

Editors' Introduction

The PANEX-Youth project was born from the recognition that children and young people were widely neglected in political decision-making during the pandemic, despite experiencing numerous consequences that have accumulated over time. Although excluded from key decision-making processes regarding crisis response by political authorities, they intensely experienced the pandemic, taking on significant roles, engaging in deep reflections, and undergoing transformative experiences, particularly at the local level.

This book presents original data from an interdisciplinary and participatory research project, serving as a historical record of the challenges faced by young people during the greatest health crisis of the past century. The data were collected through reflective and semi-direct interviews and workshops with young people and representatives of public organisations and civil society involved in policies for childhood and youth. More than just documenting losses and impacts, this work encourages reflection on the systemic damages suffered by this population in the context of an emerging crisis such as COVID-19. At the same time, it highlights the strength and resilience of youth, emphasising their innovative potential and capacity for action in the face of adversity.

By questioning the generational position of children and young people living in peripheral territories, the study sought to amplify the voices of a population often rendered invisible not only by adult-centrism, but also by social inequalities that shape and deepen disparities in times of crisis. The book challenges essentialist views of these individuals through accounts of local experiences, underscoring the plurality of their trajectories and perspectives while also reaffirming

social participation as a fundamental strategy for adaptation and crisis response in the contemporary world.

In an era where we are witnessing multiple and threatening crises emerging simultaneously, we argue that the situations and experiences presented in this book can contribute to more diverse, adaptive, and inclusive political actions, particularly in recognition of the potential of children and youth agency. This book is, therefore, dedicated to all the children and young people who participated in the research and extends to all other Brazilian youth facing the consequences of such critical context.

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