

METEORITE BENDEGÓ, A BRAZILIAN COMICS SUPER HERO.

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Introduction: Comics are mainly written for children, but everyone knows that many grown-up readers are fond of such a visual storytelling medium. Because comics' colorful pages, characters expressions and the funny dialogue balloons attract, at a first glance, most people for its contents, that medium has been used in Brazil as a non-technical educational tool to make meteoritics more popular among kids and adults. The Bendegó iron, the most known meteorite in the Brazilian collection, is the super hero who interacts visually with school children to tell its rich history and scientific facts regarding the entrance, fall, finding, analysis and classification of meteorites.



Results: Starting in October 2008 the authors and a team of nine professors and students of geology executed a 2-year academic project to identify, recover and register meteorites in Brazil. That project has opened a communication channel to teach high school students and laymen about the importance of meteorites to science and how to distinguish space rocks from terrestrial ones. A 16-page comics titled Bendegó: a visitor from space [1] was designed and 10,000 full color copies were printed in Portuguese and freely distributed to people who attended educational events such as lectures, geology congresses, astronomy parties and scientific expositions. Children and adults have enjoyed Bendegó's comics so much that other 10,000 copies are being printed to attend demand. Looking forward to make Bendegó's comics international, an English version has been set up and hopefully will be followed by other languages.

Discussion: In every country there is one meteorite which is the master-piece and the most popular among all, as Bendegó in the 60-specimen Brazilian collection. "Comics have a lot of communication power in development and education." [2], so why not use that characteristic to design and execute information campaigns about meteoritics?

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References: [1] Rios D. C. and Carvalho W. P. 2009. *Bendegó: um visitante do espaço*. Editora Cedraz, Salvador. 16 p. [2] Packalém L. and Odoi F. 2004. *Comics with an attitude... A Guide to Use of Comics in Development Information*. Hakapainos. 97 p.