



A BEACON FROM CABO VERDE

CARLOS ALBERTINO VEIGA FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER | No. 15 | SEP 2026

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear friends and partners of the Foundation,

This year, our newsletter looks a little different in August. We are using this month to devote our message entirely to a single theme: Escola Azul. We do so because few programmes capture, as well as this one does, something we believe deeply: that protecting the ocean always begins in a classroom, in a child's curiosity, or in a student asking why turtles return to the very beach where they were born.

It was in that same spirit that, at Ocean Summit 2025 in Mindelo, we wanted to give Escola Azul a spotlight that went beyond panels and speeches, bringing the Summit's international delegation to witness, the day before, the official ceremony certifying Escola Portuguesa de Cabo Verde – Mindelo campus as the country's first Escola Azul. It was a moment that confirmed, in practice, Fundação Carlos Albertino Veiga's commitment as a partner of the Escola Azul programme in Cabo Verde.

A year on, that commitment is entering a new chapter: the Escola de Praia Baixo, where we already work alongside the community to protect the loggerhead turtle. In Praia Baixo, the school is applying for its own Escola Azul certification, built on a two-year education project developed jointly by the school and the Foundation.

Between the pioneering school in Mindelo and the next candidate in Praia Baixo, this newsletter tells the story of a programme we believe has everything it takes to become far bigger than two schools: a true national movement for ocean literacy in Cabo Verde. That is the dream we close this edition with.

To everyone who makes this work possible, thank you. Let's keep building Cabo Verde's blue economy together.

Paulo Veiga
*President, Fundação Carlos
Albertino Veiga*

WHAT IS ESCOLA AZUL, AND WHERE IS IT ALREADY IN CABO VERDE

A PROGRAMME BORN IN PORTUGAL IN 2018, THAT CABO VERDE NO LONGER WATCHES ONLY FROM THE OUTSIDE



Escola Azul is an ocean literacy programme coordinated by Portugal's Directorate-General for Maritime Policy (DGPM), launched on 21 February 2018 by the then Minister of the Sea, Ana Paula Vitorino, with the aim of bringing schools closer to the maritime sector and turning ocean knowledge into concrete action. Today, almost eight years on, the programme certifies close to 500 schools across Portugal, both public and private, making it one of the largest ocean education networks in Europe. To become certified, a school must

choose an ocean-related "challenge" and develop it over two full school years, meeting seven requirements: exploring an ocean issue, involving the local community, encouraging students to act, get involved and make decisions, bringing together different fields of knowledge, engaging with a network of partners, communicating their actions, and involving students of different ages. By the end, the most engaged students become the project's "student ambassadors" within their school.

And this is where the story takes on a Cape Verdean dimension. The Escola Azul network is no longer confined to mainland Portugal, also counting schools in São Tomé and Príncipe and in Timor-Leste, and, since November 2025, its first school in Cabo Verde: Escola Portuguesa de Cabo Verde – Mindelo campus, in São Vicente. The certification ceremony, held on 6 November 2025, the day before Ocean Summit 2025, brought together in Mindelo Portugal's Secretary of State for Fisheries and the Sea, Eng. Salvador Malheiro; the Director-General for Maritime Policy, Eng. Marisa Lameiras da Silva; the Director of the Vasco da Gama Aquarium, Commander Nuno Leitão; Cabo Verde's Minister of the Sea, Dr Jorge Santos, and representatives of his ministry; and, representing Fundação Carlos Albertino Veiga, President Paulo Veiga and the Foundation's Ambassador, Lili Caneças. The Escola Azul flag was raised to the sound of the national anthems, student ambassadors and the project's coordinating teacher received their diplomas, and the Foundation took the floor to reaffirm its commitment to the programme in Cabo Verde. It was, in practice, the moment Fundação Carlos Albertino Veiga stepped forward, publicly and alongside Portuguese and Cape Verdean authorities, as a partner of the Escola Azul programme in Cabo Verde, a commitment that, a year on, is already translating into a second project, this time in Praia Baixo, as we explain next. ■



A YEAR AFTER MINDELO, CABO VERDE'S SECOND ESCOLA AZUL COULD BE BORN IN SANTIAGO

GUARDIANS OF PRAIA BAIIXO BAY, THE ESCOLA DE PRAIA BAIIXO'S ESCOLA AZUL APPLICATION

If Mindelo wrote the first chapter of Escola Azul in Cabo Verde, it is in Praia Baixo, in São Domingos, on the island of Santiago, that Fundação Carlos Albertino Veiga is now working to write the second. The Escola de Praia Baixo is preparing its application to the programme, with the Foundation's support, within the "Escola Azul 26/28" window, open until 31 October this year.

The chosen challenge could not be more closely tied to our "Personality of the Month": the protection of the loggerhead turtles that nest at Praia Baixo, one of the few beaches on Santiago where this still happens regularly. The education project, named "Guardians of Praia Baixo Bay" and designed to run across the 2026/27 and 2027/28 school years under the coordination of teacher Lúcia Dias, poses a simple question to students: how can our school help protect the loggerhead turtles and their nests on our beach, and turn that protection into a source of pride for our

community?

The answer is built around work the Foundation already carries out on the ground through its Linha D'Água team and the Padrinhos do Mar community initiative. Students will learn to recognise signs of nesting, record and report sightings to Linha D'Água, and turn that knowledge into community outreach: posters, beach clean-ups, and participation in Padrinhos do Mar's public events. In the second year, older students take on the role of ambassadors, training younger ones and presenting the project's results to the community. It is a project designed to grow with the school and with the Praia Baixo community itself, bringing together families, fishermen and the São Domingos municipal council, and it is also, for the Foundation, proof that what began in Mindelo can, and should, be replicated on other islands and in other coastal communities across Cabo Verde. ■

THE DREAM: AN ESCOLA AZUL ON EVERY ISLAND

A vision for a national programme that prepares the next generation for a fairer, more sustainable, bluer world

Between the flag raised in Mindelo and the project now taking shape in Praia Baixo, a bigger dream is starting to take form for Fundação Carlos Albertino Veiga: seeing Escola Azul become a true national programme, present on every one of our islands.

We believe that Cabo Verde, a country that governs an ocean territory 182 times larger than its land area, and which we are presenting to the world this year as a "Large Ocean Nation" at Ocean Summit 2026, holds in the ocean not only its greatest wealth, but also its greatest classroom. There is no more natural way to prepare the next generation of Cape Verdeans for a fairer, more sustainable, bluer world than to begin that preparation at school, connecting every student, from an early age, to the water around them, and to the turtles, the fish and the communities that depend on it. An Escola Azul on every island would mean students in Santo Antão, Fogo, Maio or Boa Vista doing, for their own beach, what students in Mindelo and Praia Baixo are already doing for theirs: choosing an ocean challenge, acting on it, and becoming ambassadors for a new relationship between Cabo Verde and the Atlantic. It would also mean an entire generation coming of age looking at the sea not as a boundary, but as the country's true territory, exactly the message we are carrying to Ocean Summit this year.

We know it is an ambitious dream, yet that is also how everything else began, with a map that today counts two schools, and the ever-renewed will to add many more to it. We will keep working, alongside every coastal community, to turn that dream into schools, into student ambassadors, and into a Cabo Verde that takes ever greater pride in the ocean around it. ■

NOTE OF MOURNING



BINO BRANCO

FUNDAÇÃO CARLOS ALBERTINO VEIGA JOINS THE MOURNING FOR ONE OF THE GREAT VOICES OF CAPE VERDEAN FUNANÁ

It was with deep sorrow that Fundação Carlos Albertino Veiga received the news of the death of Carlos Alberto Pereira Lopes, "Bino Branco", who passed away on 29 August in the United States, aged 56. With him, Cabo Verde loses one of the most authentic and best-loved voices of its culture.

Founder and lead singer of Ferro Gaita since 1996, and before that of Grupo Djassy, Bino Branco dedicated his life to keeping the soul of genuine funaná alive, at a time when it risked being lost. With his unmistakable ferrinho and his voice, he gave us seven albums with the group, alongside solo work, and a legacy spanning generations, from the success of "Fundu Baxu" (1997) to today. His music became part of the soundtrack of Cabo Verde, on the islands and beyond, a thread that always kept the diaspora tied to the land that saw it born.

More than an artist, Bino Branco was a guardian of our identity, a man whose genuineness and joy for life were felt as much off stage as on it. His passing leaves an immense void in Cape Verdean culture, but also the certainty that his music and his ferrinho will continue to accompany us, generation after generation.

To Bino Branco's family, friends and fellow members of Ferro Gaita, Fundação Carlos Albertino Veiga extends its most heartfelt condolences. Rest in peace. ■

PERSONALITY OF THE MONTH



THE TURTLE THAT NESTS IN CABO VERDE

WHY OUR AUGUST PERSONALITY IS THE LOGGERHEAD TURTLE, CARETTA CARETTA, NOT A PERSON

This month, our "Personality of the Month" breaks its own rule. Instead of highlighting a person, we have chosen to highlight someone who, every year, crosses entire oceans to come home: the loggerhead turtle, *Caretta caretta*, the quiet, true star of Cabo Verde's coastline. Cabo Verde is today one of the most important nesting sites in the world for this species, accounting for around 15% of the global nesting population of loggerhead turtles, making the archipelago the third-largest nesting site on the planet. Between June and October, peaking in July and September, females return to the beaches of Sal, Boa Vista, Maio and, increasingly, Santiago too, to dig their nests in the sand, often on the very same beach where they hatched some twenty years earlier. It is a remarkable feat of navigation, guided by the Earth's magnetic field, that brings them back across thousands of kilometres of open ocean to the exact point where their journey began.

The numbers also tell a story of hope: from just over 10,000 nests recorded in 2015, Cabo Verde has, in recent years, surpassed 200,000 nests in a single season, a sign that conservation work, carried out jointly by communities, scientists and organisations such as our own Foundation, is paying off. Even so, West Africa's loggerhead population remains classified as one of the most threatened in the world, and it is precisely this fragility that makes every nest, every nesting season, every protected beach, so important.

That is why, in July, we celebrated in this newsletter the news of turtles nesting at Prainha, near Praia Baixo, an encouraging sign that Santiago's coastline is still very much alive. And it is also why the protection of this species now sits at the heart of two of the projects we are featuring in this edition: Escola Azul in Mindelo, and the Escola de Praia Baixo's application. If there is one personality worth celebrating this August, it is this tireless traveller who chose Cabo Verde as the place to bring the next generation into the world. ■

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Praia • Cabo Verde

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**2021
2030** United Nations Decade
of Ocean Science
for Sustainable Development



ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

The Carlos Albertino Veiga Foundation's mission is to promote the social and economic development of Cabo Verde, based on the values of solidarity and entrepreneurship, contributing to a fairer future for all Cape Verdeans.

PARTNERS:



SPONSORS:

