



Virtual Storytelling Clubs in Brazil

The project Storytelling Club - The Day I Became Strong in The Pandemics Brazil (“O Dia Que Eu Me Tornei Mais Forte na Pandemia”, in Portuguese) took place in September 2020. It was an initiative from Canal Futura and Singular Media & Content. Canal Futura is a Brazilian TV Channel supported by Roberto Marinho’s Foundation, an educational organization linked to Globo Group.

The project, supervised by Jose Brito and Beth Carmona, had Thaisa Oliveira as executive producer and general coordinator. The moderators of the STC dynamics were: Daniel Leite, Felipe Barquete and Priscila Crispi. We counted with the support of the educator Priscila Pereira (Fundação Roberto Marinho) and also Ana Bárbara Ramos, movie director and producer (Semente Cinematográfica). Other partnership from different projects and institutions were important for the club development Crescer Sem Violência, Fundação Casa Grande, Projeto Giral, Senac São Paulo, Unibes Assistencial, Amazônia Sustentável and Fé e Alegria. Many of these organizations are NGOs that work with children, human rights, cultural and social assistance.

We present a short report about the development of the Storytelling Club in Brazil below.

I - General Information and Preparation of the Storytelling Club Brazil 2020

We worked with 2 Groups of 6 children each. In the STC 2020 Brazil meetings we attended 12 children from 4 regions of the Country (1 in the North, 6 in the Northeast, 4 in the Southeast and 1 in the Midwest Region). We had a 66% of girls and 33% of boys (8 girls and 4 boys) with ages from 8 to 12 years old.



Representation of Participant Children in Brazil’s Geography.

We looked mainly at low and lower-middle class income families, as our interest was to investigate how the more vulnerable social profiles dealt with the Pandemics, focusing on the stories that are not usually told by mainstream media. This way, we managed to have children with really challenging

realities interviewed. 50% of the boys and girls lived in big urban centers and outskirts (6), and the other 50% in small countryside cities or rural areas (6).

Ethnic Declaration (done by the parents)	Number of Children
Black	5
Brown / Mixed races (Pardo)	5
Indigenous	1
White	1

Ethnic profiles of the Children.

The racial representation, described in the table above, was also a criteria that we took into consideration. We did that in order to privilege the segments that are less represented and often excluded from being shown in Mass Media in the Country.

II - STC Methodology and Operational Observations and Challenges

The STC Brazil meetings were done online, virtually, using the video and chat program Google Meet (paid version, in order to record the meetings). The choice of this program was done because it is easier to use it with the Android mobile, which is more accessible and affordable and so it was more common in the children’s families. The devices that were used were the cell phones from the children's parents and it was in most cases the only equipment available. Since the children were using their parent's cell phones, it was necessary to do the meetings at 19h00 every day, time when the parents were back home from work. The meetings were held on 5 days (from monday to friday) for each group (2 groups). The meetings lasted usually 1h30 each day and the two groups were realized in different weeks of September.



First group of Children and Moderators.



Second Group of Children and Moderators.

In order to face some connectivity and social challenges, we provided a small financial support for the families and they received a small amount to pay for the required mobile internet data services. We did that so the children would have conditions to make the calls without having any extra expenses, because most of them use prepaid mobile phones.

We had two moderators on each meeting and plus one backstage person who was responsible for talking to the parents and children, making sure that they were on time and helping them with technical issues during the meetings. We used Padlet for uploading the drawings, organized by day and named by authors. The Padlet was an important tool in the start of a new meeting and it helped to make a connection with the previous day. It worked as a moment of reflection of what the children have learned the day before and they so really liked seeing their drawings and stories on screen.



Padlet is a helpful technologic tool to organize the children's productions.

Regarding the planning of the activities, we basically followed the handout made by the STC's provided by the PRIX JEUNESSE Foundation. We did some alterations in the encounters in order to make the activities more adapted to Brazilian reality, such as using Brazilian children songs related to inner strength and group dynamics in order to foster the relations between children.

After the activities ended, the Brazilian STC Team organized and published a digital booklet and sent it to each one of the children, resuming the main stories from each child, a gift for them to have and as a result of their work.



III - Content and challenging aspects

STCs - Positive

Among the good aspects that involved the STC's Brazil meetings we state that we had a great collaboration and solidarity among children. They were very curious about each other in a very positive way and a "safe environment" sensation was settled in both groups. Positive bonds were also established between the moderators and the children. Thanks to that good atmosphere, intimate stories were told, without a sense of embarrassment. Regarding the tips that one child should give to the other in problem solving, we equally had a good response from children. They were very sympathetic and friendly to each other and were not afraid to express their opinion towards complex subjects such as racism, death and bullying for example. Eduarda, one of the girls, told her story about being bullied at school and after the support she received from the other kids, she showed up the next day showing off her hairstyle, dancing and putting on some makeup for fun. Kassio who was at first very embarrassed about his story (he couldn't read at the age of 9) and didn't want to share it with the group, became very proud of himself and less introspective in two days.

In the end of each group the children were very satisfied about having participated and participants in general felt like a bond had been established during the activities. Even though it was a bit tiring to many of the children, mainly because of the intensity and the late hour on which it happened (19h), there was a good feeling and people wanted to do more STC. In the end, children exchanged telephone contacts, their profiles on tik tok and online games. We even had the opportunity to celebrate the birthday of one of the children during the club and it was a very special moment because initially he was sad because he was not going to be able to celebrate with his friends, but he became super happy with our online party.

Regarding the challenging aspects, we had the harshness of the stories. The children talked about sickness, death inside the core family, parent's divorce, social distancing, lack of access to health equipments, bullying, beating, child labor, and other difficult subjects. Whenever faced by a hard story, the moderators recognized children's feelings, empathized, gave time for them to express their feelings and helped them to better understand their problems (using naming techniques). They also reinforced and identified children's own bravery and strengths in the things they could do at the difficult moments they had lived. Other strategies were: Offering ideas for possible solutions and

asking for suggestions from other children. The moderators always reminded the children that it was ok to feel what they were feeling.



Isolation was hard to the children. Drawing of a participant child.

Another difficult aspect of the implementation of the STC in the Pandemics was the presence of the parents of the children (or relatives, such as brothers, uncles or aunts) in the same room as the child. Sometimes, it was possible to notice that this was influencing how they were telling the stories and they chose not to tell. Some of the children did not have the opportunity to have a spare room at home and have privacy in the meetings. In some of Brazil's poorer regions, many houses are inhabited by a relatively large number of relatives and people. This way, it was hard for the children to have a moment alone to talk about their individualities.

It is also important to mention the internet connection problems, some kids missed parts of the meetings because they were not able to get a good connection. The production and moderators tried to compensate for this lost time by sending them materials and the homework by phone the next day.

V - Stories

Tauana (11 years old)



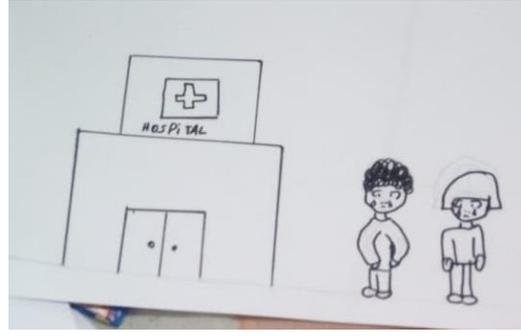
Tauana is an indigenous girl from the Amazonas, from the Kambeba tribe. She lives in a small village on which you can only arrive by boat. One day, she finds the bow broken, it was made for her by her father. Tauana felt very sad and thought about what she could do because her father never taught her how to make a bow because he only teaches the boys how to build it as he says that making a bow is too dangerous for girls. Since she had already seen her father making bows many times, Tauana decided to make a bow and arrow on her own. She goes to the forest by herself and collects all the materials, touring pieces of wood from different trees with a big knife and builds a strong bow. When her father saw Tauana's new bow he was very proud of her and it was a huge success among her friends who asked her to make one for them too. Tauana felt very powerful, like she could do anything.

Kassio (11 years old)



Kassio only learned how to read when he was 9 years old and he was very ashamed of it because nobody apart from his family knew about it. At first, the teachers helped him but he started having problems at school. His parents looked for help at a social project called "Fé e Alegria". He overcame his embarrassment and trusted the new teachers who helped him to understand letters and read the words. After learning, he became very fond of reading and has read over 50 books and has become the president of the reading club. He says the Library is his favorite place in the world. At first, he didn't want to share his story with the other kids and he told this story privately to the moderators after the storytelling club had ended on the second day. He felt relief after talking to the moderators and the following day, he decided to tell his story to all. The other kids were very supportive and he felt good about it because Kassio understood that he should be proud of his overcoming story. The tip he gave to the group was: never, never give up on your dreams.

Italo (11 years old)



Italo's father died of Covid-19 in the beginning of the pandemic. Due to all sanitary restrictions, they were unable to attend a funeral and Italo was very sad because nobody had the courage to give his father at least a rose to honour him. Italo is a very funny and outgoing boy, but he cried while telling his story during the Storytelling club. It was an important moment because he says he doesn't cry often. After his father died and his mother went back to work, Italo spent a lot of time isolated at home with the company of his parrot Baby, his best friend. One day, Baby flew outside the window and never came back. Italo was very sad because he lost two important figures in his life in such a short time and he still feels very sad, but likes to think that his parrot went away to meet his father and that they are ok.

VI - Audiovisual production

As a result of the process of the Storytelling Club in Brazil, Canal Futura produced two audiovisual episodes of The Day I Become Strong, using and adapting to screenplay the stories from the children. The episodes should be screened for the first time on Brazilian television in the first semester of 2021.

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