

Rosália Diogo and Angélica Dass

Embracing Difference

Agnès Boixader

Good morning, and welcome.

I am struck by the number of children and young people we have here today. I suppose some of the older ones who have not arrived yet are having breakfast. Hopefully, they will join us soon.

First of all, echoing Marina Garcés, who spoke about gratitude on the first day, I would like to express my very special thanks to the organisers and, in particular, to these two wonderful Brazilian women who are joining me today: Rosália Diogo and Angélica Dass.

Both of them have lived their own stories without knowing each other, until their paths crossed at a particular moment. That is what history is like: parallel lives can unfold in radically different ways and then, one day, intersect. And it is precisely in that encounter, that reunion which Philippe Meirieu also spoke about, that new relationships and, probably, new experiences can begin.

From what I have read about them, from what I know of their careers and from the projects I have seen, they are women who share many of the concerns that I have also felt throughout my life. One of them is the need to educate ourselves.

In my case, this was complicated because my family did not have enough resources to allow me the luxury of studying. But we managed to make it happen.

They are also women who, like me, fight for peace and for the defence of human rights. Rights that are increasingly being questioned and, more and more often, presented as something we could do without.

But I would especially like to say to the young people here: read the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and you will see that we cannot give up any of them. Quite the opposite. In the universality that Suleiman also spoke about the other day, there has to be a universal fraternity.

Before we begin, I would like to talk about ethics and aesthetics.

I do not know whether João Carlos is still here, but I really liked his idea of ethics as a relationship between one person and another: a relationship established by looking at one another, getting to know one another, looking into the other person's eyes and listening to their request; listening to what that person is asking of us at a particular moment and responding.

In an ethical relationship, therefore, we have an obligation to take responsibility for giving that response, knowing that it will probably never be completely adequate and that we will have to keep thinking about what other responses we can offer.

If education is anything, it is not simply instruction or indoctrination. It is always a matter of ethics.

And it is ethics that shows us a path — one path, not the only one — towards learning to love and to take responsibility in our encounter with others.

With others and with the world, understanding that nature and culture coexist in the world.

Ethics allows us to develop a sense of belonging without any form of aggression or violence towards others.

On the other hand, aesthetics, in its different manifestations and forms — the visual arts, literature, music, photography — serves as a guide for developing good taste and allows us to feel and know that we are free, or at least to move towards a possible freedom.

The work of these two women who are joining me today, both their more artistic work and their research and projects involving people from different parts of the world, takes precisely these ethical and aesthetic dimensions into account.

When someone did something mischievous, my grandmother used to say: “That’s bad taste.”

And she was right: when something causes harm, it is bad taste, even though it is much more than that.

Let me introduce them very briefly.

I will start with Rosália, who will speak for ten minutes about the projects she develops in different parts of the world, especially on the African continent and in her own country, Brazil.

Then I will introduce Angélica, who will tell us about her own projects.

Depending on the time we have available, we will be able to ask them some questions and also hear their suggestions and reflections on the educating city.

I will not say too much about Rosália, because, as always, you can find plenty of information about her on social media. I will simply say that her main areas of interest are feminism and racism. And that already says a great deal.

Rosália analyses in detail how the media address racist discourses and studies the influence they have on the construction of narratives that reinforce stereotypes and prejudice.

Far from helping to dismantle them, she explains that the media often end up becoming a pretext for their dissemination and entrenchment in society.

She brings a scientific perspective to the problems she analyses and challenges the myth of democracy: democracy is not truly democratic if it does not reach every corner of society.

I would now like to read a few words of hers that made a strong impression on me when I first met her:

“I am a Black woman. My entire family is Black by origin. From a poor background, I was born in the interior of the city of Nanuque, in the state of Minas Gerais.

My childhood and adolescence were marked by extremely violent acts of racism, attempts at dehumanisation and discrediting.

I grew up and eventually arrived in Belo Horizonte, where I began working, both to contribute and to protect my mental health.”

When I think about these words, I think about how many people here, too, have to move away from poverty and from the places where they live in order to protect their mental health and develop as human beings.

Brazil has a very long history of slavery, much longer than the false impression created by its supposed abolition.

For almost four hundred years, Africans and people of African descent were enslaved, and it has been less than one hundred and forty years since the so-called abolition.

And we continue to be discriminated against, discredited, denied, humiliated and dehumanised, even though Black and brown people make up the majority of Brazil's population.

Rosália, whenever you are ready.

Rosália Diogo

Good morning to everyone attending this congress.

Thank you to my fellow speakers and, especially, to Professor Agnès for moderating this session.

I would also like to greet Angélica Dass, whom I met recently and with whom I have since built a friendship.

I would like to thank the organisers of the event and congratulate them on the breadth and depth of the congress and its theme, on its structure, its thinking and the issues being addressed.

I would especially like to thank the members of the Scientific Committee and, in particular, Professor and dear Brazilian friend Angélica Sátiro, a philosopher and an inventive thinker.

It is an honour and a joy to be here.

I can see that a large part of the audience is made up of women. And I think that we would be nothing if we women did not exist in this world.

So, as I also greet the young people and students taking part in this congress, I would like to share a fragment of a poem by a Black Brazilian woman whom I greatly admire and whose work has travelled around the world: Conceição Evaristo.

She writes:

“The night does not sleep in women's eyes.
The moon, female, like us,
keeps watch, attentive, guarding our memory.
The night does not sleep in women's eyes.
There are more eyes than sleep.”

We are the vigilant and attentive women who call upon men to stand beside us at every moment, in the pursuit of effective democracy and equality.

In my country, violence against women is increasing, particularly violence against Black women. Femicide is growing at an alarming rate in Brazil.

We need lucid, sensitive and conscious men to deconstruct and stop this bloodshed, this killing of Black women.

I feel very much at home here because I am an educator and I work in cultural production. I therefore work with education, with culture and with the different dimensions of the city.

And those who take part in the struggle against racism clearly need critical thinking and creativity. Without them, we will not move forward.

As Agnès explained very well, I was born in a small inland city in the state where I live, and I went out into the world looking for spaces and places that could welcome me with dignity and respect simply because I am a human being.

And what I have found, not only in Brazil but also in other places, is a great deal of violence, hostility and attempts to belittle our physical and intellectual abilities.

I was deeply affected by what I saw on television and through the media about what Spain did to Vini Júnior.

And, from what I can see, continues to do.

It frightens me to see how far explicit racism and processes of dehumanisation can affect even some of the world's best football players.

I found myself asking: “What if I go to that country and they beat me and drive me out? What if I suffer physical or moral violence? Is this country really any different from mine, which is so racist?”

But today I am here, welcomed by this congress, surrounded by sensitive people who reflect on difference, who think, who care and who work for the inclusion of diversity.

And that is one of the purposes of this congress.

We are being called upon to be creative and resourceful, and to speak out precisely about the processes that attempt to make us unequal.

We are different, yes, because every human being has their own way of acting, thinking, behaving and practising.

But this global society cannot continue dehumanising others because of their beliefs, their gender or the colour of their skin.

Professor Tonucci said something a little while ago that made me very happy. He described a situation in which someone enters a classroom looking for a particular student and, when the student is identified, they say: “It’s the one wearing the red shirt.”

It was a Black student, if I understood correctly.

The colour of the student's skin was not what mattered. They identified the student by the clothes they were wearing.

In Brazil, and in many other parts of the world where I have had the opportunity to travel, our skin colour arrives before we do.

Our skin colour becomes a reason to treat us in an inhumane and unequal way, to exclude us, to keep us away from processes of equality and to deny us respect as human beings.

And what we are constantly doing, Professor Agnès, is precisely what you have just read in my short biography.

We have to remember that Africa is the cradle of humanity and that, therefore, we are all of African descent.

I believe this has now been demonstrated.

It is not just Rosália Diogo saying this. Science has demonstrated that Africa is the cradle of humanity.

How can people of African descent exclude other people of African descent because of the tone of their skin?

It makes no sense. It is irrational.

And we are here, in my everyday life in Belo Horizonte, in Africa, wherever I happen to be, and also here at this congress, offering reflections that provide a counterpoint.

I say that I am an African woman of the Brazilian diaspora and that this body of mine has travelled through different places.

I would now like to show you some images of the Art Street.

This is the Art Street in Maputo, the capital of Mozambique. There, predominantly Black people create ways of expressing their identity through representations in the streets of the city.

They are transforming the neighbourhood through this Art Street and filling it with elements connected to their African identity.

This is the Maputo model, in Mozambique.

I would also like to show you the Art Street in another African country that I visited last month: Cape Verde.

Here is its capital, Praia.

There is also an Art Street there, with a gallery created by an artist because many artists are denied a dignified space in which to develop and present their artistic work.

We do not want to create ghettos.

We want to be together with everyone, women and men alike, showing our talent.

Belo Horizonte, Casa Viva, Education and Culture is the name of this primary school for children aged six to fourteen.

On the school wall there is a phrase that I find very meaningful:

“It is impossible to understand Brazil without knowing Africa.”

I completely agree.

I produce a magazine in Brazil that is also present on social media: Cangerê magazine.

It was inspired by a project I discovered in 2014, when I was doing my postdoctoral research here in Barcelona.

That experience, which inspired Cangerê magazine, was the magazine Crear Mundos, created together with Helike Sátiro.

When I returned to Brazil, I thought: “Let’s create a magazine where we can raise our own issues and give visibility to Black and African art and culture.”

And that is how Cangerê was born.

This was the first cover.

Now we have Paulina Chiziane, a major Mozambican intellectual whose work I had the joy and honour of researching for my doctoral thesis, comparing it with the work of our Brazilian writer Conceição Evaristo.

Paulina Chiziane received the Camões Prize for Literature in 2021, one of the most important literary prizes in the world.

Before her, our dear Chico Buarque de Holanda had received it.

This is another edition of our Cangerê magazine.

I have the honour and joy of being here with Prince Eixodá in Luanda, the capital of Angola.

In my hand I am holding precisely the issue of Cangerê that I have just shown you.

So when we talk about Black intellectual life, African intellectual life, African art and African culture, we are also talking about all of this in Brazil.

I am also proud and happy to have visited seven African countries and to identify fully with what has been created there: with their intellectual life, with their desire for recognition, with African countries and with their people, artists and thinkers.

These African cities have left their mark on me, just as we try to do the same in Brazil.

As this congress proposes, arts and cultures must also be present in the streets.

In Praia, the capital of Cape Verde, the Poets' Ramp, in the centre of the city, speaks to us of this African intellectual life that educates through the streets. So does the mural we find in the streets of the Cape Verdean capital.

“My country is a song.”

Music, literature and the visual arts are found in galleries and schools, but they are also in the streets.

Look at this wall.

That is why I was so eager to be at this congress.

My time is almost up. I have seen something in this space that, I believe, also speaks to the importance of being in the street.

And that is all.

Forgive me for going on a little longer. I simply wanted to explain how strongly I feel the connection between what we are doing, this city and this congress.

Agnès Boixader

Thank you very much.

Rosalía has shown us different ways in which citizens can claim and transform urban space.

Without suggesting that everything she has explained can be transferred directly to Granollers, we can certainly understand how it can inspire us.

And notice how she has spoken to us through poetry, through art, through the need to embrace difference and through the recognition that, in one way or another, we all share common ancestors.

I would now like to introduce Angélica Dass.

Angélica is also Brazilian, although she has been working in Spain for many years.

You can look up her Humanae project. I imagine she will also talk about Lucy and about what Rosalia has already mentioned.

To introduce her, and just as I did with Rosalia, I would like to read a passage I heard a few years ago in a YouTube video and found fascinating.

She asks what colour the flesh-coloured pencil is.

White? Black? Purple? Yellow?

“I was born into a very colourful family. My father was a deep chocolate brown.”

I will leave it there, because I imagine she will develop this idea further, and I think it is beautiful.

From now on, when we ask someone to pick up the flesh-coloured pencil and they hand us the black one, they will no longer be able to give the same answer.

Over to you.

Angélica Dass

That is exactly how I was going to begin again.

I do not know if anyone has heard this before, but I always describe my family in the same way. So some of you may be hearing this story again.

But I like that. It is a celebration, a way of entering into and explaining this project.

Because, indeed, I was born into a very colourful family.

My father is the son of a woman who gave him a deep chocolate colour.

My father was adopted by the people I know as my grandparents.

The matriarch, my grandmother, had porcelain-pink skin and cotton hair.

My grandfather was a mixture of yoghurt, vanilla and strawberry, just like my uncle and my cousin.

My mother, Canela, is the daughter of a woman descended from Indigenous peoples, a mixture of oats and honey.

My mother has two sisters: one with the colour of roasted cocoa and another, who was adopted, with the colour of pastel.

And my grandfather: café au lait, with lots of coffee and lots of character.

Growing up in this family, colour was obviously never important to me. But outside the home, things were different from a very early age.

As we have heard Rosalia speak about Brazil, those who were freed in 1888 continued to serve others throughout the twentieth century, and now, in the twenty-first century, we can still speak about this history.

This project was born within this very colourful family, but I never understood why we classified human beings as white, purple, black and yellow and associated these categories with the concept of race.

I always say that I started taking photographs when I was over thirty, but I started thinking about all this when I was the age of some of the students I work with today.

I never understood the day when my teacher showed me a pink pencil and called it “flesh colour”.

Obviously, it was not mine.

This work also emerged because I was living here. I married a Spaniard, one of those pink ones who spends five minutes in the sun and turns purple like a prawn.

Believe me: people used to ask me what colour my child would be.

It was not important to me, but it seemed to matter a great deal to everyone else.

So I decided to show how I see my family, which is also the way I see the world.

I take a photograph against a white background, take an eleven-by-eleven square from the colour of the person's nose, paint the background and look for the corresponding colour in that colour language we call Pantone.

And, to make the point clear, if I am talking about blue, which blue am I talking about?

The blue of the sky, the sea or a butterfly?

In this colour language there are countless numbers for black and different numbers for white.

Here is a spoiler: clearly, I did not find a single human being who fitted exactly into either of those two colours.

The reflection behind the work is precisely about asking ourselves why we reduce ourselves in this way.

As you can see, all the colours in the project fit inside my nativity scene.

This is my father. I already know what I will look like when I am older. And this is my grandmother.

This helps explain why I do what I do and how I see what exists within my own family.

The project begins in this space: the gallery, the museum. In the image, I see people observing, something that normally happens in exhibitions.

But in Largo da Vinci, in Milan, the project is inside the Department of Genetics, because, in a way, that is precisely what we are talking about.

I love science museums because there it becomes clear that I am no longer simply telling the story of my family.

Here I would like to read something that accompanies this photograph:

“Eyes, skin, skin. We human beings are wonderfully colourful, but skin colour has been used to divide people into races, and ideas about race have long been used to justify genocide, segregation and discrimination.

But, as Rosalia said, we are 99.9% genetically identical.

Everyone in this room shares the same ancient ancestors and, obviously, belongs to the same species.”

That is why I love the current version of this museum, the American Museum of Natural History in New York. At the centre is Lucy, this australopithecine who connects us all, and in the background you can see this wall filled with colours.

But I have to say that here we are in an educating city, and my favourite place is precisely the street. As you can see, occupying public space in different parts of the world.

Because this happens, doesn't it? There are young people searching for themselves and talking about their own identity. And there is also that man who often does not believe that he belongs in the White Cube, in the museum, but who is also part of the conversation.

Some figures from this project: I have almost five thousand portraits from twenty countries and thirty-nine cities around the world.

From Addis Ababa in Ethiopia to Daegu in South Korea. In the Americas, from the United States, Mexico and Canada to Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Ecuador. And also in many places across Europe.

But perhaps the most important information you will find in these photographs is precisely the lack of information.

You do not know who is poor or rich, who is an immigrant and who is not, or where I took each photograph.

Any information you add to these images — and I am sorry to say this — belongs solely to your stereotypes.

What happens when we act in this way?

I have portraits taken in Paris, at UNESCO headquarters, and of people experiencing homelessness.

I have worked with schools in Rio de Janeiro, in favelas, and also in Switzerland.

With people with all kinds of different abilities. And here in Spain, I have worked extensively with ONCE.

All of these people voluntarily helped to create this mosaic.

And this happens often, doesn't it?

You can see that, in pairs, they have exactly the same colour, but some of us would probably label them as belonging to different races.

It is clear that the concept is a social construction.

And if it is a social construction, we can deconstruct it.

That is why I step out of the museum wall.

This is exactly part of what we have done here.

We use the primary colours, white and black, so that students can create their own colour.

And, by the way, there is no need to buy diversity colour kits. That is nothing more than an attempt to commercialise a subject.

We use the primary colours, white and black, which seem magical to children when skin colour emerges from colours that do not appear to be human.

We mix purple and green — green is yellow and blue — and we obtain brown.

And from that brown we are able to create absolutely every shade.

For me, this brown is important because it celebrates that first Homo sapiens family that migrated from the African continent.

I do not know whether they were looking for adventure or a better life.

What I do know is that we are all here thanks to that family.

It is very important for students to understand that we start with the same material and that the final result will be unique and different in every one of them.

Here you can see the process.

I also love the fact that we pass through the same colours before arriving at our own.

Their works of art are much more interesting than anything I could ever make.

And I want to insist that, when I talk about diversity, I am not talking about the amount of melanin we have in our skin.

For example, in this group of students I worked with deaf students, and there was also a student with autism, because I work with different abilities.

I would especially like to highlight this project carried out in a school in the Czech Republic, where we trained forty-eight students to become multipliers.

The challenge was to work with many white and pink students, where, in theory, there would not be much diversity among the colours we would be painting.

But look at this: perhaps the most important information was that the only thing that was truly white was the paper we were painting on.

It is a social construction.

The problem is not with the words “white” or “black”, but with the adjectives we associate with what is white and what is black.

These forty-eight students carried out the work with 2,500 students from the Moravian region.

The idea was to talk about future generations, about how they will do things and, just like our congress participants, these students were the leaders in developing the project.

As you can see, the aim is for them to go out into the street and teach.

In this case, it took place during Arts Education Week in Chile. Seventy-five thousand students from across the country, of all ages, took part, creating self-portraits inspired by Humanae and taking them into the streets to give them visibility.

And finally, we come to Granollers. I am almost finished.

I was here last October, training ninety multipliers.

They were the ones who brought these self-portraits to life, coming from different parts and neighbourhoods of the city.

I had the honour of accompanying this process, as you can also see through Instagram, because the most beautiful part was that they shared with me everything that was happening along the way.

Here you can see some images of how they collectively occupied public space with these self-portraits, and even how they found creative ways of bringing the project to people who are not yet familiar with the concept of race, such as the fabrics we found in an early childhood school.

It is a way of showing that we live in a world full of colours, even when this concept is not yet understood.

Or the photographs of children looking for ceramic plants, which is what we do when they are still too young to make a self-portrait.

So I have to say that I am very happy to have found this work and very proud of it.

And this is part of what is now in the street.

I will never be able to portray the eight billion people who inhabit the planet. But without education, I will never be able to reach them.

And forgive me for becoming a little emotional, because this, for example, is a gift a little girl brought me this morning: my mini-me.

She looked up who I was, found out my Pantone colour and created a version of me.

I have to say that what I have received and what I am taking home, filled with love, is precisely that: the love that Granollers has given me.

I cannot invent a time machine to go back to my classmates, but, with the help of teachers, we can transform the experience so that no other child has to go through the negative experiences I had at school, which ultimately led me to create work like this.

Thank you very much, and forgive me for going over my allotted time.

Agnès Boixader

Notice how what we are doing is, in a way, leaping across the dimension of time.

Earlier we spoke about how, in order to think, and not simply to develop critical thinking, we need time.

I think that each of the two experiences they have presented allows everyone here to think, to look for ways of imitating them, drawing inspiration from them, or even doing something radically different, but taking what they have explained as our starting point.

All of this has one goal: to transform the city.

In a way, both Angélica's project and Rosalia's projects are projects that build bridges.

John Powell spoke to us about the need to build bridges: simple and complex bridges, small and large, fragile and strong.

And what they have explained to us are precisely ways of building those bridges.

Now I would like to ask you both some questions, although we have limited time, because I could talk with you for hours.

Rosalia, in your research you talk about pathologies, about the pathologies affecting Brazilian society, which I understand are not exclusive to Brazil but, unfortunately, affect societies around the world.

You talk about racism, lesbophobia, transphobia, classism, and also about the fact that our society is not aware — and that is the great danger — of these pathologies.

When we are unaware of an illness, we behave like someone who does not need to go to the doctor because they do not recognise that they are ill. And although the illness exists, if it does not receive attention, it can eventually become worse.

Society works in exactly the same way.

It does not know — because it chooses not to know — about the pathologies from which it suffers.

So I would like to ask you both: how can we, from within the city, make these pathologies visible without making them worse, but instead helping to reduce them? How can we show our fears, which so often prevent us from embracing difference?

Whenever you are ready.

Angélica Dass

Perhaps the answer lies in the city, because the school belongs to the city, and also in the community, by creating spaces for conversation within education.

In many cases, the work focuses on girls, but above all, I think it needs to focus on teachers.

Perhaps what I try to do with my work, in general, is create mirrors with things that, in theory, are very different.

As we have heard at other moments, I try to find those knots, those points we have in common.

I think the way to create that moment of conversation and to recognise the illness is, literally, to place that mirror in front of us.

In my case, I do this through my practice, through teaching: showing narratives, trying to expand what we believe the world, its universe and its history to be — things that we often think belong only to us — and looking for ways to open up that perspective.

Agnès Boixader

The problem, it seems to me — and I will put the question back to you — is that the school is, after all, and this is true, a representation of society. But very often what happens at school does not reach the street.

In this case, what you did with the students in Hanoi did become visible in the street. But my question is to what extent citizens perceive the work that is being done at school.

Angélica Dass

I will insist on this tool, because one of the things I always do with these projects is ask schools whether there is a before and an after in what happens inside them.

Because that is the question: does what I do work or not?

One of the answers I receive is: “In my class, nobody talks about flesh colour anymore and, if someone does, the students themselves correct them.”

A mother came to ask what had happened in class because her son had come home correcting her when she said that a piece of clothing was flesh-coloured.

When you give a child arguments that allow them to think — we are talking about critical thinking — and to go home and continue that reflection, I believe we are creating precisely the connection between what happens in the street, outside the educational centre, and what happens inside it.

Rosália Diogo

I have been saying for a long time that Brazil, Brazilian society, suffers from various illnesses.

I could name a few: it is a homophobic, transphobic, racist, sexist and patriarchal country.

Brazil is the country where the largest number of trans people are murdered in the world.

The Black population makes up the largest part of Brazilian society, and Brazil has the second-largest Black population in the world, after Nigeria on the African continent.

It is absurd to see the extent to which we are discriminated against and the extent to which Brazil's social structure privileges, embraces and promotes a culture rooted in Europe and North America, denying the possibility of an Afrocentric perspective — that is, of placing our culture and our art at the centre as forces capable of proposing and creating.

That is why I believe that movements like this one, in which we speak and talk about these issues and present examples and practices of racism, also become forms of denunciation.

Being present in schools is fundamental.

So is writing, because I write and I am also an intellectual.

Our dear Márcia Tiburi mentioned this earlier.

In Brazil we have, for example, Eliane Brum, but we still have a structure in which many people do not recognise the intellectual contribution of Black women.

I am also an intellectual. I want to say that clearly to the people here.

The writer Conceição Evaristo, who represents Brazil in many parts of the world, is asked questions such as: “Do you dance?”

And she replies: “Can I dance? But I am also an intellectual.”

I think these are moments for us to deconstruct our understanding of what we do, of our potential and of our abilities.

It is moments like these, congresses like this one, our spaces for listening and our visits to schools that can help dismantle the myth of democracy.

Because people say: “We are all equal, nobody discriminates against anyone.”

And that is not true.

What we see among Black populations in Spain, France or England, in the peripheries, in marginalised services and occupations, among people who come from the African continent and are attacked here, people whose citizenship is even questioned...

We cannot consider this normal.

We have to denounce it.

Agnès Boixader

In a way, you are saying that we European white men and women also lack the courage to denounce these situations systematically.

We lack courage, determination and that need to write, draw, demonstrate and, on some occasions, disobey in order to transform this society, which is fundamentally capitalist and patriarchal and often homophobic towards certain minorities.

Do those of us who are European and white need to be braver, even though I, as a white woman, recognise that I am not always so?

Do we need to be braver when it comes to denouncing these situations, especially those of us who are accustomed to living comfortably without looking at what is happening in the peripheries of our cities?

Angélica Dass

I believe that, in the world we live in, everyone, absolutely everyone, can and must use their position of privilege — associated with gender, with the minorities we belong to and with the economic power we possess — to denounce injustice and try to build the equal, fair and democratic society we want.

Absolutely everyone.

Rosália Diogo

Yes, I agree. I agree with your reflection.

I understand it as a provocation to our thinking.

After all, we are talking about a struggle over privilege, social advancement and also, or above all, economic power.

When we talk about Brazilian society or other so-called peripheral societies — which, for me, are the centre, because the African continent is, in reality, the centre — we are talking about a struggle that is normally led by white men who present themselves socially as heterosexual.

The failure to recognise African-rooted culture, our culture and our art symbolically means saying that we are the ones who hold the power, because European or American culture is the one that sets the rules of the world.

“We are the ones who have the knowledge.”

“We are the ones who offer you part of our knowledge.”

And that is not true.

That knowledge comes from Africa, from Egypt, from so many African countries, from Ethiopia.

There is a denial of our potential, and that denial is learned.

Few people talk about Sheikhan Tadjopi, but they talk about Aristotle.

So how did this selection come about? Which books did we choose to study? Which forms of knowledge did we decide were worth studying?

This struggle is present in every field of knowledge and in every sector of society.

It is not easy to be a Black woman.

When white women took to the streets to fight for the creation of International Women's Day on 8 March and for equal conditions, we Black women were at the back of the kitchen, cooking and washing clothes for those women.

That is why it is difficult for us today not to assert our status as intellectuals, because this society still does not recognise our intellectual contribution.

The struggle is constant.

Agnès Boixader

It is not easy to be a Black woman. It is not easy to be poor. It is not easy to be gay. It is not easy to live any of those realities that some people regard as anomalies.

But my question remains the same, and it continues to concern me.

I look at the audience and I do not know what Pantone colour would emerge, but when I think about the city of Granollers, I see that the peripheries, even here, are underrepresented.

So the question remains the same: how do we reach citizens through the city?

How do we reach those who live on the periphery and rarely have the opportunity to participate, sometimes because they do not even know that they can?

I am not referring only to events like this one, but to the many other activities that can take place in the city.

And, if you agree, I think this brings us towards the end.

Angélica Dass

I would like to add something.

In many artistic projects I have to think about what time of day I can organise activities so that someone who works from eight in the morning until eight at night, who has children at home and barely manages to help them with their homework, can participate.

I remain optimistic because, even if I may not have seen diversity at the forefront, I have seen it among the students.

I think that is the fundamental point. That is why my hope continues to lie in education, in these conversations we can have and in these spaces.

The school, right? Following your argument, we will have to close the school.

Why?

So that education can move into the street and children can play there.

I am convinced that, in the future... At least that is how I see it: this is not a hundred-metre race, but a marathon.

I like running.

So I keep running towards a finish line that is far away, and we will see when I get there.

I probably will not be able to see the benefits or harvest the fruits of the seeds I am planting, even though I am moved by and enjoy this process.

But that is all right.

I will keep planting seeds.

Some tree will grow.

Rosália Diogo

To conclude, I can see Albert over there, and I think he wants to tell us something about continuing the process.

I would like to thank you once again for the invitation.

Congratulations to the Scientific Committee for its choice of theme and venue.

I see this city of Granollers as a city that also educates powerfully through its streets.

I would especially like to thank the young congress participants for being here.

And how wonderful that children can learn from an early age that we need to think about and practise inclusion.

We are people who are part of a process of non-inclusion.

We are here to promote the opposite movement and build a truly equitable society.

There can be no democracy with so much inequality.

We are engaged in a democratic exercise, but we still have a long way to go before we reach that level of maturity.

Thank you very much for the invitation, and thank you all for being here and listening to us.

I hope that we can create other spaces, many, many spaces, in many other places, so that we can continue our educational process.

Thank you very much.

Agnès Boixader

Let us end here, once again expressing our enormous gratitude to Angélica and Rosalia for sharing their projects with us.

We hope that, from here, from whatever strength may emerge from this International Congress and, as Pablo Sendra said the other day, we can gradually build neighbourhoods that are truly ours, that connect the centre and the periphery much more effectively and allow those peripheral areas to become central spaces too.

And that we can, as the title of the conversation these two women have shared with us says, embrace difference.

Thank you very much.