

TOWARDS A PEDAGOGICAL MODEL FOR AGROECOLOGICAL EDUCATION FROM A PEASANT AND INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVE: ADVANCES, TENSIONS AND CHALLENGES IN BRAZIL AND MEXICO

POR UM MODELO PEDAGÓGICO PARA UMA EDUCAÇÃO AGROECOLÓGICA EM PERSPECTIVA CAMPONESA E INDÍGENA: AVANÇOS, TENSÕES E DESAFIOS NO BRASIL E NO MÉXICO

POR UM MODELO PEDAGÓGICO PARA UNA EDUCACIÓN AGROECOLÓGICA EN PERSPECTIVA CAMPESINA E INDÍGENA: AVANCES, TENSIONES Y DESAFÍOS EN BRASIL Y EN MÉXICO

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ABSTRACT: This article presents the conception, advances, challenges and tensions that emerge from the proposition of an educational-pedagogical model for agroecology. To this end, we present two educational experiences of micro-contexts in Mexico and Brazil, articulated by indigenous and peasant movements: the *U Yits Ka'an* Ecological Agriculture School, in Maní, Yucatán, Mexico, and the *João dos Santos de Oliveira* Countryside High School, a countryside school located in the Settlement 25 de Maio, in Madalena, Ceará, Brazil. We point out the diversity, complexity and combinations that permeate the strategies of the subjects in claiming agroecology in the educational and formative process of both schools, and their interfaces in the dispute for an educational model linked to the socio-historical context of the indigenous and peasant struggle in both countries.

KEYWORDS: Agroecology. Education. Pedagogical models. Peasants. Indigenous people.

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RESUMO: O presente artigo apresenta a concepção, avanços, desafios e tensões que emergem da proposição de um modelo educativo-pedagógico para a agroecologia. Para tanto, apresentamos duas experiências educativas de microcontextos do México e do Brasil, articuladas por movimentos indígenas e camponeses: a Escola de Agricultura Ecológica U YITS KA'AN, em Maní, Yucatán, México, e a Escola de Ensino Médio do Campo João dos Santos, uma escola do campo situada no Assentamento 25 de Maio, em Madalena, Ceará, Brasil. Apontamos a diversidade, complexidade e combinações que perpassam as estratégias dos sujeitos na reivindicação da agroecologia no processo educativo e formativo de ambas as escolas, e suas interfaces na disputa de um modelo educativo atrelado ao contexto sócio-histórico da luta indígena e camponesa dos dois países.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Agroecologia. Educação. Modelos pedagógicos. Camponeses. Indígenas.

RESUMEN: Este artículo presenta la concepción, los avances, los desafíos y las tensiones que surgen de la propuesta de un modelo educativo-pedagógico para la agroecología. Para ello, presentamos dos experiencias educativas de microcontextos de México y Brasil, articuladas por movimientos indígenas y campesinos: la Escuela de Agricultura Ecológica U YITS KA'AN, en Maní, Yucatán, México, y la Escuela del Campo João dos Santos, una escuela del campo ubicada en el Asentamiento 25 de Maio, en Madalena, Ceará, Brasil. Señalamos la diversidad, complejidad y combinaciones que impregnan las estrategias de los sujetos en la demanda de agroecología en el proceso educativo y formativo de ambas escuelas, y sus interfaces en la disputa por un modelo educativo vinculado al contexto socio-histórico de la lucha indígena y campesina en ambos países.

PALABRAS-CLAVE: Agroecología. Educación. Modelos pedagógicos. Campesinos. Indígenas.

Introduction

This article presents the conception, advances, challenges and tensions that emerge from the proposition of an educational-pedagogical model for agroecology. To this end, we present two educational experiences of rural microcontexts in Mexico and Brazil, which articulate indigenous and peasant organizations: the *U YITS KA'AN* Ecological Agriculture School, in Maní, Yucatán, Mexico, and the *Countryside High School João dos Santos de Oliveira*, a country school located in the Assentamento 25 de Maio, in Madalena, Ceará, Brazil.

We point out the diversity, complexity and combinations that permeate the strategies of the subjects in claiming agroecology in the educational and formative process of both schools, and their interfaces in the dispute for an educational model linked to the socio-historical context of the indigenous and peasant struggle in both countries.

For that, a qualitative methodological strategy, of ethnographic character, was developed, using investigation techniques such as participant observation in the analyzed schools, as well as in other spaces of political articulation constructed by the research subjects.

In addition to the introduction, the article is organized into three sections: the first is intended to present the educational experiences developed in micro-contexts in Brazil and Mexico, where the analyzed schools will be presented. In the second section, we present the strategies articulated by the subjects to propose a pedagogical model for agroecological education and, in the last section, we point out the challenges related to the dispute over an educational process from the indigenous and peasant perspective.

Educational experiences in microcontexts of the countryside in Mexico and Brazil

In different Latin American countries we find educational experiences of a local, national and regional character in which the pedagogical process is built with a view to boosting the strengthening of identity, culture, subjectivity, the sense of belonging to the territory, or even of defense of the territory as a space for the reproduction of life, in an alternative perspective to the western development paradigm. For the purposes of this analysis, we present two experiences that articulate peasant and indigenous organizations and are developed in two microcontexts of the countryside in Mexico and Brazil: the *U Yits Ka'na* Ecological Agriculture School, an agroecological formation center for indigenous Mayan peasants, located in Maní, in the state of Yucatán, Mexico, and the *João dos Santos de Oliveira Countryside High School*, a so-called "countryside school" (*Escola do Campo*) located in the *25 de Maio* Settlement, in in Madalena, Itapipoca, Ceará, Brazil.

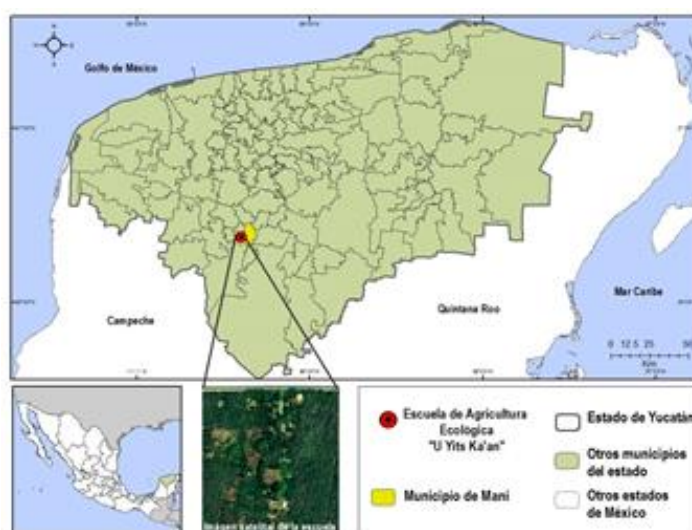
In both, we find a bet on the construction of a pedagogical model for education in agroecology, the result of a political process of defending the territory as a space for the reproduction of life, from the indigenous and peasant perspective.

The U Yits Ka'na Ecological Agriculture School

In southern Mexico, in the state of Yucatán, is the municipality of Maní, where the U Yits Ka'na School of Ecological Agriculture (which in the Mayan language means “dew that falls from the sky”) is located, created in the 1990s. This municipality is an emblematic place of the Mayan resistance, as it was there that the “Auto de fé of Maní” took place, when a considerable number of the sacred codes and images of the Mayan culture were incinerated, on

12th of July 1562. The historical episode is considered one of the bloodiest scenes of colonial historiography on the continent and an expression of the epistemicide provoked in colonization contexts (GALEANO, 1991; SUÁREZ, 2014). For this reason, the existence of the school in this location is, in itself, an act of rebellion, persistence and resistance by contemporary Mayan populations.

Figure 1 – Location of U Yits Ka'na Ecological Agriculture School



Source: Devised by the authors

In 1991, a group of priests linked to Liberation Theology and Pastoral da Terra, who worked in various locations in the state of Yucatán, proposed the creation of a formation center for peasants with the aim of promoting sustainable processes of alternatives to development, based on two axes: the revaluation of traditional culture and ecological agriculture (MACOSSAY *et al.*, 2005). These priests had contact with peasants who participated in the creation of the “Peasant to Peasant” Method, a social methodology for territorializing agroecology created in Guatemala and based on the horizontal transmission of agroecological knowledge between peasant families to solve agricultural and livestock production problems and for the promotion of agroecological practices (HOLT-JIMÉNEZ, 2008; MACHÍN-SOSA *et al.*, 2013).

In 1994, land was acquired on the outskirts of the municipal capital of Maní, thanks to funding from the German foundation Misereor, an international cooperation institution. With the available resources, the necessary infrastructure for the functioning of a school was built. The installations were completed in late 1995. That same year, in a joint effort between priests and professors from some universities and NGOs, the first school curriculum was developed (MACOSSAY *et al.*, 2005). From 1996 to 2005, classes were given at the school to the peasants

in the region, in a semi-boarding system. In 2005, funding from the Misereor Foundation came to an end, rendering the boarding school system inoperable. In 2009, a system of sub-schools was created, with the objective of having greater contact with the communities in the region, and of having a closer link with rural families, establishing formation centers coordinated by the graduates themselves (HERNÁNDEZ, 2015). There were many internal, external and allied actors that the school had, including Catholic priests, Mayan Yucatecan and Guatemalan peasants, educational institutions, national and international NGOs, as well as other foundations.

The U Yits Ka'an school is an agroecological formation school or agroecology school. The formative process is based on “meaningful learning”, which privileges practice over theory and values the ancestral knowledge of the Mayan indigenous peasant culture, based on a teaching pedagogy “from peasant to peasant” (CEBALLOS, 2014). From this perspective, peasant schools imply an alternative way of thinking, doing and acting in relation to formal education (MUÑOZ, 2013), as they conceive the formative process in close ties with their territories. The educational and formative processes related to producers, peasants and indigenous peoples seek to recover and reaffirm the importance of local knowledge as a contribution to their own intervention in a proposal that is initially disciplinary (technical/productive), but which later develops a collective reflection and generates the conditions for an exchange of knowledge in their territories.

An example of this is the dialogue built with the National Network of Rural Schools, of which the school has been part since 2003. This network works through regional articulations and the school has been one of them. The participation of the U Yits Ka'na Ecological Agriculture School in these spaces contributed to the discussion on the definition of the concept of rural school and on what its guiding principles should be. In these meetings, the importance of valuing culture and reaffirming peasant and indigenous identity is highlighted. Likewise, they build consensus around the principles that guide pedagogical mediations in so-called "countryside school" contexts, such as spirituality, equity, communitarianism, community, interculturality, ethics, sustainability and solidarity, while assuming the commitment to defend and preserve Mother Earth and a coexistence with nature (MATA, 2013).

One of the main pedagogical principles of the school is the liberation and decolonization of peasants in the Maya region based on the work of reconstruction, historical and theological re-signification; and that, from this ideological base, technical, agroecological, forestry, artisanal and traditional medicine knowledge is included and transformed, among many other activities developed by them, in coherence with community life. In this sense, the strategy of *U*

Yits Ka'an is the (re)construction of the community, through the promotion of the study of its organization, articulation and interrelationship of its projects, with a view to redefining the identity of the Mayan peoples and the principles from *Ma'alob Kuxtal* or from good living to a rebuilding of the community.⁵

Within the scope of the school's pedagogical work, agroecology has been used as one of the main tools in this process of rebuilding the community's social fabric. However, the crucial element of the school is that the agroecological approach is not limited to food production, which normally occurs in other rural schools where technical-productive knowledge is basically provided for this purpose. Since its beginning in the internship stage, one of its formation axes was the human-social, which included spirituality in its indigenous Mayan aspect, that is, the school was concerned not only with doing, but also with being. This made it possible to establish an alternative model that did not start from a productive logic; instead, the school tried to get participants to reconnect with their environment and question their reality, starting from the reconfiguration of their identity based on the rescue of their history as Mayan peoples. Based on the above, we affirm that the school integrates a diversity of proposals and pedagogical paths that, based on significant learning, in their daily life and in their approach to everyday life, aims to achieve the construction of sociability in the community.

The activities of the U Yits Ka'na School of Ecological Agriculture articulate three aspects: Spiritual (E); Identification (I) and Productive (P). The first two are directly related to the strengthening of Mayan identity and spirituality, especially in the reconfiguration of historical memory in the educational environment. The third is linked to the promotion of agroecological education. Although certain activities are carried out in a single dimension, be it spiritual, identity or productive, the school seeks the interrelationship between the dimensions. These processes of productive-spiritual (SP), spiritual-identity (IE), identity-productive (IP) and spiritual-identity-productive (IPE) activities enrich the educational proposal of the school. On the other hand, the school develops a pedagogical approach to its school calendar in conjunction with the calendar of community life, which includes a historical-ritual focus of the Mayan cosmovision and culture, such as the celebration of the Day of *Xunán Kab* (name which designates the stingless bee), in addition to the use of the Mayan calendar for traditional medicine.

⁵ All information in this section that does not have a bibliographic citation is therefore the product of ethnographic work, participant observation and interviews conducted during the investigation in 2017 and 2018.

In short, the school's pedagogical strategy is to develop activities that correlate spiritual and community identity with productive aspects. This reinforces its conviction about the harmony between these two aspects of human formation, as a way of rebuilding a dignified and fulfilling lifestyle, that is, according to *Ma'alob Kuxtal's* principles of good living, in radical opposition to the productivist and individualist approach, predominant in capitalist rationality.

Although the *U Yits Ka'na* Ecological Agriculture School is managed by priests, it articulates several organizations, including those with a strong focus on the Mexican indigenous and peasant struggle, such as the base communities of the Zapatista Movement, the Indigenous Pastoral, the National Union of Peasant and Autonomous Organizations (UNORCA), a member organization of *Via Campesina* in Mexico, and other peasant organizations in the Yucatán.

João dos Santos de Oliveira Countryside High School

In 2010, in Ceará, the MST (Landless Workers Movement) starts the operation of the first four countryside schools destined to high school education, the result of a political agenda of demands, with the State Department of Education, of construction of high schools in rural settlement areas. As a result of this historic struggle, four countryside schools⁶ were initially guaranteed: E.E.M. João dos Santos de Oliveira (Countryside School João Sem Terra), at the 25 de Maio settlement in Madalena-CE; E.E.M. Florestan Fernandes, at the Santana Settlement in Monsenhor Tabosa-CE; E.E.M. Nazaré Flor in the Maceió Settlement in Itapipoca-CE and E.E.M. Francisco Barros in the Lagoa do Mineiro Settlement in Itarema-CE⁷. It is important to highlight the participation of settled families in the entire process of implementing High Schools in Ceará, actively debating in internal assemblies, in spaces articulated by the Education Sector and in meetings with the State Department of Education. Even the choice of the name of each school was made by each settlement.

The so-called Countryside High Schools are oriented according to the educational and pedagogical principles of so-called "Countryside Education,"⁸ and governed by the regulatory framework of the National Countryside Education Policy (BARBOSA, 2014; 2015b; 2016) and an educational agenda articulated by the Education sector of the MST, with emphasis on: public, free and quality school to meet the educational demand in areas of rural settlements of the

⁶ There are currently 10 Countryside High Schools in areas of rural settlements in Ceará, in addition to two other schools that are under construction.

⁷ Idem.

⁸ In Brazil social movements reject what is called "rural education," as being formulated by the state a second-class for rural people, and use "Countryside Education" to refer to education by and for the peoples of the countryside (BARBOSA, 2017).

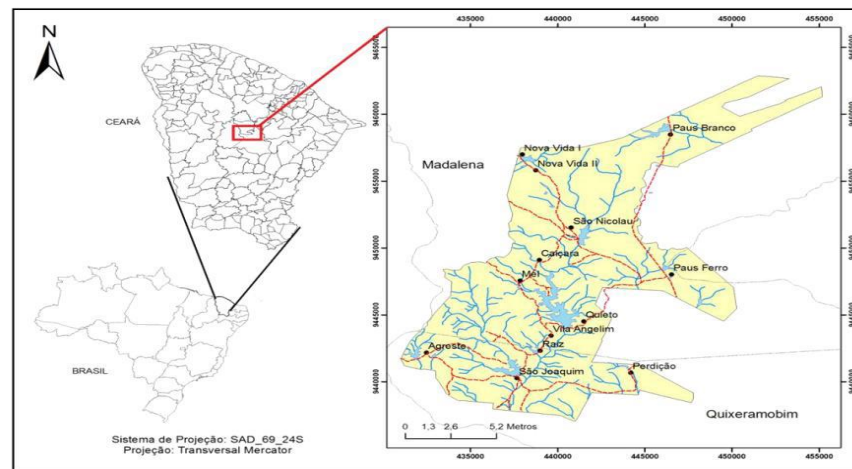
MST's agrarian reform, from Kindergarten to University Education; the right to study in the settlement, camp, in rural communities; with a pedagogical proposal focused on the issues of their reality and with educators engaged in this context; schools able to develop technical education and professional formation to work in the field; democratic management of educational processes, with the effective participation of settled Landless families; specific policy for the selection and formation of teachers to work in countryside schools in settlements and encampments; among others (MST-CE, 2012).

The so-called Countryside High Schools are oriented according to the educational and pedagogical principles of Countryside Education and governed by the regulatory framework of the National Countryside Education Policy (BARBOSA, 2014; 2015b; 2016) and an educational agenda articulated by the Education sector of the MST, with emphasis on: public, free and quality school to meet the educational demand in areas of rural settlements of the MST's agrarian reform, from Kindergarten to University Education; the right to study in the settlement, camp, in rural communities; with a pedagogical proposal focused on the issues of their reality and with educators engaged in this context; schools able to develop technical education and professional formation to work in the field; democratic management of educational processes, with the effective participation of settled Landless families; specific policy for the selection and training of teachers to work in rural schools in settlements and encampments; among others (MST-CE, 2012).

João dos Santos de Oliveira Countryside High School is located in the 25 de Maio settlement, in the municipality of Madalena/CE. This settlement is the first area conquered by the MST in Ceará, covering 22,992 hectares, associated with the direct and indirect number of families benefiting from the implementation of the school. The 25 de Maio Settlement is characterized by its physical and social organization, consisting of 428 settled families, approximately 2,000 people. It is divided into 12 (twelve) communities from 1 Cooperative, 18 associations and a General Council formed by representatives of the Cooperative and MST associations, which plan and organize the general management of the settlement. The General Council's role is to discuss the political, organizational, social, cultural, environmental, educational and housing issues of the 428 settled families that live in the communities.⁹

⁹ Ibidem.

Figure 2 – Geographical location of the 25 de Maio Settlement – Madalena/CE



Source: HIDROSED archives

The organization of the pedagogical work of João dos Santos de Oliveira Countryside High School aims to engender the educational and philosophical principles of Movement Pedagogy (CALDART, 2004) and Study Complexes (SAPELLI *et al.*, 2015), based on the postulates of soviet pedagogy. Furthermore, the school has a cross-cutting curricular structure, which articulates three integrative curricular components, namely: Projects, Studies and Research (PEP), Work Organization and Productive Techniques (OTTP) and Community Social Practices (PSC), pedagogically organizing the contents of the curriculum in its articulation with research, work and social intervention. There are a variety of educational times: Formation and mystical times; Class time; Individual study time; Working time; Workshop time and cultural activities; Seminar time; Organic time and Sports and leisure time. The existence of these educational times is due to the strengthening of the internal organicity of the school and of it with the settled families and the MST itself (PPP, 2010).

Each Countryside High School has the so-called Experimental Fields, an area of 10 hectares integrated with schools and destined for learning agroecological practices fostered by the integrating curricular components OTTP, PEP and PSC. The pedagogical intention of the Education Sector of the MST consists of articulating countryside schools to the process of territorialization of agroecology as a strategy for defending peasant territories and strengthening peasant agriculture and popular agrarian reform. To this end, there is a pedagogical and formative work articulated by the Education Sector of the MST for the insertion of agroecology, its principles and fostering methodologies in basic education (CALDART *et al.*, 2015; RIBEIRO *et al.*, 2017; ROSSET, 2017), while promoting the territorialization of agroecology through the Methodology “From Peasant to Peasant” in the peasant territories of the state (FERNANDES; BARBOSA, 2020).

From the challenge of the official educational model to the proposition of an Agroecological Education

By analyzing educational processes erected in countryside micro-contexts, particularly in Mexico and Brazil, we identified that it is still a challenge for the National Education Policy of each country to link the conception of an educational-pedagogical process that fully meets all education demands, especially in rural contexts (BARBOSA, 2017; GÓMEZ-SOLLANO, 2017). In addition, one of the main challenges posed to the management of public policies in education is to understand that the concept of education coming from peasant and indigenous organizations is not limited to claiming access to school, or even the existence of school and formal education in their territories. These organizations conceive education in an omnilateral sense, of recovering the humanization of social relations, in a Freirian sense, and of a formative process that re-establishes the link with nature. Based on the collected data, we created a table of the axes that articulate the pedagogical model of the schools under analysis and their differences in relation to the school pattern of the national education policy of the countries in question.¹⁰

Table 1 – Axes that articulate the pedagogical model of schools

Pedagogical model axes	Ecological Agriculture School <i>U Yits Ka'na</i>	João dos Santos Countryside High School	Official school standard
School Structure and Function	Peasant school, autonomous and for agroecological formation.	Public school, occupied by peasants and for formation in formal education (Countryside education) and for agroecology.	Public school for formation in formal education and with a National Common Curricular Base.
Subject profile	Belonging to indigenous and peasant communities, and with interfaces with some indigenous and peasant movements.	Belonging to MST agrarian reform settlements.	Belonging to urban and rural contexts.
Collective identity	Strengthening of the Indigenous and Peasant Maya Identity.	Strengthening the peasant identity.	It corresponds to a homogenization of identity articulated with the principles of western modernity from the individual to the citizen/citizen.
Motivational speech	- Mayan Spirituality; - Well Living; - Agroecology.	- Peasant mystique; - Popular Agrarian Reform; - Agroecology.	Formation for work.
Political-pedagogical project	- Mayan Spirituality;	- Countryside Education;	Variable according to each school.

¹⁰ Due to the limits of the article's length, we will emphasize schools, pointing out their challenges in relation to the National Education Policy of the respective countries.

	- Defense of territory and commons.	- Defense of peasant territory and food sovereignty	
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Source: Devised by the authors

The data presented demonstrate the diversity, complexity and combinations existing in educational processes of countryside micro-contexts. For the case of the analyzed educational experiences, we identified the construction of strategies of the subjects in the claim of agroecology in their educational and formative process. This claim is linked to the socio-historical processes of defense of their territories and reverberates in the dispute for an educational model articulated with the historical trajectory and political demands of the indigenous and peasant struggle in both countries.

We argue that the structuring axes of the pedagogical model of both schools presented above, namely, the structure and function of the school, the profile of the subjects, the collective identity, the motivating discourse and the political-pedagogical project of the school, require a permanent process of elaboration of strategies by the subjects, in order to guarantee the pedagogical intentionality of an educational formation for agroecology. In this sense, we observe some common strategies that are also present in other Latin American educational contexts (BARBOSA; ROSSET, 2017): 1. The construction of a theoretical-epistemic conception of Education as a historical project of knowledge; 2. The construction of an educational theory and a pedagogical model of their own; 3. The political articulation of indigenous and peasant organizations in the educational process and 4. Agroecology as a training matrix.

It is worth emphasizing the occupation character of the school for its transformation. In the micro-context of Brazil, the MST recognizes that the dispute for a public education policy dispenses with a process of school transformation, since it is shaped based on formation based on capitalist rationality. Therefore, they consider that there is an occupation of the school, the first step to start its transformation into a peasant school, whose educational process includes formation to value the peasant territory and its way of being and living.

These strategies respond to the questioning of formative rationality within the scope of the National Education Policy, which aims at an educational process concerning the modern western capitalist paradigm, of cultural homogenization, driven by national States and which often does not recognize regional and social differences. In rural areas, historically, public policies for education, for the most part, are not designed considering the rural reality, since a common national base is maintained to meet the educational demand in both realities: urban and rural. It is important to emphasize that the defense of differentiated public policies for

different realities does not mean that there is a superiority of one over the other, but rather specificities to be considered.

On the other hand, indigenous and peasant organizations increasingly demand educational formation to remain in their territories in defense of community life, the commons, autonomy, food sovereignty, all of which are considered essential for a dignified life. In this sense, agroecology emerges as a formative, productive matrix and political project for confronting agrarian capitalism in the countryside, built from a politicized perspective and from a historical subject. For this reason, these experiences seek to trigger an agroecological educational process that allows them to strengthen another conception of territory and human relations, in harmony with nature.

This understanding opens the way for the consolidation of an Onto-Epistemic Paradigm of the Countryside (BARBOSA, 2019), erected within the scope of the struggles undertaken by indigenous peoples and peasants in Latin America. It is precisely in this educational and political process that the processes of defense of material and immaterial territories, recovery and socialization of ancestral knowledge, of popular knowledge, are potentiated, as a fundamental contribution in the scope of struggles undertaken in micro-contexts and their reverberations and articulations at other scales national and regional.

In the context analyzed, this implies thinking about a set of challenges posed to schools for an educational and pedagogical approach to agroecology beyond the school context or an educational policy, since what is aimed at is the territorialization of agroecology (ROSSET, 2017). Among the challenges, we highlight (ROSSET, 2017):

- ❖ Transform these schools into action axes for territorial agroecology processes;
- ❖ Develop teaching methods for recovering and valuing ancestral knowledge and knowledge inherited from the family and community nucleus;
- ❖ Transversalize agroecology throughout the curriculum, giving it an agroecological focus;
- ❖ Promotion of knowledge dialogue between the diversity of knowledge;
- ❖ Transforming the school into an epicenter of an agroecological process.

The analysis of the two educational experiences in countryside micro-contexts demonstrates the effort to build a conception of education and a pedagogical model that transcend the social function of the school from the perspective of public policies, sometimes restricted to school education and the labor market. Without giving up this social function of the school, since young people want to have formation that contributes to the possibilities of

entering university or the job market, they also claim that the school can re-establish the humanizing dimension in their educational formation. In the light of indigenous and peasant organizations, this represents the reestablishment and strengthening of the bond with their territories and the possibility of building an emancipatory horizon.

Final considerations

In this article, we try to present two educational experiences that are developed in micro-contexts of the Mexican and Brazilian countryside. In spite of the challenges of a synthesis of the experiences in question, we believe that they shed light for us to think about what a national education policy elaborated and managed by national States should respond to, a priori.

In other words, micro-contexts are fundamental to identify the concept of education articulated by different subjects and, at the same time, how strategies are articulated to propose a pedagogical model that meets not only the educational demand, but also the political demand of the communities and their organizations. In this sense, Countryside Education refutes the concept of the field as a place of backwardness, of the archaic, a place where no public education policy takes place, as there was no school, or when they existed, it did not meet the educational demand in its totality, as conditions were precarious.

By claiming themselves as participants in the process of building an educational and pedagogical proposal, the indigenous and peasant communities express their desire for education to fulfill its social role, in the sense of forming new women, new men and new social relations between themselves and with nature.

As a result of the struggle of organized workers, countryside education has not only built a new reality, but has also been forming new men and women. We emphasize that the U Yits Ka'na Ecological Agriculture School and the João dos Santos de Oliveira Countryside High School are the result of a social process of deep questioning of the colonial character that is still predominant in public education policies. In this sense, they can also be considered educational experiences of pedagogical decolonization, since they claim other formative matrices that emerge from their identities, from the cosmovision and from their link with the territory.

Regarding the challenges, in addition to those addressed in the article, we highlight the permanent challenge of breaking away from the imposed model of traditional education and its colonial and banking character. For this reason, schools excel in strengthening spirituality and collective identity as fundamental elements of the organicity of the educational process within schools and their interfaces with community life.

The educational experiences analyzed point to the centrality of differentiated curricular matrices as a strategy to challenge this educational model historically constructed to meet the aspirations of a rationality linked to capitalism. In this pedagogical process, agroecology constitutes a fundamental formative matrix for the strengthening of the community fabric and the territory itself from the indigenous and peasant perspective.

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