



## ANITA CANAVARRO: BLACKING CHEMISTRY

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**Abstract:** Professor Anna Maria Canavarro Benite is a PhD and Master in Science, also owning a Degree in Chemistry from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ, Unviersidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro). Coordinator of the Research Laboratory in Chemical Education and Inclusion (LPEQI) and Coletivo Negro Ciata, from the Chemistry Institute of the Federal University of Goiás. In addition, she is the creator of the Investiga Menina Project, which seeks to inspire black students to pursue careers in the exact and scientific areas.

**Keywords:** biography; chemistry; scientist.

## ANITA CANAVARRO: ENEGRECENDO A QUÍMICA

**Resumo:** A professora Anna M<sup>a</sup> Canavarro Benite é Doutora e Mestra em Ciências e Licenciada em Química pela Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro. Coordenadora do Laboratório de Pesquisas em Educação Química e Inclusão (LPEQI) e Coletivo Negro Ciata, do Instituto de Química da Universidade Federal da Goiás. Além disso, é idealizadora do Projeto Investiga Menina, que busca inspirar alunas negras a seguirem carreiras nas áreas exatas e científicas.

**Palavras-Chave:** biografia; química; cientista.

## ANITA CANAVARRO: ENNEGRECIENDO A LA QUÍMICA

**Resumen:** La profesora Anna M<sup>a</sup> Canavarro Benite es Doctora y Maestra en Ciencias y licenciada en Química por la Universidad Federal de Rio de Janeiro. Coordinadora del Laboratorio de Investigación en Educación Química e Inclusión (LPEQI) y Colectivo Negro Ciata del Instituto de Química de la Universidad Federal de Goiás. Creadora del Proyecto Investiga Menina, que busca inspirar a las alumnas negras a seguir en sus carreras de exactas y científicas.

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**Palabras-clave:** Biografía; Química; Científico

### **ANITA CANAVARRO: EN NOIRCISSANT LA CHIMIE**

**Résumé:** La professeure Anna Maria Canavarro Benite a obtenu son doctorat, son Master en Sciences et sa licence en chimie à l'Université Fédérale de Rio de Janeiro. Coordinatrice du Laboratoire de Recherche en Éducation Chimique et en Inclusion (LPEQI) et du Collectif noir Ciata, de l'Institut de chimie de l'Université Fédérale de Goiás. En outre, elle est créatrice du Projet "Investigue, fillette!" qui cherche à inspirer des étudiantes noires à poursuivre des carrières dans les domaines des sciences exactes et scientifiques.

**Mots-clés:** biographie, chimie, chercheur.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Anna M<sup>a</sup> Canavarro Benite she was born on August 12, 1979, in the Baixada Fluminense region, in Rio de Janeiro and, as a good daughter of Iyatogun, she forges life in battles. Marked by a very poor childhood, she grew up without her father, so she has her mother as her greatest inspiration, Mrs. Edméa C. Almeida. She once saw her mother, who has no higher education, but was a science teacher, improvising a pipe to allow the well water to reach the house (without plumbing) where she lived with her two daughters, in Baixada Fluminense. In this context, her mother always transformed objects, which marked Anna's childhood, generating interest in material transformations. With few life alternatives, the idea of pursuing an academic career was not planned, because when you live deprived of many things, the dream you have is to get out of that situation of deprivation. However, it was through the study that Anna found her way.

Anna Benite points out that the study promotes social mobility in the lives of black and poor people. She says that she was approved in the entrance exam at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), not on the first call, but on the third call, and only found out after the deadline. Based on this, she explains that the lack of information is immense, since the public notice for admission to universities has specific rules in a restricted language - the university world follows a symbolic code of belonging in which students outside the required socioeconomic support profile in higher education do not fit.

Then, she started the Chemistry graduation in 1995, at night, at the University of Grande Rio (UNIGRANRIO) and, to pay for transportation to college, she worked in several jobs, such as saleswoman in store, shopping centres, confection centre and she was also a librarian. She says that during her graduation there were few black women in her course, in addition to realizing that the entire colonization process was materialized in the curriculum structure, without much representation. In 1996, she was approved in the public exam, at the State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ), to work in a vivarium, in the Biomedical Centre in the Department of Biochemistry. Subsequently, he undertook a scientific initiation at the Institute of Chemistry at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). There, observing people doing research and discovering things and, consequently, producing science for the country, at that moment, he discovered the path he would like to take.

After obtaining her graduation degree, Anna Benite joined the Master of Science program at UFRJ, working with molecular modelling and the theory of molecular orbital. At the same time, at UERJ, she taught Chemistry classes in high school in a community college-entrance exam. Shortly after finishing her Master's degree in 2001, he joined the doctorate at the same institution. In parallel with her doctorate, and work at UERJ, Anna Benite also worked at the University Centre of the City of Rio de Janeiro (UniverCidade). Later, in 2005, she obtained the title of doctor with a thesis in the area of Medicinal Inorganic Chemistry called “Studies using the Density Functional Theory of the coordination of aromatic and heteroaromatic N-acylhydrazonic derivatives candidates for inhibitors of Zn-dependent metalloenzymes” .

The following year, it held three public tenders for higher education teaching in Brazil - it was approved in all. And in July 2006, she was installed as a professor at the Institute of Chemistry at the Federal University of Goiás. However, at the end of these construction processes, one fact bothered her a lot: her peers were underemployed, and the school was not one of their favourite places. Thus, in 2006, she founded the Research Laboratory in Chemical Education and Inclusion and in 2009 she instituted the Coletivo Ciata - Study Group on the Decolonization of the Science Curriculum, working from the perspective of a non-white and European epistemology in the Chemistry curricula.

In addition, in 2015 it created the Investiga Menina project, which aims to promote collective actions for the benefit of the school community, aiming to provide experiences

and information on the contribution of women to the creation of scientific and technological resources. Anna Benite points out that the school in its current model, as well as hegemonic science, can be characterized as European, white and masculine, which reinforces inappropriate attitudes and beliefs, influencing students who will end up feeling demotivated to enter the world of science, affecting mainly female black students.

In 2016, she was elected president of the Brazilian Association of Black Researchers (ABPN). Representative of the State Council for the Promotion of Racial Equality of the State of Goiás in the years 2016 - 2017. Member of the National Council for the Promotion of Racial Equality - CNPIR (2016/2018).

She is currently a member of the Group of Black Women Dandara in the Cerrado, a poetry writer by the Coletivo Ogum's Toques Negros, Associate Professor IV at the Chemistry Institute and holds also a professor position both in the Graduate Program in Education in Science and Mathematics and in the Graduate Program in Chemistry, at UFG. In addition to that, she is: Research Professor at the Center for Research in Science Teaching - NUPEC; Coordinator of the Goiás Interdisciplinary Research Network in Inclusive Education - RPEI; Executive Secretary of the Brazilian Association of Black Researchers (2018-2020); Advisor to the Goiás Research Foundation (FAPEG). In addition, she published more than 240 panels/posters in congresses, 96 articles in journals, 2 books and subscribes 14 book chapters.

Professor Anna guided over 70 students in course completion and undergraduate research, 15 students in the Master's degree program and 7 students in the Doctorate Program. Finally, Anna Benite remarks that being a scientist is an anti-hegemonic act, in this sense, the university is not prepared for a woman and, mainly, for a black woman with children, the boys whose names are Igor and Thomas and her daughter Sofia.

Adupé!

**Picture 1:** Professor and Scientist Anita Benite



Source: Photo provided by Professor Anna Benite.

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