

Talison, from Recife

Pernambuco, Brazil



Talison, from Recife

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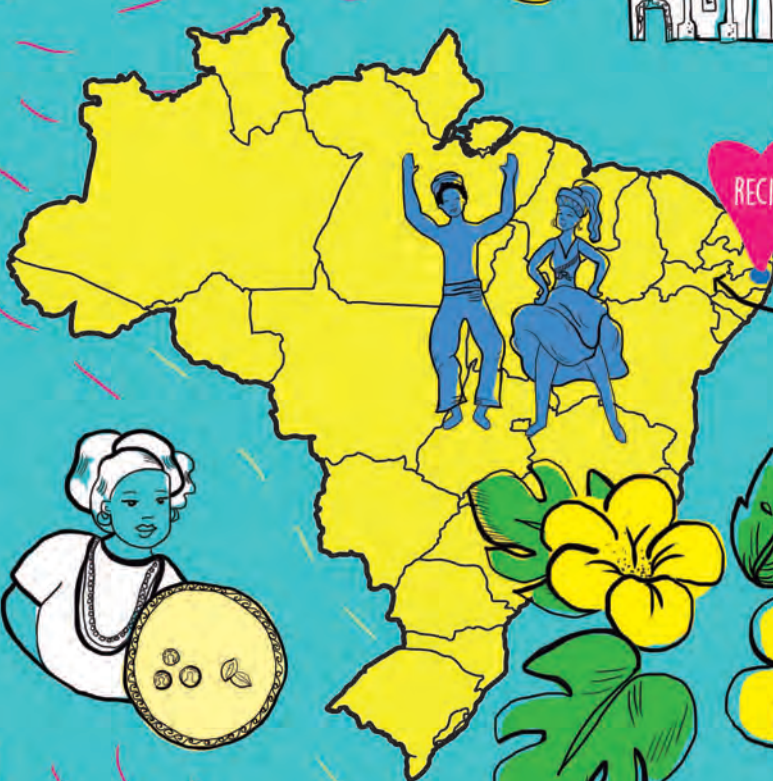


South
America

Brazil



Pernambuco





Boys and girls are always the same at every time and place: curious, playful, energetic, affectionate, enthusiastic, creative. It is the environments they are born into and grow up in that give them a part of their personal identity, and allow them to share unique experiences with children from other countries.

To discover different realities and celebrate the cultural diversity expressed in traditions, environments and experiences is the goal of this book collection, created by the Junta Nacional de Jardines Infantiles (National Board of Preschools) in conjunction with the Bernard van Leer Foundation. *Children of the World* invites preschoolers, their families and their teachers to discover various ways of life and ways of being a child, through stories and a great variety of photographs from different corners of the globe.

Plentiful rivers, stilt houses, cocoa seeds, wild animals, leafy plants, joyful dances, ancestral rites, children's journeys after their parents' immigration; all are part of the scenes that this collection of stories displays, seeking to enchant adults and children alike and to send the message of diversity as something to respect and share.

Adriana Gaete Somarriva

Executive Vice-president

National Board of Preschools (JUNJI, by its Spanish acronym)



Piu
Mania de Brasilery

da Musica
AL HENRIQUE DIAS
30 EN 20 ANOS DE VIDA

Today's world needs stories that allow us to recognize and value the richness of diversity in all its facets. The *Children of the World* collection, by the Junta Nacional de Jardines Infantiles (National Board of Preschools), is a wonderful tool for sharing stories about children's harmonic coexistence in various contexts and cultures.

Human beings require moments of leisure, of plenitude, of enjoyment of free time. This collection of stories is a unique opportunity to create these spaces and form magical connections between educators and children. These moments of relating through stories are crucial for personal growth, for sharing with family and friends, for strengthening our community life and enhancing our children's capabilities from an early age.

Here at the Bernard van Leer Foundation, we firmly believe that the best investment we can make is that in children under five years of age. It is for this reason we have worked all over the world for seven decades in over 50 countries, seeking to provide a better start for all children's lives. We trust that in Chile these stories will help strengthen the bonds between adults and children, and that they will help broaden the scope in regards to the lives of children in different corners of the world.

Cecilia Vaca Jones
Program Director
Bernard van Leer Foundation





“I’m Talison, the artist! I’m 4 years old and I want to be either a footballer or a dancer: a footballer, like Rivaldo¹, or a dancer, like my dad”.

¹ Rivaldo was a great footballer born in Recife, and was part of Brazil’s national football team.



“My family is full of artists”, says Talison proudly. “My dad’s name is Delefon, and he’s a dancer. Delefon is his stage name, because when he was born, he was given the name Luziel. My mom’s name is Tamaris, and she’s a dancer too.

In Recife, a lot of people –for artistic or spiritual reasons– choose a name they want to be called by”.



“Tamaris and I live from dancing. It’s our profession”, says Delefon. “We dance and dance. We’ve gone to Europe and Africa to dance. I’m a b-boy², I do breakdance and folklore dances with African roots, *capoeira*, *maracatú*, *coco*... I’m also a musician. We made a rap CD for kids and won a prize for it: I got to travel to Vienna and London for it” .

² B-boy is the word used for people who practice breakdancing, a fun and athletic type of dance similar to hip-hop.



“I focus on traditional dances. I’m also an activist, and I advocate for the rights of the Afro-Brazilian population and of the ‘favelados’”, says Tamaris. “My great-grandmother and her mother were both slaves: they harvested sugarcane. These are my only photos of them. I’m very proud of my roots” .





“We live in a favela³ called *Chão de Estrelas* (Star Floor), named after one of Brazil’s most popular songs”, says Delefon. “We live here, in the north part of Recife. There’s a bus station next to it. Here, we learn to respect our culture and religion, passed down from African slaves. There are 10,000 people living here” .

³ *Favela* is the name for poor communities in Brazil, usually found in large cities.





Salve a
CULTURA de
Pernambuco

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“My grandparents’ family played the Candomblé drums. We’re devoted to nature, and we make offerings for it. We have a ‘Mother of Saints’. I’m the daughter of our mother of saints (Inaya): her name is Rosa, and she’s my spirit guide”, Tamaris continues. “She is our priestess. We visit her to ask for advice and to have our fortune told”.



“I advocate for the rights of the Afro-American population, and of the favelados”, says Tamaris. “That’s why we practice Candomblé, the African religion of Brazil, in which music and dance are what call the spirits. Delefon and I have a dance company. We’re descended from Africans that came from Angola, Mozambique, and Cape Verde. In Candomblé, everyone wears white” .

“We drink *jurema*, the sacred drink that grants us wisdom”, says Rosa, the Mother of Saints.



Delefon explains that in *Chão de Estrelas* there's a mix of cultures, with a lot of African influence.

"There's a community and cultural life. People practice *maracatú*, *xando*, and *frevó*, the typical Pernambucan rhythm", he says.

"I like to dance!" Talison exclaims.



“My parents ride a bicycle, or they walk”, says Talison.
“There’s few cars and a lot of horses and carts. We only have
a bicycle”.





In *Chão de Estrelas* there is a Culture Center. Vilma, its founder, says they work with children and teenagers there to teach them about Afro-Brazilian culture.

“Children come here from age 3 to 17”, says Vilma. “There’s areas for reading, art and dancing. We have a children’s dance group. It’s a way to face the difficult reality of living in a favela.

There’s an aspect of resilience and survival. Nobody funds us; I’m a homemaker, and now I need to sell my minibus to maintain it. I have to pay for everything. But this is my life: Tamaris came from here, and so did her entire family. We rely on volunteer work. There isn’t another center like this in the entire favela”.

Delefon enters the stage. He's joined by Okado. Talison watches with wide eyes: he wants to pull off the difficult dance moves the two demonstrate, and they want to teach him.

Delefon grew up with his friend Okado. Since they were boys, they have been training day by day in different dances, and they're part of a dance company named the PéNoChao Group. Talison wants to dance like them.



Papa Delefon explains:

"I was just like Talison as a kid, mischievous and energetic. A kid on the block. I only went to school until 8th grade. But I found dance, and with it I understood life. It was my salvation. My story began when I was 11 years old, and I think the same thing will happen to Talison. I found Capoeira.

I live off of giving dance classes in the favela *Cidade de Deus*. (City of God). Living as an artist in Pernambuco is very hard".



Talison likes the paintings on the wall: they're the 16 Gods and Goddesses (called *orixas*) of the African religion. Among them are Oxalá (the elder God), Oxum (yellow, Goddess of beauty), Lemanjá (blue, Goddess of water), Xangó (God of justice). He tells them apart by their colors. They're representative of Candomblé.

"When the drums are played, the Gods come, and it's as if everything is lifted", says Delefon very seriously.

"They speak through the Mother of Saints", informs Tamaris.









“I like to play with my cousin Leonardo in the gap in the ceiling”, says Talison. “ And with Meia Noite (Midnight), the cat. We pretend like we’re in a movie, and play hide and seek” .

“This is the street with old things”, says Talison.

“They’re recycling workshops”, Delefon explains. “Here, they take old things and make something new out of them. They work all day long”.

“People in the favela almost never have a stable job”, says Tamaris. “They sell eggs or water. That’s how they keep themselves afloat. In order to sustain ourselves, everything is either reused or recycled”.



Water is scarce in *Chão de Estrelas*. There is no running water or sewers. Any water meant for drinking needs to be bought from neighbors, since the water in the canals is too polluted and smells very bad.



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Since it's so hot in Recife, Talison goes to *Boa Viagem* beach with his parents at least once a week. The water is very warm. And there's sharks.

"*Futevolei* was invented on this beach: a mix between football and beach volleyball", says Delefon.

"There's sharks here!" Talison exclaims, as if it's a game.



Talison always wants to move his body. Surely this mobility is something he inherited in part from his parents, but mostly from the mixed roots that exist in Pernambuco. Physical exercise is part of his education.





Tamaris and Delefon get up at 5:30 in the morning. Because of the tropical heat, the days begin very early. At 6:30 Delefon takes Talison to preschool. It's close to where they live. They pick him up at 11:30 for lunch. He's been going since he was three.

"During the day, we're at home. At night we both go to our dance group. Talison stays with my mother", says Tamaris. "In the afternoon, he plays. Sometimes we go to the beach. We have a bicycle at home. In the evenings he sleeps a little, but he doesn't like it. What he likes is to be read to".

“I like coming to preschool: school is fun”, says Talison in his classroom, playing with Legos in the company of his teacher, named Raniere. “My best friends are Carlos, Jay and Ágata”.

“Talison is an alert child. Very participative, playful and charismatic”, says Raniere. “There are ten other boys and girls of his age”.

“I like Captain America”, Talison confesses.



"I'm in love with Laura, one of my twin friends", says Talison.

Laura doesn't hear this confession. A while later, she says:

"Talison is very funny".

"He's our best friend", her sister adds.



Recife is a city of industry and culture. Poets such as Manuel Bandeira, musicians such as Naná Vasconcelos (who plays the berimbau)⁴ and educators such as Paulo Freire were born here.

Though this all may seem very distant from Talison's favela, in truth, you can find forms of artistic expression in every alleyway of *Chão de Estrelas*.

"Naná Vasconcelos has a foundation for children in Recife and Angola", says Tamaris. "He hopes for children to develop spiritually through music and dance. My Mother of Spirits, Rosa, worked with him".

⁴ The *berimbau* is a local percussion instrument of African origin, brought by slaves. It consists of a flexible wooden bow and a wire, with a gourd used as a resonator. It is used to accompany Capoeira.







Okado is a *breakdancer* and takes part in a competition in the historic center of Recife on a Friday night. Men and women, each in their own style, perform impressive physical feats. Talison happily watches the show, and thinks:

“When I’m older, I’m going to dance like them”.



Hot Sunday. Tamaris, Delefon y Talison go for a walk in the historic center of Olinda, Recife's neighboring city, close to their favela. They dress in beautiful, colorful clothes. There are tourists visiting from many different countries. The three of them are also tourists today. In the background is the sea and the horizon.

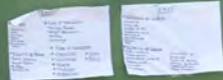
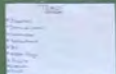
"It's a World Heritage Site", says Tamaris.

Talison starts playing a game in front of a Colonial-Era church.

"Back then, slaves could only enter from a side door", says Tamaris.



Walking the old cobblestone streets of Olinda, they come across many surprises. Well-preserved old houses, in colors that Talison likes as much as his shirt. He says hello to a giant doll. He dances along with his parents as they walk. They go through artisanal vendor's stalls and drink guava juice. He plays a game where he pretends to talk like he's on television.







MORE INFORMATION

CHÃO DE ESTRELAS (Star Floor)

(Song by Orestes Barbosa and Sílvio Caldas)

Chão de Estrelas (the name of Talison's favela) is a famous seresta, a type of Brazilian song inspired by serenades. It was composed by Orestes Barbosa and Sílvio Caldas in 1937, and is considered one of the major classics in Brazilian music.





Minha vida era um palco iluminado.
Eu vivia vestido de dourado
palhaço das perdas ilusões
cheio dos guizos falsos da alegria.
Andei cantando a minha fantasia
entre as palmas febris dos corações.
Meu barracão no morro do salgueiro
tinha o cantar alegre de um viveiro
foste a sonoridade que acabou.
E hoje, quando do sol, a claridade
forra o meu barracão, sinto saudade
da mulher pomba-rola que voou.
Nossas roupas comuns dependuradas
na janela qual bandeiras agitadas

pareciam um estranho festival.
Festa dos nossos trapos coloridos
a mostrar que nos morros mal vestidos
é sempre feriado nacional.
A porta do barraco era sem trinco
mas a lua furando nosso zinco
salpicava de estrelas nosso chão.
Tu pisavas nos astros distraída
sem saber que a ventura desta vida
É a cabrocha, o luar e o violão.

My life was a lit-up stage.
I lived dressed in gold
clown of lost illusions
full of the false bells of joy.
I went on singing my fantasy
between the feverish palms of hearts.
My shack on the willow hill
had the joyous singing of a nursery
that was the sound that ended.
And today, when the light from the sun
lines my shack, I feel a longing
for the woman, the dove who flew.
Our ordinary clothes hanging
from the window like waving flags

seemed like a strange festival.
A party of our colorful rags
proving that in the poorly-dressed hills
it is always a national holiday.
The shack's door had no latch
but the moon piercing our zinc [roof]
spattered our floor with stars.
You stepped on the stars, distracted,
not knowing that the joy in this life
is the mulatto girl, the moonlight and
the guitar.



***SOBRA UNO/ONE TO SPARE*⁵ (Typical game from Pernambuco)**

Several children sit to form a circle and one stays outside of it on foot. Each child picks the name of a fruit. Whoever is leading the game says: "I went to eat a fruit salad at Talison's house. The fruits missing were banana and pineapple". The kids representing those fruits then switch places.

The child standing up needs to try to take the place of one of the fruits. If he does, that child then stays standing. The leader calls out the name of other fruits and tries to find another place to sit. At some point the leader calls out: "All of the fruits were missing!" All of the children then try to find a different spot at once. Since in this game there is always "one spare" left standing, the child who ends up as the spare after the final reshuffling is the loser.

⁵ Lúcia Gaspar and Virginia Barbosa, *Popular Children's Games*, Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Recife, 2009.

RECIFE, OLINDA AND PERNAMBUCO

Recife is a large city of canals and bridges. It's in the tropics, very hot and colorful. There are many skyscrapers standing next to the architectural and cultural legacy of Portuguese colonialism. The region has a mix of influences ranging from African, Portuguese, Indigenous, and even Dutch.

It was one of the first Portuguese colonies in Brazil, founded in 1537. They created sugarcane plantations worked by African and Native slaves. This mixing of cultures created a unique cultural richness.

The oldest and most tourist-attractive sector is in Olinda, a city adjacent to Recife with well-preserved Colonial Era buildings, like churches and houses. Its historic center is a World Heritage site.

Pernambuco is the name of the State which includes Recife and Olinda, in the northeast of Brazil. It's defined both by its active industry and for being a cultural beacon, attracting visitors with its music, dance, film and poetry.





THE CARNIVAL

Just like in Rio de Janeiro and Salvador de Bahía, carnivals in Recife and Olinda are the biggest events of the year in the State of Pernambuco. Several days of party and dancing remind of the African roots unique to the area. They're celebrated twice a year, in October and February.

Recife's Carnival opens with a parade by the Galo Group of Madrugada and is extended through three days of non-stop music and dancing throughout the city streets, beginning with *Boa Viagem* beach. At its center, the orchestra plays frevo and everyone dances to this rhythm invented by black slaves to celebrate their freedom.

Olinda's Carnival is the most beautiful in all of Brazil, the most loyal to its origin, and lasts 11 days, mixing elements of both African and Portuguese culture. People dance frevo, samba, and Afro-Brazilian maracatú.

COOKING WITH FAMILY

COUSCOUS WITH CHARQUI (Talison's favorite food)

Ingredients

- Couscous
- Eggs
- Salt
- Cold water
- Tomato
- Onion
- Margarine
- Milk
- Coffee

Preparation

Prepare a mixture of couscous with cold water, and a little salt. Place in the cuscusera (a special appliance for making couscous). Cut the charqui (dried beef) into slices. Add tomato and onion. Mix with the couscous. Add margarine. Add two eggs and stir. Served with coffee with milk.







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Ediciones de la JUNJI is the result of the National Board of Preschools commitment to generate knowledge, creativity and innovation in education and childhood, and thus promote new means for learning and constructive debate.



The **CHILDREN OF THE WORLD** collection reflects the diversity and similarities of childhood all around the world and gives an account, with their own face and voice, of each of their lives.

These stories and photographs show what was before unseen: boys and girls in their everyday lives, cultures and territories, allowing them to be shared in homes, kindergartens and schools, with children and families everywhere on Earth.

