

Playful activities in anti-racism education to promote children's health

Atividades lúdicas sobre educação antirracista para a promoção de saúde da criança

Actividades lúdicas sobre educación antirracista para la promoción de la salud infantil

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ABSTRACT

Objective: to present methods and activities developed by students and teachers of an extension project, demonstrating the potential of playful activities based on anti-racist education as a strategy for promoting child health. **Method:** this is an experience report from a university extension project entitled "EducaSaúde: playful education promoting quality of life at school", from the School of Nursing at Unicamp, in 2019, in a public municipal daycare center in Campinas, Brazil. **Results:** based on the identification of an ethnic-racial and social profile of the black majority of children, their families and daycare educators, from the observation and reports of situations of racial discrimination and considering the impacts of structural racism in Brazil on the health of the black population, especially for children, there was a need to implement activities based on anti-racist education in the daycare context. **Conclusion:** the results of the EducaSaúde project provide insights into the effectiveness of anti-racist approaches in promoting awareness and addressing structural racism from early childhood.

Keywords: Racism; Health; Child; Child Rearing; Health Education.

RESUMO

Objetivo: apresentar métodos e atividades desenvolvidas por discentes e docentes de um projeto de extensão, demonstrando a potencialidade de atividades lúdicas baseadas em uma educação antirracista como estratégia de promoção da saúde da criança. **Método:** trata-se de um relato de experiência vivenciado em um projeto de extensão universitária intitulado "EducaSaúde: educação lúdica promovendo qualidade de vida na escola", da Faculdade de Enfermagem da Unicamp, no ano de 2019, em creche municipal pública de Campinas, Brasil. **Resultados:** a partir da identificação de um perfil étnico-racial e social de maioria negra das crianças, seus familiares e educadores da creche, da observação e relatos de situações de discriminação racial e considerando os impactos do racismo estrutural brasileiro para a saúde da população negra, especialmente para as crianças, houve a necessidade da implementação de atividades baseadas em uma educação antirracista no contexto da creche. **Conclusão:** os resultados do projeto EducaSaúde permitem *insights* sobre a eficácia de abordagens antirracistas na promoção da conscientização e na luta contra o racismo estrutural desde a infância.

Descritores: Racismo; Saúde; Criança; Educação Infantil; Educação em Saúde.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: presentar métodos y actividades desarrolladas por estudiantes y docentes de un proyecto de extensión, demostrando el potencial de las actividades lúdicas basadas en la educación antirracista como estrategia para promover la salud infantil. **Métodos:** se trata de un relato de experiencia realizado en un proyecto de extensión universitaria titulado "EducaSaúde: educación lúdica promoviendo la calidad de vida en la escuela", en la Facultad de Enfermería de la Unicamp, en 2019, en una guardería pública municipal de Campinas, Brasil. **Resultados:** a partir de la identificación de un perfil étnico-racial y social con mayoría negra de niños, sus familias y educadores de guardería, la observación y relatos de situaciones de discriminación racial y considerando los impactos del racismo estructural brasileño en la salud de la población negra, especialmente los niños, surgió la necesidad de implementar actividades basadas en la educación antirracista en el contexto de la guardería. **Conclusión:** los resultados del proyecto EducaSaúde permiten obtener ideas sobre la eficacia de enfoques antirracistas en la promoción de la concienciación y en la lucha contra el racismo estructural desde la infancia.

Descriptores: Racismo; Salud; Niño; Crianza del Niño; Educación en Salud.

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Introduction

This paper is an account of the experience of students and professors at the State University of Campinas (Unicamp) in a university extension project entitled “*EducaSaúde: educação lúdica promovendo qualidade de vida na escola*” (EducaSaúde: playful education promoting quality of life at school), of the Faculty of Nursing in 2019. University extension is an essential practice in the academic context, as it promotes interaction between the university and the community, allowing the knowledge generated in the academic environment to be applied and adapted to social demands. By acting in communities, university extension seeks to disseminate knowledge and understand local needs, promote social, cultural, and economic development, and contribute to forming critical and engaged citizens.

By using a problematizing and playful methodology to approach health education topics, the project's experience over the years has highlighted the need to address racial, social, and gender issues, with a focus on cultural diversity and combating racism and other forms of oppression. It is known that Africans and their descendants were enslaved on Brazilian soil for almost four centuries and that this scenario gave rise to major processes of social inequality and oppression underpinned by structural racism.^{1,2}

Racism in Brazil was produced by the slave regime in which the state and society structure not only the exclusion of black people from the many sectors of society, but also a veiled form of discrimination against the black population, causing them to experience various aspects of racism in their daily lives.²

Among the multiple faces of racism, Personal/Internalized Racism stands out, in which actions and feelings are developed individually by racialized people in their subjectivity of inferiority, devaluation, incapacity, or superiority, depending on the established cultural construction and racial power; Interpersonal Racism, in which actions are directed by third parties at the black person in general aspects of discrimination by race-color, such as disrespect, devaluation, and dehumanization; and Institutional Racism, movements related to the social structure, such as difficulty in accessing information, quality work/income, and institutional services.^{3, 4}

As a reflection of these dimensions, the dynamics of Brazilian racism can be elucidated in a striking way. According to the Atlas of Violence (2020), in 2018 the homicide rate for black people per 100,000 inhabitants was 37.8, and for non-black people, it was 13.9; the rate of femicide among black women was 5.2 and 2.8 among non-black women. This data is important, considering that the rate of femicide among non-black women has declined, unlike the rate among black women.⁵

It is also noteworthy, in the current global scenario of the recent Covid-19 pandemic, that a study showed that being brown is the second biggest risk factor, after age, for dying from COVID-19 in Brazil.⁷ In the field of health, several studies explore the indicators of the black population and the respective coping strategies, such as the National Health Policy for the Black Population (PNSPN), created in 2009, which was responsible for structuring the recognition of racism as a social determinant of health conditions in Brazil, and stands out as a policy for tackling racial inequities and racism.⁶

In the specific context of the nursery school in which the project is being developed, it is known that Campinas was one of the main slave trade sites in the country, which also resulted in a movement of struggle and resistance in this region, against the inhumane conditions in which they lived, resulting in the formation of quilombos, communities composed by resistant groups.⁷

From this scenario of resistance formed by the black population, Jardim São Marcos was later created, located in one of the areas of Campinas where the highest rates of inequality, violence and drug trafficking are currently concentrated, in addition to the lowest availability of resources in the areas of health, education, sanitation and housing.⁸ The data shows the reflection of the neglect that has occurred for centuries with the black population of Campinas as a result of the colonization and enslavement process and how this affects the quality of life of the black population to this day.

The project also undertakes to shed light on the issue from a critical-reflexive perspective, using as theoretical and methodological references renowned authors in the field of study of anti-racist education.^{2,9,10} Therefore, it is necessary to add to the methodological approaches used, problematization and playfulness, the approach of anti-racist education, which consists of thinking actions in a logic that is not only inclusive and sensitive to ethnic-racial issues, but that encourages the dismantling of racism as a structure in society.¹¹

It is known that health education is an important attribution for nursing and the multidisciplinary health team, to protect and promote the health of the community; this extension project therefore encourages undergraduate nursing students and other areas to develop skills and competencies for educational practice in a collective and interdisciplinary way, aimed at different audiences and using pedagogical instruments based on meaningful and playful learning. In this process, the university extension students have the challenge of making children aware of their health-disease-care process using an active and reflective attitude, dialectically involving their socio-cultural reality,

from the perspective of the theory of citizen education, in which education is seen as an instrument of individual and collective liberation.¹²

Therefore, recognizing racism as a social condition and the need to promote healthy spaces for the manifestation of ethnic-racial diversity and to take care of the mental health of black people, especially nursery school children, gives rise to the need to promote anti-racist education through the project as a health promotion strategy at school. To this end, anti-racist education aims to enable children and adults in their social circle to learn about their ancestral history, to value black culture and beauty and diversity, to recognize and combat racism, and to build healthy habits.

To achieve these objectives, play is taken as a pedagogical instrument for allowing children to express their subjectivity in a free way and contextualized to their own culture because through playful activities, the subject can relate ideas and situations, and by relating them, they build knowledge.¹³

Considering this discussion, it is important to highlight the pillars of an extension project and its relevance within the university context. An extension project consists of actions that start from the university environment and its members such as professors, students, staff and collaborators to promote a closeness and exchange with the community, expanding the reach of the knowledge produced at the university to society as a whole and also allowing the sharing of experiences and learning with members of the community.¹⁴

In this way, activities were designed to teach children about the country's population formation process, present the family tree as a process that forms the birth of the individual, and reflect on the different professions and the possibility of achieving them. As a strategy to work on the themes above playfully, taking into account the age group of the nursery school children (3 to 6 years), games, storytelling, dynamics, songs, and dances were promoted. Workshops, roundtables, and training with playful and pedagogical materials were also promoted with equipment professionals so that the project team would be able to select and make educational instruments and develop playful learning strategies in health.

The anti-racist approach arose from the observation of reality and the recognition by the extension students themselves of its need. The first activities developed in the project made it possible to see how many issues related to blackness were included in the attitudes and comments of the children, the majority of whom were black, through, for example, comments about their physical characteristics and those of the extension students. Demands that initially seem disconnected from racism, such as healthy eating

and hygiene, have also emerged. Considering its cross-cutting nature, it must be made clear that the anti-racism theme has been considered and introduced into all activities, objectively or subjectively.

The need of working on such a complex topic required very careful planning so that it could be done in an age-appropriate way for the children. Playfulness and valuing black culture and aesthetics were ways found to give space to the children's voices and feelings, express and recognize their blackness, empower and raise awareness, and promote a space to combat racism.

In this context, this study aims to report playful activities on anti-racism, developed by students and professors of a university extension project, as a strategy to promote children's health.

Method

This study consists of an experience report using a methodology based on the detailed description of the experiences of a professional or a team. The aim is to contribute in some way to the author's field of work. This experience, originating in professional practice, may or may not have been successful in its objectives. However, regardless of the outcome, it generates knowledge that can be applied in other contexts or provokes discussions on relevant topics.¹⁵

The experience reported in this article refers to the project "*EducaSaúde: educação lúdica promovendo qualidade de vida na escola*", an extension activity of the Faculty of Nursing of the State University of Campinas, developed based on the methods of Action Research, Problematization and Culture Circles, following the teaching precepts of the Brazilian educator of worldwide importance, Paulo Freire.¹⁶ The project has been developed since 2018 in a public municipal nursery school in Campinas, Brazil, and aims to promote biopsychosocial health education activities to promote children's health and development through playful and problematizing educational actions from a Freirian perspective of education.

This need is related to the ethnic-racial conformation and sociodemographic profile of Jardim São Marcos, a neighborhood in the city of Campinas (SP) where the nursery school is located, with a majority black population, with low purchasing power, and marked by violence. The social and racial context that the children in the EducaSaúde project experience is a reflection of the formation of Brazilian society and has historical roots.

The "*EducaSaúde: educação lúdica promovendo qualidade de vida na escola*" project was created in 2018 and promotes its actions based on the Action Research

methodology, which is based on the empirical knowledge of the social group to guide the development of activities and the production of knowledge.¹⁶ The activities carried out by the extension students are based on the demands presented by the school community itself or perceived by the members of the project team and, based on this, the continuous and dynamic construction of the actions needed to resolve the situation is carried out, promoting the education and development of the children, their families and the nursery school educators. All the work is done in association between the community and the project team, following the precepts of Freire, who says that the educator and the student should share a horizontal relationship, with equal positions.^{12,17}

This project serves an early childhood education institution located in the state of São Paulo, Brazil, which aims to develop playful and diversified educational strategies to promote the health of children and members of their social cycles (educators, family members, and the community). The institution, called *Serviço de Promoção Social Paróquia de São Paulo Apóstolo* (SPES nursery school), is located in Jardim São Marcos, a suburb of the city of Campinas, São Paulo, Brazil.

The project promotes health, valuing of an active and participatory attitude and the inclusion of undergraduate and postgraduate nursing students and other courses in the socio-cultural reality of the community, enabling them to recognize and intervene in situations that are unfavorable to healthy child development. Using theoretical references of participatory critical education and playfulness, dialoguing with other fields of knowledge, such as the arts, social sciences, and pedagogy, the project addresses audiences of different age groups, consisting of children in early childhood education and also adults who have links with the children participating in the project.

Considering the pillars of the project, the investigation of demands by the members of the extension project is uninterrupted, paying attention to new demands that may arise in this community and also to the results of the activities that are being put into practice, since the aim is always to bring benefits and positive development to the children, families and educators.¹⁸ In this way, the ability to adapt and continuous attention are essential in the work of all extension students.

Another fundamental concept in the work of the EducaSaúde project is Paulo Freire's Problematicization or Problematicizing Pedagogy.¹² The Problematicization methodology consists of a way of understanding, questioning, and changing the social environment in which the student is inserted, promoting a critical and inquiring vision and making the individual consciously understand their rights and duties as a citizen. It aims for students to recognize themselves as active agents of change in the reality and society in

which they live, seeking solutions to the real problems and demands of that community - relating here directly to the fundamentals of Action Research. Problematization can be summarized as a strategy for abandoning the magical and naive view of the world and replacing it with a conscious, critical view and active responsibility in the world in which one lives.^{12,19}

Still in the discussion of the methods described by Freire that are the basis of the "EducaSaúde" project, there is the concept of Culture Circles, which consist of strategies for exchanging experiences and knowledge in a circular organization, that is, in which all the participants in the conversation are in an equal position, physically and symbolically. In these Culture Circles, the essential focus is on free and open dialog, in which the members feel comfortable sharing and participating actively. In this way, there is no teacher responsible for simply transmitting knowledge; this knowledge comes about through a continuous and dynamic construction by all parties.²⁰

Relating to the development of the activities, it was carried out during the children's time at the educational institution, so there was no need for them to stay after school hours. The educators gave up their classroom space to carry out the activities and were always invited to take part in the actions and contribute in any way they thought would be most interesting to enrich the activity. The activities lasted an average of one hour, considering that this was the period indicated by the educators as suitable for working with the children.

To carry out the activities with the educators (Culture Circles), the institution's communal areas were used after school hours so that there was no detriment to the activities already pre-established in the class program. The duration of these actions was longer, considering the specificities of working with adults, extending from two to three hours of workshops.

To plan, organize, and develop the actions, the following steps were used, applied to all the activities developed, following the precepts of Action Research.¹⁸

Step 1: Interaction with the community: based on conversations, observations, and relating experiences to what is learned in academia;

Step 2: Identifying the problems: through contact with the community, a mapping of the needs of families, children, and educators is carried out, detecting the issues that need intervention;

Step 3: Defining priorities: defining what should be resolved as a priority in conjunction with the extension project. In the case of this experience, the priority set was to work on ethnic-racial issues with pre-school children;

Step 4: Action planning: the moment when the activities that will be carried out are organized to achieve the objective set according to the needs;

Step 5: Developing the action: at this stage, the activities are carried out by the research and extension team with the public through videos, songs, storytelling, and games that address the themes defined as priorities;

Step 6: Assessment of the action: analysis of the results and impact of the action implemented, assessing the strengths and limitations of the intervention. It was carried out continuously through conversations and online forms with the educators at the end of each proposed activity.

Regarding ethical aspects, the children's guardians authorized their participation in the extension project's activities by signing a document drawn up by the nursery school at the beginning of the extension activities in 2018.

Results

Chart 1 shows the activities carried out by the EducaSaúde project throughout 2019, together with their respective objectives, focusing on those of relevance to the theme addressed in this study. It is worth noting that only activities directly related to anti-racism and valuing ethnic-racial diversity were included, although the project also covered other themes. However, it is important to point out that in all the activities, including those that dealt with themes such as hygiene and food, the reinforcement of the valorization of blackness was present.

Chart 1 - Activities carried out in 2019 with the target audiences of the extension project. Campinas (SP), Brazil, 2019.

Audience	Theme	Type of activity	Objectives	Changes observed in participants' behavior
Children aged 4 to 5 years	Survey of demands and analysis of the health of nursery school children	Introducing the team; Making the cover of each child's portfolio (painting); Weighing and measuring all the children.	Get to know the children who took part in the project; Conduct a BMI and health survey; Diagnosing children's needs that require health education interventions.	Children's involvement with the team (establishing a primary bond); Children's involvement with the project (creativity and individuality in building their own portfolio).
Children aged 4 to 5 years	Where did I come from? Where am I going?	Manipulating a globe (locating countries); Folding paper boats (a metaphor	Learn about the country's population formation process; Presenting the family tree as a process that shapes	Interest and curiosity in handling the globe and finding out about their ancestors; Exercising creativity in

		for people's journeys around the world); Building a family tree with cardboard and drawing; Drawing of the child with the theme "What do I want to be when I grow up?".	the birth of an individual; Reflect on different professions and the possibility of achieving them.	drawing the professions; Representation of different people working in the professions.
Teachers and teaching assistants	CULTURE CIRCLE I: Diversity at school: for an education of respect and peace	Free dialog on the theme, with all members participating horizontally (following the methodology of Culture Circles).	Learn about and reflect on the ethnic and cultural diversity of the formation of the Brazilian people; Identify and reflect on the racism present in our culture; Reflect on the school as a reproducer of racism and an instrument for combating/facing it.	Significant participation by the team of educators, sharing experiences, and building joint knowledge.
Children aged 4 to 5 years	Identity and Diversity	Painting the diversity tree (marking all the children's thumbs with paint on the cardboard tree); Showing of a playful video about diversity; Painting of a group of friends representing racial and social diversity.	Reinforcing the different ethnic groups and valuing them; Getting children to identify with and get to know their bodies; Demonstrating different lifestyles and the difference within the difference.	Accepting the differences between classmates; Self-recognition in the images and drawings shown; Normalization of the diverse physical characteristics of each child.
Teachers and teaching assistants	CULTURE CIRCLE II: Being a black woman in Brazil	Free dialog on the theme, with all members participating horizontally (following the methodology of Culture Circles).	Reflect on the identity of black women in Brazil; Discuss how black women face structural racism in Brazil; To raise possibilities for changes in the school/nursery school to empower women and girls, especially the black ones.	Significant participation by the team of educators; Reports of personal experiences, generating collective recognition; Development of empowerment strategies.
Children aged 4 to 5 years	Recap and closure	Talk and drawing summarizing what has been seen during the year; Folding paper airplanes (a metaphor for the start of a new journey); Awarding of a symbolic certificate	Recap the activities carried out during the year and identify the objectives achieved; Closure.	The children's positive reaction to the end of the year and the activities; Children spontaneously returning to the themes covered throughout the year; A fond farewell from the children to the extension project team.

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The results of the EducaSaúde project demonstrate the positive impact of the activities carried out, with an emphasis on anti-racism education and valuing ethnic-racial diversity, especially among children aged 4 to 5 years old and educators.

The activities with the children included the identification of health demands, showing a significant involvement of the participants, promoting creativity and individuality. The theme “Where did I come from? Where am I going?” aimed to explore the process of formation of the Brazilian people. First, the children were shown a globe, where they located the countries of interest. Next, the question “Who were the first inhabitants of Brazil?” led to a guided discussion about indigenous peoples. The narrative was enriched with stories and illustrative figures to present the first inhabitants of Brazil and the process of settling the territory by foreigners, highlighting the intelligence of the Portuguese in navigation and the process of enslaving African peoples, always emphasizing their competence and mastery of working in the fields. The importance of women in colonial society was also addressed. The construction of paper boats illustrated the Portuguese invasion, and the creation of family trees helped the children to reflect on their origins and ancestry, understanding, in a subtle way, that they are the fruit of a significant past.

In the “Where am I going?” section, the focus was on the children's prospects. The activities began with a dialog about their parents' professions, followed by the game “What profession is that?”, where the children guessed the professions based on images. The representations chosen for the professions were intentionally unconventional, such as nurse instead of doctor, and female airline pilot instead of male pilot, connecting with the discussion about the role of women in colonization. Within this context, black representatives have been included in various professions, showing that, despite historical difficulties, black people are conquering previously denied spaces, underlining the possibility of breaking with preconceived ideas about who can occupy certain roles in society.

The “Identity and Diversity” activity dealt with the differences between people's colors through a game with handprints on cardboard. This was an opportunity to talk to the children about how people have different identities, expressed by characteristics such as skin color, reinforcing the importance of each individual in their uniqueness, the beauty of differences, and respect for them.

In addition to the activities with the children, it was essential to address racial issues with the nursery school educators, preparing them to deal with everyday situations

involving these issues and increasing their confidence in dealing with these themes in the classroom. The “Culture Circles” were the chosen methodology, providing educators with in-depth reflections on racism, diversity, and the identity of black women in Brazil. Active participation allowed for meaningful sharing of experiences and the creation of strategies for the empowerment of black women and girls.

In the introduction to this methodology, the educators and assistants shared their family histories, highlighting a predominantly black and poor ancestry, with origins in the Northeast and Minas Gerais, and the female figure as the main breadwinner in the household. The music video “*Eminência Parda*” (Brown Eminence) by Emicida was shown, addressing the roles occupied by black people in society, which led participants to reflect on their own lives and experiences of structural racism in Brazil. Subsequent discussions explored structural racism and racism at school, with participants expressing that they know little about their history, suggesting reasons such as repression of memories to avoid suffering, family separation, exploitation, denial of education, and identity.

These reflections were connected to current experiences, especially in the behavior of parents and children at the nursery school, leading to the conclusion that there is a shared responsibility to transform structural racism through education and the empowerment of children.

The presence of black women, highlighted in the first circle, was revisited in a second meeting. Participants were encouraged to list characteristics of a successful woman, resulting in attributes such as independence, character, honesty, courage, determination, patience, persistence, dreams, responsibility, drive, willpower, and dedication. Subsequent reflections addressed the reasons why women are seen in this way, including stereotypes of servitude, objectification, and machismo.

The end of the activities included a recap of the themes covered throughout the year, with the children responding positively to the content and a fond farewell from the project team. At all stages, the valorization of blackness was integrated in an evident way, even in activities with diverse themes, such as hygiene and food, reinforcing the comprehensive impact of the project's anti-racist approach.

Discussion

From the activities developed by students and professors in the EducaSaúde extension project in 2019, it was possible to observe the potential of play applied to anti-racist education aimed at promoting the health of the black population, especially children

in the context of nursery school. A detailed analysis of the project's results reveals the significant impact of these initiatives on raising awareness and fighting structural racism from an early age.

One of EducaSaúde's main strengths is its cross-cutting approach, which integrates anti-racism into all activities, even those initially unrelated. This approach demonstrates a deep understanding of the intersectionality between health, education, and racial identity, recognizing that issues such as healthy eating and hygiene are intrinsically linked to racial experiences.

This perspective is corroborated by a study²¹ which, in a narrative review of intersectionality as a practice and concept in education, concluded that this approach is essential for promoting equity, combating prejudice, and preparing students for a diverse world. The school, in collaboration with the community and partner institutions, must break away from normative binarism and assume its responsibility in forming critical and inclusive citizens. Awareness-raising and ongoing training for educators are fundamental to inclusively meeting students' needs, allowing the expression of diverse identities, and promoting an environment of liberation from conservative norms.²¹

In addition, the EducaSaúde project shows sensitivity by adapting its activities to the age of the children, using playful and interactive methods to facilitate understanding of the concepts covered. The involvement of nursery school educators in discussions on racial issues, as evidenced by the "Culture Circles", enables them to deal with everyday situations involving children, promoting a deeper reflection on structural racism in the school context.

The integration of professors, staff and extension students in the project made it possible to create links between the institutions involved, providing tools and knowledge about health that can be worked on daily with the children. This exchange of knowledge established appropriate strategies for the emerging themes, with an emphasis on the subjective and complex dimensions of the health-disease process, reinforcing the importance of an intersectional approach in education.

The intersection between health and education, observed in the activities aimed at identifying health demands, highlights the importance of working on the theme of health in a broader way. The EducaSaúde project reaffirms that health is not just a physical issue, but also involves valuing racial identity and respecting diversity. This approach is in line with recent research that emphasizes the importance of intersectionality when addressing themes of health and education, corroborating the observations made in the project.

A study published in BMC Medical Education explores how structural racism and intersectionality are key to understanding health disparities and suggests including these concepts in medical education. This research highlights that intersectionality allows for a deeper understanding of the multiple forms of discrimination that impact the health of marginalized populations, which is essential for developing more inclusive and effective educational and health strategies. In addition, another study published by the BMJ explores how intersectionality can transform health services, especially in pandemic contexts where different forms of discrimination and exclusion have been exacerbated. This study also highlights the need to collect and analyze disaggregated data to better understand how structural inequalities affect access to health, especially for marginalized groups, and how this information can guide more equitable strategies.^{22, 23}

These studies reaffirm the importance of an intersectional approach in projects like EducaSaúde, which seeks to integrate health, education, and racial identity in a context of combating structural racism from childhood. The results obtained, such as the change in the children's perception of their hair and skin tones, show the effectiveness of the activities in promoting critical awareness and empowerment from childhood. This is in line with the principles of education proposed by Paulo Freire, who emphasizes the importance of awareness and reflection in the formation of critical citizens.²⁰

In addition, the "Culture Circles" allowed for a dialog on issues such as ethnic and cultural diversity, structural racism, and the identity of black women. This space made it possible to raise possibilities for changes in the school/nursery school to combat racism and empower black women and girls and to discuss the need for more dialogue with families on these issues.²⁰

Furthermore, the EducaSaúde project is aligned with several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations 2030 Agenda, demonstrating its commitment to a holistic approach to promoting children's well-being and combating social inequalities.²⁴ EducaSaúde contributes to promoting children's health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, and the reduction of ethnic and racial inequalities through a collaborative approach with educators, families, and communities.

Therefore, EducaSaúde plays an important role in promoting multiple SDGs, contributing to a healthier, fairer, and more inclusive world for the children and communities it serves. Its inspiring strategy shows how an educational project can approach anti-racism holistically and effectively, promoting empowerment, valuing diversity, and combating racism from an early age.

Moreover, the project enabled the extension students to broaden their knowledge and horizons through the activities carried out with the children and staff of the nursery school, linking extension actions with the development of research and the diffusion of the production of scientific knowledge, in the field of health and sociology, always seeking to articulate with educational health actions and the development of strategies for the valorization and empowerment of the black population.

This study has some limitations that should be considered when analyzing the results and conclusions. Firstly, as this is an experience report, the generalization of the findings is restricted, as the results reflect the reality of a specific context. Another important aspect to highlight is the assessment of the project's impact on children's behavior and perception of ethnic-racial diversity since it was carried out in an exploratory manner. Besides, the active participation of the educators in the activities may have positively influenced the results, but this contribution was not quantified, which makes it difficult to analyze the specific weight of each intervention carried out. These limitations highlight the importance of conducting future studies to better understand the impact of educational projects such as EducaSaúde in different contexts and populations.

Conclusion

The results of the EducaSaúde project offer insights into the effectiveness of anti-racist approaches in promoting awareness and fighting structural racism from an early age. Through a detailed analysis of the activities carried out throughout 2019, it is clear to see the significant impact of these initiatives on the lives of the children, educators, and communities involved.

EducaSaúde's cross-cutting approach, integrating anti-racism into all activities, demonstrates a deep understanding of the intersectionality between health, education, and racial identity. In addition, the sensitivity in adapting the activities to the age of the children and the involvement of educators in discussions on racial issues are aspects that highlight the effectiveness and relevance of the project.

The changes observed in the children's behavior and perception of their own ethnic-racial identity, and the open dialogues on diversity, racism, and female empowerment, show the positive impact of EducaSaúde's interventions.

In addition, the project's alignment with various Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations 2030 Agenda highlights its importance in promoting a healthier, fairer, and more inclusive world for the children and communities it serves.

Therefore, EducaSaúde not only offers an inspiring approach to dealing with anti-racist issues in education but also serves as an effective model for promoting empowerment, valuing diversity, and combating racism from an early age. Initiatives like this must be recognized and replicated in different contexts to build fairer and more equal societies for future generations.

Authors Contributions

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Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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