

EDUCATION IN HUMAN RIGHTS: THE PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL

A EDUCAÇÃO EM DIREITOS HUMANOS: A PERCEPÇÃO DOS PROFESSORES DE UMA ESCOLA PÚBLICA

LA EDUCACIÓN EN DERECHOS HUMANOS: LA PERCEPCIÓN DE LOS PROFESORES DE UNA ESCUELA PÚBLICA

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ABSTRACT: This article aims to analyze and present the perception of teachers in the early years of a municipal education system about human rights education in the context of public school. The research was methodologically constructed based on the responses of the regent teachers of specific subjects to a questionnaire. It should be noted that the teachers act in the planning of classes, activities and in the proposition of pedagogical material related to the theme. The analysis of the results shows that approximately 70% of the teachers who answered the questionnaire perceived the existence of challenges to approach the theme in the context of public school education. It was also observed the consent of teachers about the relevance of education in human rights as a basis for new pedagogical practices that transform society.

KEYWORDS: Education. Human rights. Early years teachers. Public school.

RESUMO: Este artigo tem como objetivo analisar e apresentar a percepção dos professores dos anos iniciais de uma rede municipal de ensino acerca da educação em direitos humanos no contexto da escola pública. A pesquisa foi construída metodologicamente através de respostas dos professores regentes de disciplinas específicas a um questionário. Ressalte-se que os docentes atuam no planejamento das aulas, atividades e na proposição do material pedagógico ligados à temática. A análise dos resultados demonstra que aproximadamente 70% dos docentes que responderam ao questionário percebem a existência de desafios à abordagem do tema no contexto da educação escolar pública. Observou-se ainda a anuência dos docentes acerca da relevância da educação em direitos humanos como fundamento de novas práticas pedagógicas transformadoras da sociedade.

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PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Educação. Direitos humanos. Professores anos iniciais. Escola pública.

RESUMEN: Este artículo tiene como objetivo analizar y presentar la percepción de los profesores de los primeros años de una red de educación municipal sobre la educación en derechos humanos en el contexto de la escuela pública. La investigación se construyó metodológicamente a través de las respuestas de los profesores regentes de disciplinas específicas a un cuestionario. Es de destacar que los docentes trabajan en la planificación de clases, actividades y en proponer material pedagógico relacionado con la temática. El análisis de los resultados muestra que aproximadamente el 70% de los docentes que respondieron el cuestionario perciben la existencia de desafíos para abordar el tema en el contexto de la educación escolar pública. También se observó la conformidad de los docentes sobre la relevancia de la educación en derechos humanos como fundamento de nuevas prácticas pedagógicas que transforman la sociedad.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Educación. Derechos humanos. Profesores de los primeros años. Escuela pública.

Introduction

Human rights education is characterized as a necessary requirement for the exercise of citizenship in the contemporary world, in view of the fact that education as a social practice articulated to history, in a dialectical-dialogical process that links consciousness to action, has as its theoretical substrate the conception of the human being that is built in the process of relationship with culture. This permanent construction, which takes place in the relationship with the other, with different political, ethical, and educational conceptions, is nourished by respect in the process of constituting the meaning and significance of education for the praxis of human rights in contemporary times. This implies in the understanding that the exercise of educational activity is inseparable from the ethical-political character that propels human beings towards the invention of themselves in their historical condition as subjects of rights.

On the other hand, in the context of today's social contradiction, what is perceived is the emptying of humanism and human rights. Thus, Arroyo (2011) emphasizes that it is necessary in today's time, in the permanent formative process of educators, to reaffirm the requirement of education and the appropriation of ethical advances in values, as an inseparable part of the intellectual and cultural production to which the human being is entitled, as a historical subject. Therefore, it is the right of the education professional to be trained as a subject ethically committed to human emancipation.

Therefore, in the field of human rights education, it is necessary the affirmation of ethical gesture, in a singular way, "[...] that shows and makes explicit the dense ethical, positive meanings of social, political, cultural resistances of these collectives" (ARROYO, 2011, p. 66), which are in the mobilization to know their stories of affirmation of historical subjects who fight for a project of fair and fraternal civility.

Which means that facing the human unfinished, as a process of construction of its existence, it is not "[...] possible to exist without assuming the right and the duty to choose, to decide, to fight, to do politics. And all this brings us back to the imperiousness of the formative practice, of an eminently ethical nature" (FREIRE, 1997, p. 58), which characterizes the human right to intervene in the world to improve the life of humanity.

Given the above, the main objective of this article is to analyze and present the perception of teachers of the initial years of a municipal education network about human rights education in the public school context. Besides the introduction and the final considerations, the article is organized in two parts. In the first part, we present the methodological basis of the research, considering the elaboration and online sending of a questionnaire, related to the theme of education in human rights, to the teachers who teach specific subjects to students in the early years of the municipal educational network. In the second part, the main results are analyzed and presented.

Therefore, having as its core the creation of a dialogical educational culture in human rights (BRAZIL, 2009), this article understands the fundamental importance of the basic education school for the entire social body.

Thus, education in human rights must encompass issues concerning the fields of formal education, the school, the pedagogical procedures, the agendas and instruments that enable an awareness-raising and liberating pedagogical action, focused on respect and appreciation of diversity, the concepts of sustainability and the formation of active citizenship (BRAZIL, 2007, p. 31).

In other words, public schools, especially basic education teaching units, are privileged spaces for dialogue and must produce and disseminate pertinent knowledge capable of building a society committed to the fundamental principles of human rights. The educational practice based on respect for diversity and encouragement of active citizenship should permeate the preparation of curricula and transform human lives, aiming at the implementation of a logic committed to plurality and equal opportunities that expand beyond the school walls, in view of the commitment of all in fulfilling the social function of the school.

According to the National Plan for Human Rights Education:

Human rights education must be promoted in three dimensions: a) knowledge and skills: understanding human rights and the existing mechanisms for their protection, as well as encouraging the exercise of skills in everyday life; b) values, attitudes and behavior: developing values and strengthening attitudes and behaviors that respect human rights; c) actions: triggering activities to promote, defend and repair human rights violations (BRAZIL, 2007, p. 32).

In this way, it is possible to see that teachers and students, situated in the daily routine of the school of basic education, dialogically compose a privileged context for the construction of education in human rights, having as an effective possibility the rupture of the idea of a school that reproduces the system that creates social and rights inequalities. Basic schools permeated by human rights education must overcome the perpetuation of manifest and latent functions that tend to plaster the reproduction of the oppressive system.

It is understood that

[...] notion of function has a very practical meaning: it is something that allows a system its own reproduction. There are the 'manifest functions', which are those that social subjects seek as important for the reproduction of the system, and there are also the 'latent functions', which are neither sought nor even recognized by the participants of any system (TORRES, 2002, p. 13).

It becomes important to build from the school educational bases a social project that problematizes and seeks to overcome the dilemmas of the theory of citizenship situated in the Western political tradition. As Torres (2007, p. 9, our translation) puts it

The dilemmas of citizenship in a democratic, diverse, and multicultural society can be outlined as follows: theories of citizenship were advocated in the tradition of Western political theory by white, heterosexual men, who identified a homogeneous citizenship through a process of systematic exclusion rather than inclusion in political organization. This perspective implies that women, certain identified social groups (such as Jews or gypsies), the working class, people who represented specific ethnic and racial groups (people of color), and individuals who lacked certain attributes or abilities (for example, the illiterate) were initially excluded from the definition of citizen in various societies.⁴

According to the National Plan for Human Rights Education (BRAZIL, 2007, p. 31):

It is not only at school that knowledge is produced and reproduced, but it is there that this knowledge appears systematized and codified. It is a privileged

⁴ Los dilemas de la ciudadanía en una sociedad democrática, diversa y multicultural pueden esbozarse de la siguiente forma: las teorías de la ciudadanía fueron propugnadas en la tradición de la teoría política occidental por hombres blancos y heterosexuales, que identificaron una ciudadanía homogénea a través de un proceso de exclusión sistemática y no de inclusión en la organización política. Esta perspectiva implica que las mujeres, determinados grupos sociales identificables (como los judíos o los gitanos), la clase trabajadora, personas que representaban grupos étnicos y raciales específicos (gente de color) e individuos que no contaban con ciertos atributos o habilidades (por ejemplo, los analfabetos) en principio quedaban excluidos de la definición de ciudadano en varias sociedades.

social space where pedagogical institutional action and the practice and experience of human rights are defined. In contemporary societies, the school is the place where world conceptions and social consciousness are structured, values are circulated and consolidated, cultural diversity is promoted, citizenship is formed, social subjects are constituted, and pedagogical practices are developed.

According to Tavares (2010, p. 488), "the right to human rights education is part of the right to education," as advocated by the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights (2002, p. 22, our translation):

The development of international standards based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and particularly the Protocol of San Salvador, have clearly established the right to human rights education as part of the right to education.⁵

Thus, "human rights education, besides the entire process of training in its contents, intends the socialization of values and principles that are intrinsic to it, in order to build and consolidate a culture of human rights." (TAVARES, 2010, p. 492). From this perspective, we highlight the role of non-formal education spaces, and especially the school environment, in which "a set of opportunities are identified for the dissemination of content related to human rights, as well as for the socialization of values." (TAVARES, 2010, p. 495).

In view of the above, it is possible to realize the relevance of basic education in the construction of a broad social project, which forms ethical human beings committed to the defense of human rights. Therefore, basic education schools must take a leading role in the creation of a culture of human rights education, because they are the bearers of the foundations of dialogue that influence the awareness of students and their families, as well as the definition of guidelines and political pedagogical projects capable of referencing cognitive proposals that reach all social levels.

Methodological procedures of the research

This is a research with teachers of the early years of a municipal public school. The data collection used a questionnaire sent online to the teachers. Seventeen of them received the questionnaire, but twelve teachers actually answered. Among the several justifications

⁵ El desarrollo de las normas internacionales a partir de la Declaración Universal de los Derechos Humanos y muy particularmente el Protocolo de San Salvador, han consagrado claramente el derecho a la educación em derechos humanos como parte del derecho a la educación.

proposed by those who did not answer the questionnaire, the most prevalent was related to lack of time.

The questionnaire (AMARO; PÓVOA; MACEDO, 2004; GIL, 2008), as a research technique, is widely used in the applied human and social sciences, and was chosen to compile information about the perception, in relation to human rights education and to human rights-related themes, of teachers of the initial years where the research was developed. Through the use of this instrument it was possible to send the questions to the teachers who made the data available to the researchers.

Therefore, it is necessary to point out how the questionnaire was prepared and how it was applied to the teachers of the teaching unit. First of all, the purpose of the questionnaire was defined, that is, to examine its effectiveness in collecting teachers' perceptions about human rights and human rights education in the school context, as well as the stimuli, possibilities, barriers and challenges they encounter to develop pedagogical activities related to the issue.

It is essential to point out that the questionnaire was made available only to regular teachers and to those who work on specific subjects, either permanent or temporarily hired, who develop their daily pedagogical work in the specified teaching unit. The individualization of the teachers happened through previous dialog with the management team, taking into account the data made available by the school supervision and contained in the didactic sequences that contemplated activities and tasks related to education in human rights, diversity, transforming dialog, conflict resolution, civil rights, children and adolescents' rights, health rights, discrimination, prejudice, construction of a culture of peace, environmental rights, citizenship, gender issues, and political rights.

In relation to the basic categories for the analysis, we highlight: specification as a regular teacher or one who works on a specific subject within the basic education curriculum, institutional link, participation in movements that address human rights issues, implementation of projects related to human rights, elaboration of pedagogical activities related to human rights education, existence of a school policy on human rights education, existence or not of possibilities or challenges to pedagogical practice that address issues directly related to human rights or human rights education.

According to Gil (2008, p. 121):

A questionnaire can be defined as a research technique consisting of a set of questions that are submitted to people with the purpose of obtaining information about knowledge, beliefs, feelings, values, interests, expectations, aspirations, fears, present or past behavior, etc. Questionnaires, most of the time, are proposed in writing to the respondents. In this case, they are usually

referred to as self-administered (sic) questionnaires. When, however, the questions are formulated orally by the researcher, they can be referred to as interview-applied questionnaires or forms.

The application of questionnaires has advantages and disadvantages according to Gil (2008). Among the advantages are: the large number of people reached even if geographically dispersed, reduced costs, guaranteed anonymity of respondents and answers, convenience of the time of the answers and the non-exposure of the respondents to the influence of the researcher's opinions. Among the disadvantages in relation to the application of this technique it is possible to highlight that it:

[...] a) excludes people who cannot read and write, which, in certain circumstances, leads to serious deformations in the results of the investigation; b) prevents assistance to the informant when he does not correctly understand the instructions or questions; c) prevents knowledge of the circumstances in which it was answered, which can be important in evaluating the quality of the answers d) does not guarantee that most people will return it properly filled out, which may imply a significant decrease in the representativeness of the sample; e) usually involves a relatively small number of questions, because it is known that very long questionnaires have a high probability of not being answered; f) provides very critical results regarding objectivity, because the items may have different meanings for each researched subject (GIL, 2008, p. 122).

According to Nogueira (2002), it is possible to classify the questionnaires into the following types: (a) open, which explore all the answers to an item; (b) closed, present a more rigid structure than the open questionnaires and allow statistical treatment with the aid of computers; (c) direct, present the possibility of collecting the information directly; (d) indirect, used for cases whose answers to the questions are not precise due to impossibility or because it is a delicate subject; (e) assisted, allow the researchers to personally present the questions to the interviewees; (f) unassisted, eliminate the possibility of contamination by the researcher to the respondents.

According to Chagas (2000), an effective questionnaire must contain a set of information, such as: identification of respondents, request for cooperation, clear and objective instructions, information that is intended to be researched, and information for classification of respondents contained at the end of the questionnaire. It is worth mentioning that the questionnaire was designed according to the research objectives. In this sense, it was defined the self-administration and the sending by internet as a form of application, according to Vieira (2009, p. 18): "the questionnaires delivered to the respondents so that they themselves fill them out are called self-administered questionnaires. They can be sent to respondents by mail, e-mail or Internet."

Considering the importance of the questionnaire as a technique for the development of the research, based on the literature consulted (GIL, 2008; VIEIRA, 2009; AMARO; PÓVOA; MACEDO, 2004), specific outlines were established, in view of the fact that the operationalization of the investigative dynamics has counted, in general, with closed and open questions. In this perspective, open questions were used with free responses from the respondents, conditioned to the research theme, and closed questions with binary and predefined alternatives.

Taking into account the methodological foundation built by the questionnaire, and preserving anonymity, the questions were presented to the respondents. We tried to identify the subjects according to whether they were teaching classes or working in basic education, whether they were institutionally linked, and whether they were related to the teachers' perceptions of human rights and human rights education. Thus, it is possible to present the complete picture regarding the categories synthesized by the questions and the form of answers to the questionnaire, aiming to collect the perceptions of teachers regarding human rights education.

Chart 1 – Questionnaire applied to teachers of the early years

Participant Identification	
Questions asked	Form of response to the questionnaire
1. Regular teacher or specific discipline?	Question with pre-defined alternatives
2. Connection to the teaching system	Question with pre-defined alternatives
Themes related to human rights and human rights education	
3. Do you participate in movements that address human rights issues?	Closed-ended question with binary alternatives
4. Do you carry out human rights-related projects in your school/community??	Closed-ended question with binary alternatives
5. Do you elaborate pedagogical activities related to human rights education?	Closed-ended question with binary alternatives
6. Are you aware of the existence of a school policy on human rights education?	Closed-ended question with binary alternatives
7. Do you perceive the existence or not of possibilities or challenges to the school pedagogical praxis to address issues directly related to human rights?	Closed-ended question with binary alternatives
8. What are the main possibilities or challenges to school pedagogical praxis to address issues directly related to human rights?	Open question without pre-defined alternatives, but conditioned to the theme of the previous question

<p>9. 9. Do you perceive the existence or not of possibilities or challenges to the school pedagogical practice to address issues directly related to human rights education?</p>	<p>Closed-ended question with binary alternatives</p>
<p>10. What are the main possibilities or challenges for the school pedagogical practice to address issues directly related to human rights education?</p>	<p>Open question without pre-defined alternatives, but conditioned to the theme of the previous question</p>

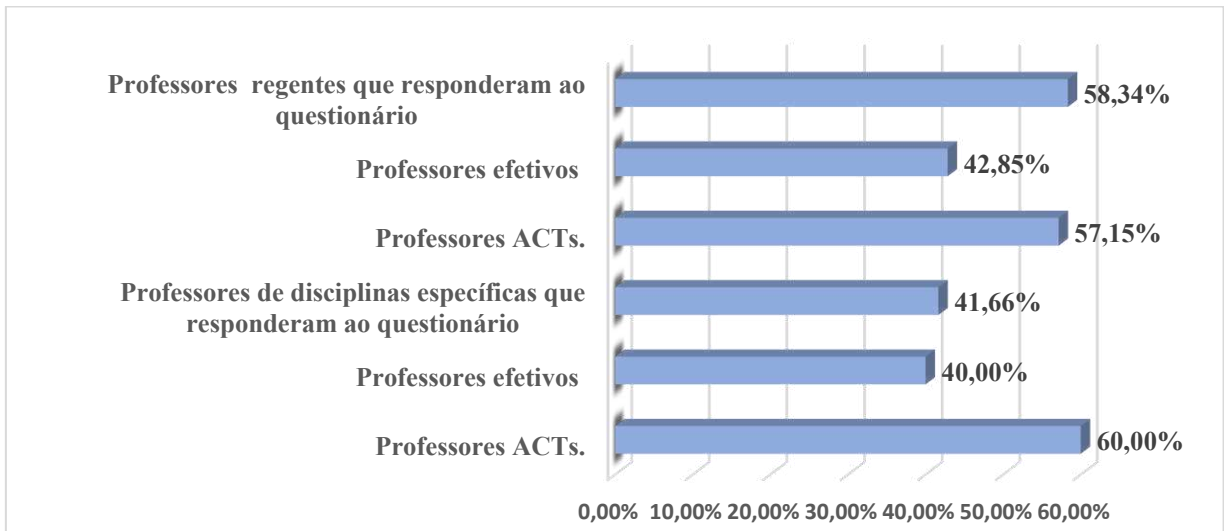
Source: Prepared by the authors

After elaborating and structuring the questionnaire questions, the forms were created in an online environment in Google Forms. With the permission of the managers, the teachers' e-mail addresses used for official communications with the school unit were collected, and then the questionnaire was individually sent to 17 teachers. Of these, 12 responded, representing 70.5% of the total number of teachers. It is therefore necessary to present the results obtained, describing the perception of teachers through the analysis of the data collected in the questionnaires.

Presentation of results and discussion

At this point, we seek to analyze and present the data from the questionnaires sent and answered by the early years teachers. The first step is to identify the respondents. Based on the 12 questionnaires returned, and considering that teachers could indicate the option of working as regular classroom teachers or as teachers of specific subjects, it was possible to observe - according to data in Graph 1 - a greater adherence of regular classroom teachers to the answers to the questionnaires sent, followed by teachers of specific subjects.

Graph 1 – Identification and affiliation of the teachers who answered the questionnaires⁶

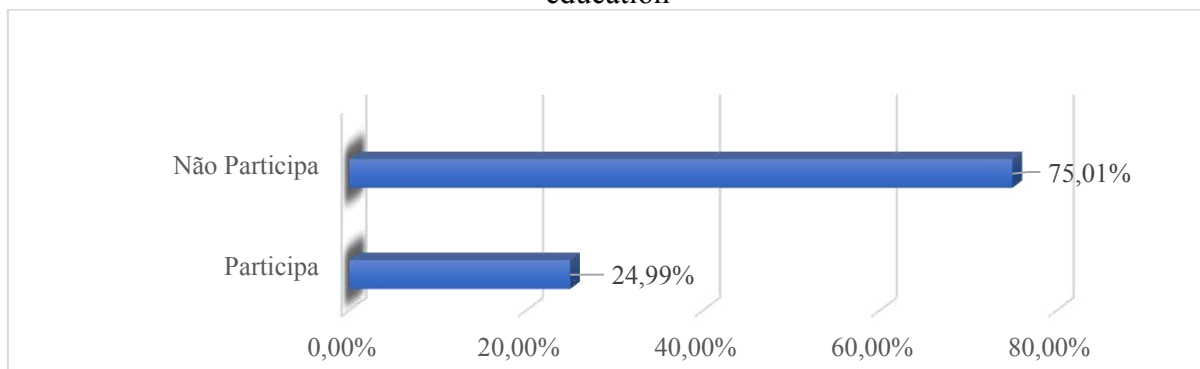


Source: Prepared by the authors

Regarding the institutional relationship with the education system, according to what is observed in Graph 1, the following result was obtained: 58.34% (07 respondents) are regular classroom teachers, of whom 42.85% (03 respondents) are permanent, and 57.15% (04 respondents) are hired on a temporary basis. Among the teachers who work with specific subjects in the early years, 41.66% (05 respondents) participated, of which 40.00% (02 respondents) are permanent and 60.00% (03 respondents) are hired on a temporary basis.

As graph 2 shows, in relation to participation in social movements that address issues related to human rights or human rights education, the data shows that 75.00% (09 respondents) do not participate in such actions. On the other hand, 25.00% (03 respondents) participate in movements committed to specific topics in human rights or human rights education.

⁶ Professores regentes que responderam ao questionário = Teachers who answered the questionnaire; Professores efetivos = Effective teachers; Professores de disciplinas específicas que responderam ao questionário = Teachers of specific disciplines who answered the questionnaire; Professores ACTs = ACTs teachers

Graph 2 – Teachers' participation in movements linked to human rights or human rights education⁷

Source: Prepared by the authors

Continuing with the presentation of the results, it is important to show the data referring to the pedagogical praxis in the daily life of the school-community and the teachers' theoretical-political awareness of human rights and human rights education. This way, there was the possibility, on the part of the respondents, to mark only one binary alternative: positive or negative, to the questions sent in the online questionnaire.

The questions are related to the themes prioritized in the process of this research. It is worth noting that the positive (yes) or negative (no) answer given to the question contained in the questionnaire sent to the teachers of the early years of basic education is intrinsically linked to the presentation and description of the analytical categories structuring the research. Thus, Table 1 shows that most teachers (08 respondents) do not even carry out projects related to human rights in the school environment or in the community; however, most teachers (09 respondents) answered that they develop pedagogical activities and work, in the classroom, on activities related to human rights education.

A fact that makes us reflect a lot concerns the knowledge of the school policy on human rights education. Firstly because 50% (06 respondents) are unaware of the existence of such a policy, with the logical consequence that the themes are not addressed with the students in the classroom. Secondly, the other 50% (6 respondents) who say they know of its existence do not demonstrate, when compared with the answers about the implementation of projects in the school and community sphere, that in fact this school policy is a source of inspiration for the development of planned actions related to human rights in the school and the surrounding community.

⁷ Participa = Participate ; Não participa = Do not participate

Table 1 – Teachers' practices related to human rights and human rights education

Institutional affiliation of teachers	CATEGORIZED QUESTIONS		
	Conducts projects related to human rights in the school/community	Elaborates pedagogical activities related to human rights education	Is aware of the existence of the school policy on human rights education
ACTs Teachers.			
Yes	03	06	02
No	04	01	05
Effective teachers			
Yes	01	03	04
No	04	02	01
Total			
Yes	04	09	06
No	08	03	06

Source: Prepared by the authors

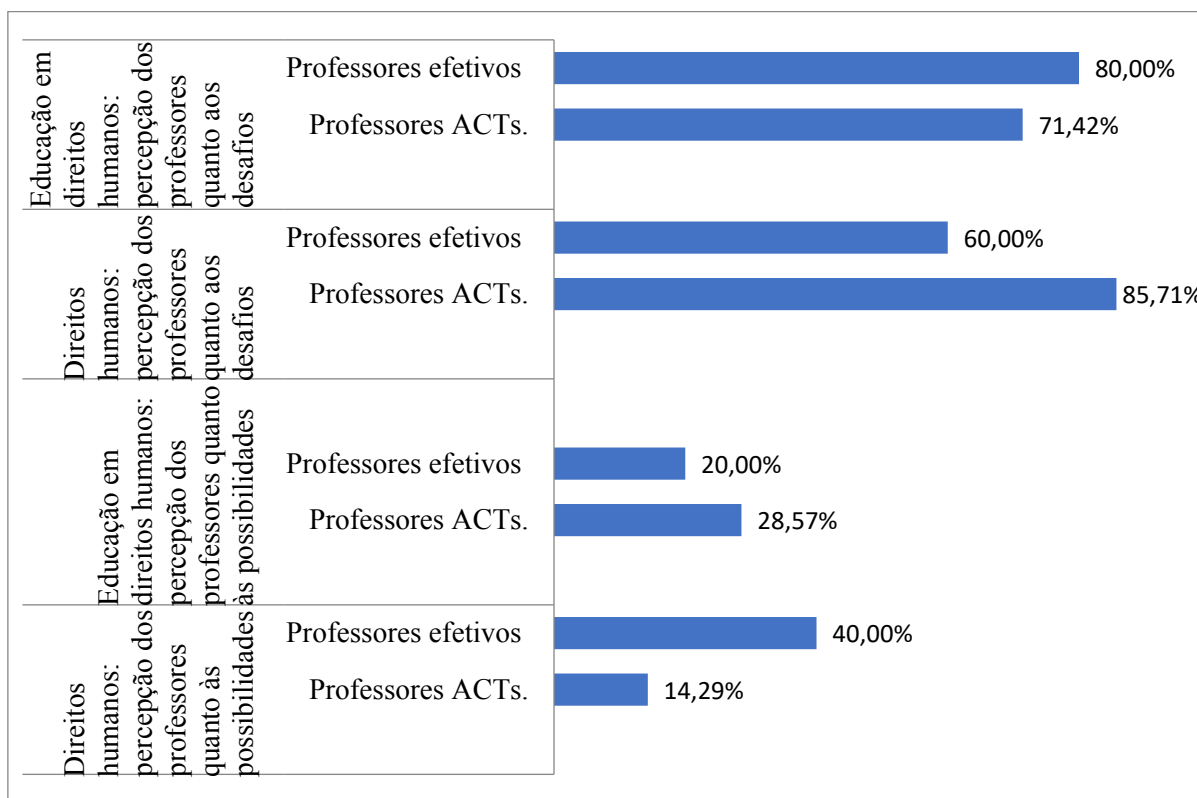
The next questions, one directly related to human rights and the other to human rights education, will require more emphasis, since the main objective of this research is to analyze and present the perceptions of teachers of the early years in a public school. Thus, the answers to the themes contained in these questions show the perception of possibilities or challenges to school pedagogical praxis, due to the fact that teachers address, in the school environment, issues related to human rights and human rights education, constituting a basis for understanding improvements in the proposition of educational policies capable of transforming society and building a more harmonious coexistence among human beings.

As can be seen in Graph 3, these questions present, in a first moment, binary alternatives, unfolding then in open answers to be developed from the perception of teachers about possibilities or challenges to school pedagogical praxis in relation to human rights and education in human rights. Among teachers with permanent positions, 80.00% (04 respondents) perceive challenges to human rights education in public schools. For 60.00% (03 respondents) there are challenges to addressing human rights issues. Among teachers hired on a temporary basis, the numbers show that 71.42% (05 respondents) perceive challenges to human rights education, and 85.71% (06 respondents) perceive challenges in addressing issues related to human rights in the school.

According to the survey data, faced with the challenges, the possibilities seem to be small. In fact, 20.00% (only 1 respondent) and only 28.57% (2 respondents), permanent and ACTs respectively, perceive possibilities regarding education in human rights. In relation to the possibilities of approaching themes related to human rights in public school education, among

permanent employees, 40.00% (02 respondents) perceive the existence of such possibilities, among ACTs, 14.29% (only 01 respondent) answered affirmatively.⁸

Graph 3– Teachers' perceptions of the possibilities or challenges regarding human rights education and the human rights approach in school education



Source: Prepared by the authors

Regarding the perception of teachers about the challenges posed to human rights education and the approach to human rights issues on the "school ground", an open question was prepared without a pre-defined alternative, but logically linked to the perception of obstacles. Among the teachers with permanent and temporary positions, the answers presented in Chart 2 were obtained.

⁸ Professores efetivos = Effective teachers; Professores ACTs = ACTs teachers; Direitos humanos: percepção dos professores quanto às possibilidades = Human Rights: Teachers' perception of the possibilities; Educação em direitos humanos: percepção dos professores quanto às possibilidades = Human rights education: teachers' perception of the possibilities; Direitos humanos: percepção dos professores quanto aos desafios = Human Rights: Teachers' perceptions of the challenges; Educação em direitos humanos: percepção dos professores quanto aos desafios = Human rights education: teachers' perception of the challenges

Chart 2– The perception of the challenges to human rights education and to addressing the issue in public schools

Human Rights Education and Human Rights: Teachers' perceptions of the challenges	
01	"There is a lack of knowledge of this subject here at school."
02	"Everyone's unity is lacking. The school and the community need to work together on education and recognize that education is a human right."
03	"People have no interest. Society in general doesn't care about education. If human rights were so important the rulers wouldn't speak ill of them."
04	"There is a lack of incentive for teachers. It would be very important to have a training focused exclusively on human rights education."
05	"It is necessary to work on these themes in the continuous training courses we have."
06	"The school has no structure, for example, how to talk about human rights with tiny classrooms full of students, children who often come to school because they have no food at home? And so it goes, society needs to solve this violence that makes everyone afraid."
07	"I am not a fan of these so-called human rights. I think everyone has to work to get their own rights enforced."
08	"Society doesn't help, families don't help, nobody helps. Doing a project or even activities linked to human rights is very difficult in the current context."
09	"There is a lack of incentive in the training of teachers, because if they addressed these issues, everyone could do activities in the classroom with the students."
10	"I think there is education, there is no education of this, education of that. The person needs to be educated and that's it."
11	"I have heard about human rights on television and the internet, but I need to learn more about it."
12	"The teachers, the students and their families, the technical staff and the school office need to join hands to defend human rights."
13	"Human rights education is very important, even more so in Brazil that enslaved so many people. Racism continues not only on television, but in our daily lives. That needs to change."
14	"We need the more training in human rights education."
5	"I've always heard about human rights, but I'm not sure what it means as human rights education."
16	"Politicians and rulers should value human rights more. I understand that to take care of education, health and people is to be committed to human rights."
17	"Human rights education is a way to combat indiscipline and school dropout. We are all responsible for it."
18	"I wouldn't know how to answer that question right. I think there is a lack of training to answer such a question properly. I think human rights defend people who are incarcerated, but I'm not really sure. I'm going to research and work that issue with the students and then I'm going to talk to people who understand the subject."

Source: Prepared by the authors

Regarding the perception of teachers about the possibilities of human rights education and the approach to human rights issues in a public school, the question sent online was answered freely, without pre-defined alternatives. Similarly to the question about the challenges, previously analyzed, the answers about the possibilities were linked to this perspective. The following results were obtained among teachers with permanent positions and those hired on a temporary basis, as shown in Chart 3:

Chart 3 – The perception about the possibilities of human rights education and the approach of the theme in public schools

Human Rights Education and Human Rights: Teachers' perception of the possibilities	
01	"There are several possibilities to educate in human rights, you just have to make an effort and go for it."
02	"You have to have dialogue. Dialogue opens doors to transform and create more human rights."
03	"I, for example, in relation to human rights, always talk that we have to respect our colleagues and talk to solve disagreements in the classroom."
04	"Educational guidance and school supervision help us with human rights issues at school."
05	"Setting good examples at home and at school, participating in meetings and demonstrations to improve the city and school, is a possibility to demonstrate human rights and show how important human rights education is."
06	"Without human rights education we will hardly overcome inequalities in Brazil."

Source: Prepared by the authors

Among the answers obtained from the teachers of the initial years about the challenges and possibilities to human rights education and the approach of topics related to human rights at school, some points deserve to be highlighted, among them: basic education as the foundation of the construction of an educational system that revitalizes peaceful coexistence and democracy (MAGENDZO; SCHMELKES; CONDE, 1995); the importance of perceiving the current challenges (CANDAU, 2007; MAGENDZO, 2006) for the construction of a dialogic pact in function of human rights education; the lack of incentive and the emphasis to be given to the training of teachers in human rights (CANDAU; SACAVINO, 2008; 2013); the improvement of school structures to concretely house a new vision in relation to human rights; the need to break prejudices and present theories that are transformed into concrete practices in the classroom (MORGADO, 2002).

Up to this point, the data presented here show how much work still needs to be done in order for institutional policies, focused on human rights and human rights education, to be implemented and transformed into concrete actions, whether in basic education, teacher training or social transformation. It is necessary to see the critical-transformative force acting on the challenges so that they become more and more possibilities of acceptance of diversity, of active citizenship, and of respect in its multiple facets. It is necessary that the perception of the possibilities for teachers is built and grows every day, with the indispensable contribution of the technical-pedagogical teams that work in the schools, seeking the expansion of these themes in the daily training of all the players involved in the educational process.

It can be inferred that when it comes to the issue of human rights education, it is important to understand that "the awareness of unaccomplishment among us, women and men, makes us responsible beings, hence the ethicality of our presence in the world" (FREIRE, 1997, p. 62). From this perspective, education in human rights constitutes itself as a theme, as a necessary requirement for the process of permanent formation of teachers, as a mediation for the construction of citizenship and democracy today, because the quality of the city depends on the quality of the active formation of the citizen.

Thus, Gorczewski (2009, p. 18) problematizes that in this movement, it is necessary for the teacher to appropriate a philosophical paradigm of education,

[...] that the quality of life in the future depends on the quality of the citizenry we are forming today; the society of the future begins now. Thus, as an imperative for the very survival of the human race and the realization of the basic principles of justice, the need to rescue and transmit the values that underlie the rights of men" and women cannot be put off any longer.

Human rights education, for the full exercise of citizenship, implies creating conditions for the permanent formation of historical subjects capable of understanding the complexity of the human phenomenon to meet the demands of the contemporary educational process. The substratum of the formation and educational practice in human rights is that the social purpose of education, as the first condition for coexistence, is in the formation of the human being as a social subject, as a philosophical paradigm of education for the practice of freedom.

What characterizes the commitment of education for social justice is the possibility of the construction of participatory democracy, as a condition for the full exercise of citizenship, as well as the socio-cultural emancipation of society, as a determination for the formation of the conscience of citizen equality, the foundation of education in human rights, conceived in the perspective of political commitment, associated with humanization, awareness, and action of human freedom.

Final considerations

This article sought to investigate and present the perceptions of teachers in the early years of a public school in the municipal education system about the challenges and possibilities posed to human rights education and issues related to human rights in the daily practice of teaching, especially in the planning and implementation of activities by teachers in the classroom and the school community as a whole.

It is noteworthy that even though the research context was limited, as well as the subjects who answered the questionnaire, intentionally summarizing the horizons of reach, it is possible to state that the research achieved the objective of making a scientific exploration of the teachers' perceptions, pointing to quite important results. It is worth highlighting the almost unanimous confirmation of the respondents (more than 70.00%) about the challenges that still persist in relation to education in human rights and the barriers to work with themes linked to human rights, due to the lack of training and the little knowledge in the school context of issues related to diversity, human rights and citizenship, among others.

It is noticeable, on the other hand, that most of the respondents are open to knowing more and demand an effective training that transforms theory into concrete respect for diversity and encourages new citizenship practices. The ignorance of fundamental documents and policies must be confronted with the presentation and critical analysis of the pacts made for human rights built with the participation of actors who act on a global, regional, and local scale.

It is not enough that teachers know, for example, the National Plan for Human Rights Education or the National Guidelines for Human Rights Education, among others, but it is also necessary that they are offered incentives and financial resources to implement projects and initiatives that are really dialogical-transformative for students and society as a whole, building in fact the possibilities that seem invisible in the face of so many challenges.

In the formative dialogue of the teachers, for the exercise of teaching with better quality, in the public school space, it is significant that the theme of human rights is provided, in the permanent formation centered in the school, aiming at the formation of conscience and democratic praxis, so that it can help the students to build a critical understanding of the world.

Although isolated and punctual actions by teachers to deal with the issue of human rights education and the realization of activities related to human rights in the public school context are important, they are not enough. It is worth remembering the need to form a critical conscience, permanently challenged by a situation that works to weaken the perception of new possibilities, thus reinforcing the maintenance of the system as it is. Human rights education goes precisely against paralyzing conservatism, prejudice, racism, oppression, and antidialogical postures, building a critical-reflexive educational praxis.

As a conclusion, it is important to point out that most of the respondents belonged to the group of those hired on a temporary basis, compared to the permanent ones. Therefore, the limitation of the results is recognized when considering the answers obtained. In this way, further research is needed, with the main focus being a greater understanding of the challenges

and possibilities for human rights education and the formative approach to topics related to human rights in the context of public school education.

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