

**ETHICAL COEXISTENCE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS: ANALYSIS OF AN INTERVENTION PROGRAM FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF SCHOOL PROFESSIONALS**

***A CONVIVÊNCIA ÉTICA EM ESCOLAS PÚBLICAS: ANÁLISE DE UM PROGRAMA DE INTERVENÇÃO A PARTIR DAS PERSPECTIVAS DOS PROFISSIONAIS DA ESCOLA***

***LA CONVIVENCIA ÉTICA EN ESCUELAS PÚBLICAS: ANÁLISIS DE UN PROGRAMA DE INTERVENCIÓN A PARTIR DE LAS PERSPECTIVAS DE LOS PROFESIONALES DE LA ESCUELA***

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**ABSTRACT:** Faced with the problems of coexistence in schools, Moral Education Research Group - GEPEM developed the program “Ethical coexistence at school”, which proposes the implementation of actions that aim to contribute to improving the quality of school coexistence and the conflict solution process. This article presents an exploratory research of a descriptive character that scrutinized the perceptions of teachers and managers related to the transformations, contributions and limitations of the program implemented in four public schools. Semi-structured interviews were carried out and the data were qualitatively analyzed. Most respondents argue that it is a role of the school to act in the quality of coexistence, favoring ethical training and dealing constructively with conflicts. Among the changes, what stands out is the importance of theory subsidizing actions; valuing student participation and leadership; strengthening respect and dialogue in relationships. The limitations have been the lack of engagement by some professionals, the absence of spaces for dialogue and collective decisions at school.

**KEYWORDS:** School coexistence. Pedagogical intervention. Teacher training. Moral education. Problems of coexistence.

**RESUMO:** Diante dos problemas de convivência nas escolas, o Grupo de Estudos e Pesquisa em Educação Moral - GEPEM elaborou o programa “Convivência ética na escola”, que propõe a implantação de ações visando contribuir para a melhoria da qualidade da convivência escolar e do processo de resolução dos conflitos. Este artigo apresenta uma pesquisa exploratória de caráter descritivo que investigou as percepções de professores e gestores quanto às transformações, contribuições e limitações do programa implantado em quatro escolas públicas. Foram realizadas entrevistas semiestruturadas e os dados foram

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*analisados qualitativamente. A maioria dos respondentes defende ser papel da escola atuar na qualidade da convivência, favorecendo a formação ética e lidando construtivamente com os conflitos. Entre as mudanças, destaca-se a importância da teoria subsidiando ações; a valorização da participação e protagonismo estudantil; o fortalecimento do respeito e do diálogo nas relações. As limitações foram a falta de engajamento de alguns profissionais, ausência de espaços de diálogo e decisões coletivas na escola.*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Convivência escolar. Intervenção pedagógica. Formação docente. Educação moral. Problemas de convivência.

**RESUMEN:** *Frente a los problemas de convivencia en las escuelas, Grupo de Estudio e Investigación en Educación Moral - GEPEN elaboró el programa “La convivencia ética en la escuela”, que propone la implantación de acciones cuyo propósito es contribuir para mejorar la calidad de la convivencia escolar y del proceso de resolución de conflictos. Este artículo presenta un estudio exploratorio de carácter descriptivo que investigó las percepciones de profesores y gestores en lo que se refiere a las transformaciones, contribuciones y limitaciones del programa implantado en cuatro escuelas públicas. Se realizaron entrevistas semiestructuradas y los datos han sido analizados de modo cualitativo. La mayoría de los que contestaron las entrevistas defiende que es papel de la escuela actuar en la calidad de la convivencia favoreciendo la formación ética y lidiar constructivamente con los conflictos. Entre los cambios se destaca la importancia de la teoría que subsidia acciones; la valorización de la participación y el protagonismo estudiantil; el fortalecimiento del respeto y del diálogo en las relaciones. Las limitaciones fueron la falta de compromiso de algunos profesionales, la ausencia de espacios de diálogo y las decisiones colectivas en la escuela.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Convivencia escolar. Intervención pedagógica. Formación de profesores. Educación moral. Problemas de convivencia.

## Introduction

There are constant reports from educators about behaviors considered as violence, aggression and indiscipline, and that point to the need to seek strategies capable of improving the quality of interpersonal relationships in schools and, at the same time, favoring citizen training, towards moral autonomy. Several studies (ABRAMOVAY, 2016; VINHA *et al.*, 2017; ZECHI, 2014) have indicated how coexistence problems, in their different manifestations, affect the school climate, pedagogical practices, and interpersonal relationships, being a major challenge at school.

According to data from the Basic Education Evaluation System (IEDE, 2019), half of the principals (51.5%) reported having already witnessed physical or verbal aggression from students to teachers or school staff; 68.4% of teachers reported having already experienced

verbal or physical aggression between students<sup>3</sup>; and student indiscipline is seen by 68% of managers as one of the factors that most hinders the functioning of schools. The Teaching and Learning International Survey (OECD, 2014) indicated that 34% of principals in Brazil report weekly student bullying or verbal offenses, and 12% report the same frequency of student offenses against teachers. Among the 34 countries participating in the study, Brazilian teachers are the ones who spend the most time maintaining order in the classroom (20%). Another example is in Abramovay (2016), for whom 70% of students in seven Brazilian capitals have experienced some type of violence in their schools, 27% being cyberbullying, 25% theft and/or robbery, 20% threats, and 13% physical assaults.

Some of the studies indicate that there is indeed a perception of increased violence at school and a feeling of insecurity (ABRAMOVAY, 2016; OECD, 2021; GARCIA; TOGNETTA; VINHA, 2013; VINHA *et al.*, 2017; ZECHI, 2014). But we must be careful with an alarmist discourse, implying that the school lives a scenario of permanent violence. Violence undoubtedly exists, especially in some units in large centers and vulnerable regions or in occasional episodes in schools, but in smaller numbers than what is boasted. Vinha *et al.* (2017) point out that many of the data inferring the growth of school violence consider as such any problem of coexistence (violence, bullying, incivilities, indiscipline, among others), without distinguishing them. It is necessary to recognize that these are phenomena of a different nature, which also require differentiated interventions. Often, it is proposed to increase the severity of the rules and punishments to deal with these problems (VINHA; NUNES, 2020), which leads to the maintenance of heteronomy<sup>4</sup>.

Coexistence problems, particularly violence, are multifactorial phenomena that go beyond the school walls and cannot be considered in isolation. However, studies on the quality of school climate and coexistence, when explaining the "school-effect" in this area, indicate that when they are perceived as positive by the school community, that is, based on mutual respect, trust and care, they have an effect on the quality of interpersonal relationships, being a factor of resilience and well-being, playing a key role in preventing violence for both students

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<sup>3</sup> It is worth noting that the fact that SAEB combines physical aggression and verbal aggression in a single question prevents a more detailed analysis of the type of aggression, since they are completely different forms. Physical aggression is closer to violence, while verbal aggression is more related to incivilities.

<sup>4</sup> In heteronomous morality, values are not conserved, but are regulated by the pressure of the environment, that is, the subject modifies moral behavior in different contexts. Thus, there is a relationship of submission to power, and it is considered right to obey by submitting to authority, avoiding punishment, or conforming to social conventions. In moral autonomy, the feeling of acceptance or obligation towards norms is internal (self-regulation), being based on equity and reciprocal relations. Therefore, values are conserved despite changing contexts and the presence of social pressures (VINHA *et al.*, 2017).

and school professionals (BRESSOUX, 2003; DEBARBIEUX *et al.*, 2012; VINHA; NUNES, 2020; 2021).

The challenge is how schools can deal with coexistence problems and, at the same time, favor the development of autonomous people. In Brazil, the successful experiences in this area in public schools are still isolated initiatives, almost handcrafted. This is shown in the study by Menin, Bataglia, and Zechi (2013), which examined the projects of values education in public schools. It was found that of 1,062 schools that develop these projects, less than 5% had a more systematized proposal that could be considered successful. Most of the professionals involved (71%) had no training in this area, so that their proposals were based mainly on common sense. The authors point out the reasons why most of them were not effective: the actions were directed only to the students; they were punctual and for a short period of time; they were not institutional projects, but for a small group; they used a transmission/doctrination process; there were evident contradictions between the objectives and the relational and disciplinary climate in the school; they aimed at controlling behavior and discipline and not the socio-moral and emotional development that would lead to the use of more assertive and cooperative strategies to deal with conflicts.

However, certain research with intervention in Brazilian schools shows that an education for ethical and democratic coexistence is possible, as well as desirable (MENIN, 2019; TOGNETTA, 2021; VINHA *et al.*, 2017). According to such studies, incivilities and various types of violence at school can be addressed, providing opportunities to learn the need for rules and values and the socio-moral and emotional development, by seeking dialogical solutions, with the active participation of those involved. They also indicate ways of building and learning values and practices consistent with ethical and democratic coexistence that can and should occur in education.

Based on this perspective, the Group of Studies and Research in Moral Education - GEPEM, developed the program "Ethical Coexistence at School".<sup>5</sup> (ECS). This is a program for training teachers and transformations at school, with differentiated and complementary actions aimed at improving the quality of coexistence and the process of resolving interpersonal conflicts, favoring the construction of a positive school climate.

We qualify as ethics the coexistence based on practices that defend values linked to dialog, participation, diversity, justice, respect, and solidarity, implying the formation of

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<sup>5</sup> The program was coordinated by Drs. Telma P. Vinha (FE-UNICAMP), Luciene Tognetta (UNESP) and Cesar Augusto Amaral Nunes (GEPEM) and carried out by a team of researchers and graduate students linked to GEPEM - UNICAMP/UNESP.

increasingly autonomous subjects, who base their decisions and actions on moral values. It cannot be restricted to good socialization with the adoption of already established ways of living together, but must be understood as a process in which some norms, relationships and customs are criticized and, thus, new ways of living together are thought and discussed (PUIG *et al.*, 2000). For this conception, the ECS program was implemented by the GPEM team in six municipal elementary schools, through an agreement of the Faculty of Education of UNICAMP with a Municipal Education Secretary. In the present study, we analyzed only four schools, which were the ones that started the implementation at the same time. It is noteworthy that they voluntarily joined the program. With an expected duration of 24 months, this program consists of violence prevention actions, attention to coexistence problems, and promotion of social and moral values and skills. It was developed considering three different ways of acting, but interrelated: interpersonal, linked to the way of being and doing of educators, especially the relationship they have with each other and with their students; curricular, referring to the "planning and implementation of activities specifically designed to work on the ethical formation of students"; institutional, consisting of "educational activities that start from the organization of the school and the class, and that have democratic participation as an assumption" (PUIG *et al.*, 2000, p. 17). The actions, in summary, consisted of:

- Evaluation of the school climate and diagnosis of institutional needs - meetings were held with the management team and teachers, sessions of daily observations and questionnaires were applied to evaluate the school climate in students, teachers and managers. Subsequently, the researchers returned the results, debating the data with the school professionals and collectively planning the resulting actions.
- Systematized space for the development of socio-moral and emotional proposals - insertion of a weekly 90-minute subject in the curriculum of the final grades of elementary school, taught by a reference teacher selected by the school<sup>6</sup>. In the early grades, it was taught by the all-purpose teacher.
- Continued training with school professionals - weekly/fortnightly, with all school professionals, studying themes such as the construction of an ethical personality, assertive and empathetic language, rules and legitimation processes, coexistence problems, conflicts and possibilities of interventions, among others, totaling about 140 hours; biweekly training with reference teachers, aiming to study the conduction of assemblies and active procedures linked to socio-moral and emotional development, occurring in the new discipline (about 70 hours).

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<sup>6</sup>They worked by means of the Teachers' Supplementary Workload, which are paid hours of work done by teachers in another curricular component.

- Implementation of spaces for participation, resolution and mediation of conflicts - holding assemblies in each class, for dialogue and construction of joint solutions for the improvement of coexistence and work; implementation of spaces for conflict mediation in which the parties involved, supported by the mediator, are encouraged to dialogue, seeking a satisfactory and non-punitive agreement for the disagreement.

- Help teams - formed by groups of students who support peers who are in trouble or involved in conflict or bullying (TOGNETTA, 2021).

- Collective choice of school values, with development of action plan, review of quantity and quality of rules.

- Preparation of an Institutional Plan of Coexistence - a document that provides for the organization and functioning of the institution with regard to coexistence, setting the goals to be achieved, the rules that regulate it, and the actions that will be carried out.

- Monitoring and advising - through participant observation sessions and advisory meetings to the team of managers and teachers.

The implementation of the procedures was flexible, not imposed, occurring with collective participation. Not all took place in all four units, due to the needs and conditions of each. Any implementation of programs in schools needs to consider and deal with different realities, full of challenges, demands, and urgencies. In ECS, a continuous responsive process was employed, which is the interaction and dialogue between the creators and the implementers, respecting the context and also meeting the demands and needs of schools (CAMPOS, 2020).

During and at the end of the program, evaluations were performed by the team by quantitative methods, such as school climate assessment (pre- and post-tests) and responsive evaluation <sup>7</sup>, questionnaires to evaluate the training and the transformations in the school, and observation sessions. The different analyses of the data showed that the transformations depend on the characteristics of each institution, which advanced at different paces and along different paths. However, progress was found in the expressive improvement in the quality of interpersonal relationships; in the use of more empathetic communication; in the presence of more constructive interventions in conflicts; in the change in the quality of rules and in the expansion of student participation in the elaboration process and in the discussion of problems; in the increase in students' feelings of justice, respect, and belonging (CAMPOS, 2020; VINHA; NUNES, 2021, VINHA; NUNES; MORO, 2019).

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<sup>7</sup> In responsive evaluation, participants are helped to conduct their own evaluations at various times, and the findings are used to improve program understanding, decisions, and actions (VINHA; NUNES; MORO, 2019).

This article aimed to investigate the perceptions of teachers and managers regarding the "Ethical Coexistence at School" program as to the implication of these professionals in relation to the quality of students' social and moral learning, as well as to understand the transformations, contributions, and limitations of the program.

## Methodology

To reach the objective, a survey was developed<sup>8</sup> exploratory and descriptive in nature. Data were produced in two ways: 1) by analyzing the documents and records produced during the program, in order to understand the actions, processes and assessments developed by the group of trainers; 2) by conducting semi-structured interviews to investigate the perceptions of the participating professionals.

The research *locus* was four public elementary schools (1st to 9th grade), two of them full-time, in a large city in the interior of São Paulo state. Three schools are located in regions of great social vulnerability and one in the central region of the city, but mainly serves young people in open social-educational measures. The research subjects were the school professionals, teachers and managers (principals, vice-principals and pedagogical supervisors), participants of the intervention program. At the end of the program, all professionals were invited for interviews, which were previously scheduled and conducted individually in the schools by the researcher, who was not part of the team that designed or implemented the program. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed qualitatively, using content analysis.<sup>9</sup>, building categories from the meaning of the participants' speech.

Twenty-three subjects participated: 10 teachers and pedagogical supervisors from school A, representing 28.5% of the professionals who attended the training sessions; six (8.5%) teachers and pedagogical supervisors from school B; three (27%) teachers from school C; and four (33%) teachers from school D. All the interviewees have a degree (Pedagogy or other degrees), six have a *lato sensu* post-graduation and seven have a *stricto sensu* post-graduation. Only two teachers are beginning their careers, with up to five years in the profession; most of them (14) are professionals with more than 15 years of teaching experience.

<sup>8</sup> Project approved by the Research Ethics Committee - CAAE 82949518.9.0000.8142.

<sup>9</sup> The coding and categorization of the data was done in *Atlas.ti*, a software that assists the researcher in the process of organizing the analysis of qualitative data.

## **Presentation and discussion of results**

In this article, we will present the results of all the participants from the four schools, in two major categories. The first includes questions aimed at understanding the interviewees' conceptions of the work with coexistence and students' social and moral learning. The second deals with the perceptions regarding the contributions and limits of the program.

### **Implication of teachers and managers regarding the quality of students' social and moral learning**

In an attempt to investigate if teachers and managers considered the school as also responsible for the quality of the relationships established and for the promotion of students' sociomoral learning, we asked if the participants understood that it is the teacher's role to work on improving coexistence at school. All the interviewees (100%, n=23) recognized that it is the teacher's role to address the issue and seek ways to improve coexistence, but the answers indicate different reasons, translated mainly into two categories.

For 39% of the respondents, the work with coexistence was perceived as a resource to face the problems of conflicts among students and between students and their teachers, in order to improve the quality of relationships when they are not good. These are the so-called "attention" actions, which are undoubtedly necessary, but it is also necessary to invest in the prevention of violence and in the promotion of social and emotional competencies and moral values.

More than intervening in situations of coexistence problems, another 39% defended the teacher's role in the prevention and promotion of an ethical coexistence, and that everyone at school should contribute for this development, not because the students lack this formation or because the family is not fulfilling its role, but because the integral development of the student, including the social and ethical dimension, is the school's role and also the family's responsibility. This perception, according to the reports, was consolidated throughout the training courses promoted by the program.

It also draws attention that, even though they recognize that it is the teacher's role to work for the improvement of the coexistence, 9% indicated that this is necessary because the family and society do not do it, i.e., it is not a primary function of the school. This conception, although in a much smaller percentage, is in line with other studies for which many teachers are in favor of the school developing moral education projects, because there is "a crisis of



values" in the family and society and, therefore, it is up to the school to "fill" this gap (MENIN; BATAGLIA; ZECHI, 2013; ZECHI, 2014).

We identified in the document analysis that, at the beginning of the program, most professionals attributed the cause of problems of bad student behavior and value formation to the families. This data is consistent with studies by Dedeschi (2011) and Souza (2012), who point out that this belief is strong among teachers, and that few include as also influencing pedagogical issues, the lack of spaces for dialogue and participation or even the quality of interpersonal relationships at school. Therefore, there is not much to change, because "the causes of the problems" are outside the walls of the institution, which leads to a certain "powerlessness" and search for "solutions" also external, such as greater supervision, hiring more professionals, awareness projects for families, among others (VINHA; TOGNETTA, 2013).

The answers contained in this category bring positive results, by revealing that all interviewees, even with limits, implicated themselves as responsible for working with school coexistence and understand the school as a locus of social and moral learning. The training promoted by the ECS program, according to the reports, contributed to this change in conception, emphasizing the validity of investing in a consistent training in this area.

### **Respondents' perception of the program's contributions and difficulties**

In the interviews conducted individually, the participants were asked to comment spontaneously on the program developed, the main contributions, individually and for the institution, and how they evaluated the actions taken, their advances and limits. The answers were analyzed according to the perception of the main contributions pointed out in the field of the three ways in which the program was developed: the transformations that occurred in the interpersonal, curricular, and institutional areas.

**Chart 1** – Respondents' perception of the program's contributions (%)<sup>10</sup>

Contributions		Total
<b>Transformations in the interpersonal sphere</b>	Theoretical foundation of teaching practice	74
	Improvement in the quality of personal relationships - teacher-student relationship	35
	Improvement in the quality of coexistence	22
	Change in the conception about the role of the teacher/school in working with coexistence and values	17
	Change in the conception about interpersonal conflicts	17
	Changes in the way of being and acting	17
	Improvement in the quality of personal relationships – relationships among students	13
<b>Curricular Transformations</b>	Recognition of the need to insert the topic of coexistence into the curriculum	17
<b>Transformations at the institutional level</b>	Appreciation of the students' protagonism	48
	Theoretical basis for the organization of school work	13

Source: Prepared by the authors

The **transformations that occurred in the interpersonal sphere** concern those that have a direct impact on the way educators are and do things, and on the relationship they establish with the students. The most significant, mentioned by 74% of the subjects, was the theoretical basis for teaching practice. They recognized that, given the gaps in their training, the theoretical foundation coming from the training held during the program influenced their practices, making them more confident to deal with coexistence problems and intervene in conflicts.

Another transformation mentioned was the improvement in the quality of interpersonal relationships, 35% occurred in the teacher-student relationship and 13% among students. When explaining the changes in the relationships between adults and students, they said that before they used to adopt non-constructive ways of communicating with them, with criticism, reproaches, and value judgments; the training cooperated to a change in the language they use and in the way they act when facing conflicts, in order to build a relationship of dialog and mutual respect. Another 22% affirmed that the program led to improvements in the quality of coexistence among everyone, reducing conflicts, violence, and incivilities.

As for the **transformations in the curriculum**, related to the planning and execution of activities to work on the ethical formation of students, 17% recognized the need to insert into the school curriculum issues associated with coexistence and social, moral, and emotional

<sup>10</sup> Sometimes, the answer of the same subject was classified in more than one category. The percentage was calculated in relation to the total sum of participants (Total = 23).

skills. They emphasized that the theoretical foundation provided by the training courses contributed to the planning and execution of such activities.

In the **changes at the institutional level**, which involve activities organized by the school with a view to democratic participation, 48% of the participants highlighted the valuing of student protagonism. The respondents, in general, identified that changes in institutional practices, such as spaces for dialogue with the students, revision of rules and sanctions, promotion of assemblies, insertion of a discipline of ethical coexistence, and the work with the help teams allowed more opportunities for students to express themselves, to participate and to make decisions. They believe that such changes helped students to feel more belonging and to perceive the school environment as more respectful and fairer.

With regard to the **difficulties** encountered in carrying out the program, 30% of the respondents mentioned the long duration of the course (140 hours), generating fatigue and lack of interest among teachers. This problem was pointed out by the participants from schools A and B; on the other hand, there was a manifestation of interest in continuing the training by the respondents from schools C and D, when they indicated the program's closure as a limitation. The divergence in the respondents' statements points out the importance of flexible planning and of having a responsive process that enables adaptations and learning during implementation.

Another difficulty presented (26%) referred to the low adhesion of some teachers, not participating in the training or not developing some proposals. In the same vein, 17% highlighted the resistance of some teachers to the theoretical basis of the program, resulting in less engagement. In two schools, the managers did not participate in the training sessions, making it difficult to understand and offer conditions for a more successful implementation of the actions. To mitigate this problem, the trainers held biweekly meetings with them about the progress of the program. This non-participation and the consequent greater difficulty to develop some proposals and to institutionalize the program was mentioned by 26% of the respondents. The presence of authoritarian attitudes and little dialogic and participatory postures was pointed out as also resulting from this little involvement of some teachers and managers.

These results indicate the importance of planning, in the design and implementation of the program, flexible processes capable of favoring greater collective engagement and also actions specifically directed to the management team, such as differentiated training and promotion of horizontal exchanges through learning communities, with exchanges, collaboration and support between schools (lateral training) (BERKOWITZ; BIER; MCCAULEY, 2016; VINHA *et. al.*, 2017; ZECHI, 2014).

Finally, we also observed that 22% of the respondents pointed out the difficulty in relating theory and practice, suggesting that, in the formative moments, there were more practical activities linked to everyday school life; however, they emphasized that there was dialogue and redesign of the actions of the trainers, in an attempt to remedy this difficulty.

Studies (BERKOWITZ *et al.*, 2016; FRICK *et al.* 2019; MENIN; BATAGLIA; ZECHI, 2013) have shown that one of the biggest difficulties for the development of successful projects and interventions in this area is the lack of consistent training that expands the possibilities of knowledge of procedures and processes and bases them, allowing to go beyond specific actions based on common sense. In the program analyzed, the teacher training stood out as positive, but some professionals still persisted in more authoritarian practices in relationships and in the presence of conflicts. The analysis of the answers shows the difficulty in transforming actions and cultures established in schools. Such changes require the planning and implementation of long-term actions, respecting the needs and pace of each institution and its professionals (URUÑELA-NÁJERA, 2018), which is also why it is important that a program in this area be planned to be developed over several years.

### **Final remarks**

This study brought as its main contribution the analysis of the program "Ethical Coexistence at School" in the perception of teachers and managers of participating schools, evaluating the transformations, contributions and limitations of the program after its end.

The collected perceptions were diverse and materialized in concepts, attitudes, and shared learning throughout the implementation period. We highlight as relevant the fact that most respondents defend the role of the teacher/manager and the school to deal with behavioral problems and act preventively to improve the quality of coexistence, without adopting coercive means or social conformity, but favoring the development of student autonomy, which denotes an important change in conception about the assumption of the school's role in this process.

The participants also reported several changes brought about by the program, highlighting the theoretical subsidies that foster practices for the improvement of coexistence and greater security and employment of constructive strategies to deal with conflicts, the appreciation of student protagonism and the strengthening of respect and dialogue in interpersonal relationships, which is corroborated by Vinha, Nunes, and Moro (2019). As for procedures, assemblies and help teams were highlighted by the participants as very important for ethical coexistence.

It was identified the lack of engagement of some professionals and that some intended transformations, especially regarding the establishment of more dialogic relationships and the expansion of spaces for participation of professionals, did not advance as much as expected in two schools. The schools that presented the least transformation were those that had managers with less engagement and a more centralizing posture, with little involvement with the program.

Levin and Fullan (2008) warn that cultures do not change by imposition, but by the specific displacement of existing norms, structures, and processes by others. In this sense, the training of professionals, mainly based on reflection of the reality experienced, is necessary for changes in paradigms and beliefs and for the expansion of knowledge, although this does not guarantee that it will result in the improvement or transformation of new practices. It is also of no use for a program to act only on processes or structures and not transform the values, beliefs, and conceptions of those involved. The process of cultural change takes time and depends on the modeling of new values, practices, and procedures that are expected to replace the existing ones, requiring efficient planning, in-depth training, employment of energy, constant monitoring and support. For the authors, this process must involve some pressure and support: pressure implies agreed-upon transformation goals, follow-up, and transparent evaluation; support involves technical support, development of new competencies, access to new ideas, more time for learning and collaboration.

The program sought to act in this direction, with shared goals, constant training, monitoring, advice and collaboration. However, a relevant factor that should be considered by programs that aim for deeper transformations in culture is the need to have a long period to be developed and consolidated, usually longer than 5-6 years (BELLEI; VANNI; VALENZUELA; CONTRERAS, 2016), which did not occur in CEE, which lasted only 24 months. For greater achievement of the objectives, it is recommended to extend the implementation and monitoring period. It is also recommended that there be greater coordination between trainers, school, and the Municipal Secretariat of Education team.

The data discussed in this work showed that, even with the difficulties, the construction of ethical coexistence in the school environment is desirable and possible, but implies continued training and support for the changes and challenges faced by the school, so that, gradually and in agreement with the school community, intentional and systematized actions are implemented, coordinated among themselves, included in the Coexistence Plans and in the Political-Pedagogical Projects. It must respond to real school objectives and problems identified as relevant by its community and whose solutions must be collectively agreed upon.

In fact, as a place of coexistence with diversity and learning to live in the public space, the school is an ideal place to learn to live in a participatory, respectful, and ethical way, strengthening democratic values. The results of this study indicate the validity of investing in training and monitoring the transformation processes in schools in this area.

Countries such as Chile, Colombia and Spain, among others, have public policies related to the prevention and mitigation of school violence and the promotion of participatory, inclusive and democratic coexistence, including professional development plans for teachers and certain procedures, such as the implementation of Coexistence Commissions in schools, conflict mediation processes, valuing youth participation and protagonism, collective construction of the Coexistence Plan, among others (SALLÁN; BARRERA-COROMINAS, 2014). In Brazil, although article 12 of the Law of Directives and Bases states that schools have the duty to "[...] promote measures to raise awareness, prevent and combat all types of violence, especially systematic bullying, within schools" and "establish actions aimed at promoting the culture of peace in schools" (BRAZIL, 1996), currently, the public policy in this area fostered by the Ministry of Education is the National Program of Civic-Military Schools (BRAZIL, 2019), which aims to deploy 216 schools in this model by 2023.

In such schools, management is shared with the military, with teachers and coordinators forming the pedagogical team, and police officers the team responsible for disciplining the students. Disciplinary mechanisms are adopted, offering civilian students an education based on military procedures, rites, and values, such as the containment of conflict, the reinforcement and worship of national symbols, the imposition of rigid rules, uncritical obedience to the hierarchy, and inflexible discipline. With this, they predominantly strengthen in the students moral heteronomy, with obedience to authorities imposed by relations of coercion and unilateral respect, while important experiences that favor the development of socioemotional skills and democratic values are not lived.

Contrary to this proposal, we defend that one of the main purposes of education is moral autonomy, with the voluntary, conscious, and rational assumption of values that the individual himself legitimates and considers as valid for himself and for all human beings, no matter who they are. For this form of assumption of values to occur, individuals must live in environments where conflicts are learning opportunities, where there is participation and relationships of trust, cooperation, and mutual respect prevail. Thus, it is necessary to offer alternatives to the civic-military school model and to the reductionist proposals of increased rigor and control, given the difficulty of educational institutions in dealing with coexistence problems.

Discussing the model of school coexistence implies debating the kind of society we want to build. It is imperative to present other models adapted to the reality of Brazilian schools, duly grounded in research, as evidenced by the experiences of other countries that have already advanced in public policies in this area.

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