decolonization of thought, to counteract the colonial monoculture that dominates the ways of knowledge transmission. I am one of the founders of FAPISP (Forum for Articulation of Indigenous Teachers of São Paulo). I take care of the dialogue with the four Living Schools, reflecting on interchanges and contributing to the continuity of these dreams.

SAÚVA is a non-profit association, a network to promote sustainability, autonomy and circularity of projects and enterprises; it is motivated by the regeneration of the environment as a whole; for the decrease of social inequality; for the exchange of knowledge with Brazil's peoples and traditional cultures; through the practice of self-education and co-creation of other forms of economic relations.

ANAI G. VERA BRITOS is Paraguayan and lives in Brazil. She studied Biology at the UFMS, but changed profession as she got her master's degree in Anthropology from UFSC. Currently she is a doctoral candidate at USP (University of São Paulo). She researches Guarani ethnology and other peoples of South American lowlands.

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