

Articles

Professional and technological education for young people and adults: analyzing Proeja within the context of IFF

Educação profissional e tecnológica para jovens e adultos: analisando o Proeja no âmbito do IFF

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Abstract

Federal institutions play an important role in the democratization of education in Brazil, with a diversity of offerings at different levels and modalities. Among them, the National Program for the Integration of Vocational Education with Basic Education in the Modality of Education for Young People and Adults (Proeja), established in 2006, stands out. This article aims to analyze the development trajectory of Proeja and its implementation at the Instituto Federal Fluminense (IFF). To this end, an exploratory and descriptive approach was adopted, based on a documentary and bibliographic review of legislation, institutional documents and statistical data. The results show progress in the institutionalization of Proeja, but also reveal persistent challenges, such as the low supply of vacancies, structural difficulties and the need for specific teacher training for the modality. It is concluded that, although Proeja represents an innovative educational policy aimed at social inclusion and the comprehensive education of young people and adults, its consolidation at the IFF still depends on structural, pedagogical and political reconfigurations that guarantee its effectiveness.

Keywords: Proeja; EPT; comprehensive training; inclusion.

Resumo

Os Institutos Federais desempenham papel importante na democratização da educação no Brasil, com diversidade de ofertas em diferentes níveis e modalidades. Entre elas, destaca-se o Programa Nacional de Integração da Educação Profissional com a Educação Básica na Modalidade de Educação de Jovens e Adultos (Proeja), instituído em 2006. Este artigo tem como objetivo analisar a trajetória de desenvolvimento do Proeja e sua implementação no Instituto Federal Fluminense (IFF). Para isso, adotou-se uma abordagem exploratória e descritiva, com base em revisão documental e bibliográfica de legislações, documentos institucionais e dados estatísticos. Os resultados evidenciam avanços na institucionalização do Proeja, mas também revelam desafios persistentes, como a baixa oferta de vagas, as dificuldades estruturais e a necessidade de formação docente específica para a modalidade. Conclui-se que, embora o Proeja represente uma política educacional inovadora voltada à inclusão social e à formação integral de jovens e adultos, sua consolidação no IFF ainda depende de reconfigurações estruturais, pedagógicas e políticas que garantam sua efetividade.

Palavras-chave: Proeja; EPT; formação integral; inclusão.

INTRODUCTION

Brazil's educational legislation spells out an education policy that is linked to general education, with basic education content, and professional training, focused on the issues and practices of the world of work. The National Education Guidelines and Bases Law (LDBEN), in its Article 2, ratifies that "[...] education, a duty of the family and the State, inspired by the principles

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Study conducted at Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia Fluminense (IFF), Campos dos Goytacazes, RJ, Brasil.



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of freedom and the ideals of human solidarity, has as its purpose the full development of the student, their preparation for the exercise of citizenship and their qualification for work” (Brasil, 1996, p. 1).

In this context, Youth and Adult Education (EJA) in Brazil, covering primary and secondary levels, has played an important role in the process of democratizing education, providing conditions for the development of those who previously did not have access to it during the regular period. On the other hand, this modality is marked by discontinuity and insufficient public policies to deal with the potential demand and fulfillment of the right to quality public education. The EJA is inserted in the Brazilian scenario as a redemption of a social debt with men and women, young people and adults excluded from the educational process (Coelho; Gonçalves, 2012), so it is up to the government and society to guarantee their rights, under the terms established by the Federal Constitution (Brasil, 1988).

Developed in formal and non-formal educational spaces, the EJA is the result of individual initiatives, social groups and state actions, especially in the field of literacy (Brasil, 2007a). Historically, this type of education has been aimed primarily at people from the lower classes, whose social rights, including access to education and work, have historically been denied. It is, therefore, a public that has specificities, trajectories marked by inequalities and expectations linked to their socio-economic realities. However, although the EJA has been legally recognized as a type of education since the promulgation of LDBEN No. 9.394/1996, this recognition has not been enough to effectively ensure the right to schooling for this public.

Faced with this scenario of educational inequalities, and in line with the principle of equal opportunities for young people and workers, the National Program for the Integration of Professional Education with Basic Education in the Youth and Adult Education Modality (Proeja) was established in 2006, covering the entire national territory (Brasil, 2005a, 2006a). The program was set up as an educational policy of the federal government that aims to guarantee young people and adults who have not completed primary or secondary school the opportunity to resume their studies, integrating, in an articulated way, the elevation of schooling with a technical professional qualification at secondary level.

In 2008, through Law No. 11.892 of December 29, 2008, Brazil witnessed an important milestone in professional and technological education: the creation of the Federal Institutes of Education, Science and Technology. The creation of the institutes stems from the history, role and specific relationships that Professional and Technological Education (EPT) establishes with science and technology, regional and local development, and the world of work, through the link with raising the schooling of young people and adult workers (Brasil, 2008b).

During the process of expanding Professional and Technological Education (EPT), the Federal Government created the Federal Network of Professional, Scientific and Technological Education (RFEPCT) and the Fluminense Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology (IFF). Located in the north of the state of Rio de Janeiro, in the south-east of Brazil, the IFF plays a strategic role in expanding EFA in its catchment area, including the offer of Proeja, through actions aimed at its implementation on the various campuses.

The Institute not only represents the internalization of free, quality public education, but is also committed to building collectivity as a guiding principle, based on the promotion of equality in social, economic, geographical and cultural diversity. It is also linked to policies on work and income, social, environmental, educational and sectoral development, among others ((Brasil, 2010a, 2010b). This set of elements constitutes a differential that marks the genesis of the constitution of a social identity of its own, both for the agents and for the institutions inserted in this context.

In this context, through an exploratory and descriptive documentary and bibliographic review (Gil, 2019), this paper aims to analyze the development of Proeja offers, considering the challenges, advances and limitations that mark this educational policy in the Federal Network. Reflecting on Proeja implies understanding its social functions and purposes, as well as its historical tensions. Likewise, it is necessary to engage in a dialog with the principles that underpin a popular, democratic and emancipatory school, as advocated by Freire (2001), who sees the EJA as a political, ethical and knowledge-producing act (Vasques; Anjos; Souza, 2019).

To carry out the study, the analysis covered laws, decrees, ordinances, circular letters from the Secretariat for Professional and Technological Education (SETEC), as well as resolutions and opinions issued by the National Education Council (CNE). Within the IFF, institutional documents were examined, such as the Institutional Development Plan (PDI) and the Institutional Political-Pedagogical Project (PPI). The narrative bibliographical review was based on national and international studies on the subject, selected on the basis of criteria of relevance defined by the researcher.

This paper begins with a brief description of the history of the RFEPCT and the IFF, highlighting the legal and institutional frameworks that underpin their creation and expansion. Next, the process of implementing Proeja, its historical trajectory, the conceptual and structural references that support it, as well as the consequences of this path for the implementation of the offer in the context of the IFF. The final section presents considerations on the challenges faced and the prospects for continuing and strengthening this modality. The study seeks to contribute to reflections on the articulation between public policies for inclusion, expansion and training of young people and adults within the scope of EFA.

FEDERAL INSTITUTES AS PUBLIC POLICY: ANALYSIS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE IFF

The Federal Institutes (IFs), part of the RFEPCT, created by Law No. 11.892, of December 29, 2008, by then president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, through Setec, develop their actions in accordance with the policy issued by the Ministry of Education (MEC). It is made up of a group of higher, basic and professional education institutions, multi-curricular and multi-campus, specialized in offering professional, scientific and technological education, integrated with the different levels and modalities of education. Its aim is to provide professional, scientific and technological education at all levels and modalities, with a view to training citizens to work in various sectors of the economy, with a focus on local, regional and national socio-economic development (Brasil, 2008a). The RFEPCT is based on a history of socio-educational construction that has been in existence for more than a century, having begun its activities as a policy instrument aimed at helping disadvantaged people without resources to learn a trade (Brasil, 2006b).

The IFs' educational proposal is committed to linking the construction of knowledge to social transformation, based on EFA, and has an innovative character resulting from the specificities of its institutional identity. This identity is shaped by the territorial expansion, the multi-campus structure, the definition of the scope of actions and the vertical pedagogical organization, which covers everything from basic education, through Initial and Continuing Training (FIC), to higher education. According to a survey carried out by the Nilo Peçanha Platform (Brasil, 2022), by 2023 38 institutes had been implemented across the country, distributed in 659 units, present in the 26 states of the Federation and the Federal District. These institutes offer technical courses, higher technology courses, bachelor's degrees, specializations, master's degrees and doctorates (Brasil, 2008a).

According to Oliveira et al. (2020, p. 36),

[...] an important aspect to be considered as a result of the creation of the institutes is related to the scope that the expansion process has achieved, since its inception, with the creation of the Expansion Plan for the Federal Education Network, at the end of 2005. The multi-campus structure of the institutes has made it possible for vocational education to "enter" places that had hitherto lacked the minimum opportunities for technical and higher education.

The IFs therefore manifest the expansion of public policies, emphasizing teaching, research and extension in their egalitarian, political, economic and social dimensions. These institutions are instruments for building a fairer country, by proposing public, free and quality education for all citizens, with a view to the universality of human values (Pacheco, 2012). In short, it is an educational and innovative institutional model, in terms of its political-pedagogical proposal, unparalleled in other countries. According to Pacheco (2011 apud Oliveira et al., 2020), this model is based on the verticalization of teaching, in which teachers work at different levels,

and students share diverse pedagogical spaces, ranging from basic education to doctorates. It is from this perspective that the IFs take on the role of strategic agents in structuring public policies in the regions where they operate, establishing direct interaction with public authorities and local communities.

The IFF, in turn, as established by Law 11.892, is a federal agency linked to SETEC/MEC. It offers teaching, research, extension and innovation at basic, professional and higher education levels, covering the North, Northwest, Baixadas Litorâneas and Metropolitan regions of the state of Rio de Janeiro, through a multi-campus structure and delegated management. It is a specialized EFA institution, based on the integration of technical and technological knowledge with pedagogical practices. Its main objective is to train and qualify professionals for various sectors of the economy, with an emphasis on local, regional and national socio-economic development (Brasil, 2008a).

The IFF's mission is to promote education with a view to the all-round training of students and regional development, making a commitment to defining and implementing public education and work policies, linking socio-educational and economic actors. The institution seeks to be inclusive, based on collegiate and democratic management, integrating, in addition to the teaching, research and extension tripod, the areas of innovation, sport, culture and internationalization (Cara; Cruz; Manhães, 2023). In this way, the IFF contributes to the democratization of access to public education in the region it covers, as a result of the internalization of the federal network. This expansion implies advances in infrastructure, people management and student access, permanence and success.

During the territorialization movement, the IFF expanded into 12 municipalities in the state of Rio de Janeiro, with a structure made up of 12 campuses, an Innovation Pole, a Reference Centre for Technology, Information and Communication in Education and an Administrative Centre, where the Rector is located in Campos dos Goytacazes/RJ. This entire structure is shown in Figure 1.

At the IFF, EFA courses are offered that complement the different levels and modalities of education, namely: professional qualification, including initial and continuing training for workers; technical professional education at secondary level, with intermediate technical professional qualification courses and technical professional specialization courses; and technological professional education, at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, covering intermediate technological professional qualification courses, technological professional specialization courses and professional master's and doctorate programs. These courses are provided for in the LDBEN, Law No. 9.394 (Brasil, 1996) - articles 39 to 42 -, regulated by Law No. 11.741, of July 16, 2008 (Brasil, 2008b), and by Decree No. 5.154, of June 23, 2004 (Brasil, 2004). This decree was later amended by Decree No. 8.268, of June 18, 2014 (Brasil, 2014), and standardized by Resolution of the National Education Council (CNE) of the Full Council (CP) No. 1, of January 5, 2021 (Brasil, 2021).

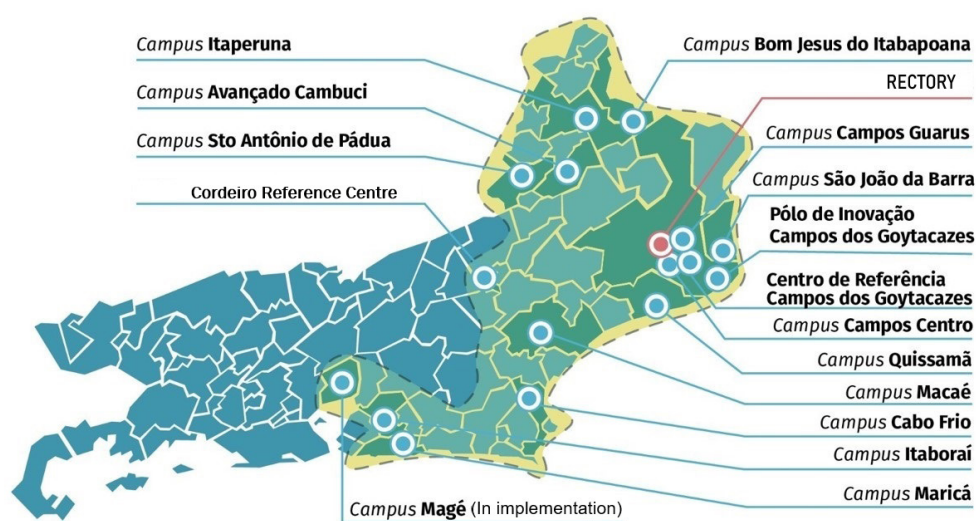


Figure 1. Geographical scope of the IFF.

Source: IFF digital repository (Instituto Federal Fluminense, 2025).

Transversality and verticalization are aspects that contribute to the uniqueness of the curricular design of the educational offerings presented at the IFF, implying recognition of flows that allow the construction of training itineraries between the different EFA courses. That said, knowledge in an integrated and verticalized way requires a stance that goes beyond the hegemonic disciplinary model. It means thinking of an education professional capable of developing reflective and creative work and of promoting contextualized didactic transpositions that make it possible to build students' autonomy (Pacheco, 2011).

In this context, the IFF has the prospect of "[...] broadening its social insertion, contributing to the social and economic development of the state" (Instituto Federal Fluminense, 2018). With this in mind, the IFF assumes the role of a strategic agent in structuring public policies for the region it serves, establishing a more direct interaction with public authorities and local communities. From this point of view, the demand of the subjects to be served by those institutions, their interest groups and their school and professional profiles should guide the multiplicity of proposals.

With the support of a legal provision, the main law of national education, the possibility of integrating professional education with basic education for young people and adults is no longer based on decrees and has become part of the legal framework of Brazilian education. Thus, as part of the public policies that seek to train young people and adults by linking basic education and vocational training, the federal government created Proeja. In this context, it is important to note that Proeja was established within the RFEPCT by Decree 5.478 of June 24, 2005, as a strategy to guarantee the right to education integrated with vocational training for young people and adults who have not completed high school at the regular age. The following year, the program was expanded by Decree No. 5.840, of July 13, 2006, making it a national policy, also extended to state and municipal networks and S System entities, with the aim of promoting higher education and professional qualification, considering the specificities of the subjects of Youth and Adult Education and their relations with the world of work (Brasil, 2005a, 2006a).

Based on this diversity, the offer must be structured from the qualification of workers, through short FIC courses, to the processes of knowledge recognition and professional certification. It must also include the construction of institutional offers based on training itineraries organized by technological axis. In this sense, it is necessary to provide for the use of studies and work experiences, conceived as a specific educational proposal of the EFA, which favors the qualification, requalification and professional development of workers, at the most varied levels of schooling and training, up to the consolidation of high school technical training, articulated with High School in the EJA modality (Instituto Federal Fluminense, 2018). Given this scenario, the following topic will present the conceptual aspects and fundamental elements of the implementation of Proeja in Brazil and at the IFF.

PROEJA: TRAJECTORY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Given the Federal Institutes' commitment to public, inclusive and socially-referenced education, aimed at the comprehensive training of individuals and regional development, Proeja stands out among their offerings. The program is therefore a public educational policy guided by the concept of education as a right for all. It is a strategy aimed at tackling historically produced educational inequalities, especially those affecting young people and adults with interrupted schooling trajectories. This public, with knowledge from diverse experiences in the world of work and in life, seeks, through the program, not only higher education, but also professional training that combines technical, scientific and cultural knowledge, expanding the possibilities of socio-professional insertion and active participation in society (Brasil, 2006b).

Decree No. 5.478/2005, Decree No. 5.840/2006 and Law No. 9.394/1996 (LDB), especially after its amendment by Law No. 11.741/2008, consolidate a public policy aimed at Youth and Adult Education integrated with Vocational Education. The aim of this policy is not only to raise the level of schooling, but also to recognize and value the knowledge that comes from the students' life and work experiences, from the perspective of comprehensive education. The aim is to give the individual a broader understanding of social, political, economic and cultural reality, as well as the world of work, moving away from a formative logic centered exclusively

on market demands. In this way, we are abandoning the narrow concept of training people only to meet the needs of the market, in favor of a proposal that understands students as historical and political subjects, capable of understanding, acting and transforming the reality in which they are inserted.

For Rodrigues (2010, p. 40), it is necessary to consider that:

[...] the program brings new challenges for the construction and consolidation of an educational proposal for emancipatory social inclusion [...] and aspires to continued training that allows for a change in the life perspective of young people and adults; [...] the broadening of world reading and effective and critical participation in social processes.

In 2007, the Proeja Base Document was drawn up with the aim of reflecting on the problems of Brazilian basic education, especially in the context of Proeja, as well as guiding the development of the political-pedagogical projects for the courses (Ivo; Hypolito, 2012). The document presents a diagnosis of the EJA in Brazil, the public policies that have been aimed at this public until now, as well as the challenges inherent in implementing a policy of integration between Technical Professional Education at Secondary Level and Secondary Education in the EJA modality. It also discusses the foundations of the integrated political-pedagogical project, its concepts, principles and operational aspects (Brasil, 2007b).

According to the Base Document (Brasil, 2007b), Proeja is structured with the aim of providing training that combines solid basic education with professional training in an inseparable way. In other words, the aim is to provide students with an integral education, taking into account both their role in the world of work and their status as historical subjects, with trajectories marked by unique experiences. This perspective also involves training for the full exercise of citizenship, based on recognizing the specific characteristics of young people and adults. In addition, it implies understanding the EJA as a specific field of knowledge, which requires research into the real learning needs of this public, as well as the qualified training of civil servants to work in this type of education.

The document goes on to present the six principles that underpin the policy, which were defined on the basis of theories of education in general and specific studies stemming from theoretical and practical reflections in the field of YAE. They are: (1) inclusion of the population in educational offerings; (2) organic insertion of the YAE modality integrated with Professional Education in public educational systems; (3) expansion of the right to basic education through the universalization of Secondary Education; (4) work as an educational principle; (5) research as the foundation of training; and (6) recognition of generational conditions, gender and ethnic-racial relations as constitutive elements of human formation and the ways in which social identities are produced (Brasil, 2007a).

The guidelines set out in the Proeja Base Document (Brasil, 2007b) show a concern with the high rates of educational exclusion affecting young people and adults in Brazil. These guidelines underpin the programme's objectives, with an emphasis on broadening the population's access to vocational education and democratizing basic education. This is in line with the policies and actions of the MEC, particularly with regard to strengthening, expanding and improving the quality of vocational education in the country (Lopes, 2009).

Proeja is aimed at young and adult students who require differentiated pedagogical attention, from the perspective that treating unequals equally deepens inequalities. It is therefore imperative to understand how these individuals produce knowledge, what their interests are, their needs, their socio-cultural contexts of origin, as well as their desires and learning rhythms. These elements are fundamental to the development of curricula, teaching materials and contextualized planning that enable comprehensive education. Such training is aimed not only at the appropriation of historically constructed knowledge, but also at a critical understanding of oneself, the world and social relations, enabling these individuals to transform them through their work (Santos; Grossi, 2010).

The Proeja proposal brings aspects that have been pointed out as:

[...] innovative, qualitative and quantitative, in terms of scope, conception and location for education in the country, especially when it comes to offering basic education (at

primary or secondary level) integrated with professional education, in the form of youth and adult education, as well as training specialist teachers to work in these courses and modalities. In this sense, we can say that secondary education integrated with vocational education in the form of youth and adult education is a pioneering initiative that has no precedent in the history of Brazilian education, especially in terms of provision in public networks (Lima Filho, 2010, p. 114).

Proeja primarily adopts the model of integrated provision, although, considering the specificities of its target audience, it also allows concurrent provision, especially in the context of FIC courses for professional qualification. The program is aimed at young people and adults aged 18 or over, although there is no legal impediment to the participation of young people aged between 15 and 17, as long as they meet the criteria established by the institutions. It is an exclusively face-to-face course, structured around an integrated curriculum, which aims to combine basic and professional training. This pedagogical proposal enables students not only to enter the world of work, but also to gain a broader and more critical understanding of the social, political, economic and environmental dynamics that characterize contemporaneity (Brasil, 2007a).

Thus, the offer of EJA at the RFEPCT is an attempt to include the underprivileged majority who cannot attend school. Thus, as Faria and Assis (2014) point out, the challenge lies in discussing the forms of inclusion and the social impact of this policy, especially considering the historical conditions of exclusion and the socialization processes that many young people and adults face. The commitment is to overcome these barriers in order to guarantee an integral education that allows these individuals to understand themselves and the world in which they live, promoting their transformation through work and education.

The program establishes a commitment to human education, made up of scientific and technological knowledge and skills integrated with vocational training. In this way, it aims to provide students with an understanding of the world that will allow them to act in it, contributing to the construction of a just society, configuring itself as “[...] training in life and for life and not just qualification for the market or for it” (Brasil, 2006b, p. 10). According to Arroyo (2005), the EJA is situated in a field that has not yet been consolidated in terms of public policies and educational guidelines, being “[...] a field open to all cultivation and where various agents participate, sowing and cultivating crops that are not always well defined throughout its tense history” (Arroyo, 2005, p. 19).

According to Moura and Henrique (2012, p. 116), one of Proeja’s major challenges is to integrate three fields of education that have historically remained distant: secondary education, technical vocational training and youth and adult education. Among these, the greatest challenge is the effective curricular and pedagogical articulation between these modalities:

[...] expanding the right to Professional Education in Basic Education, integrating students from Youth and Adult Education into the curricular dynamics of teaching at a Federal Education Institute and making sure that the offers resulting from the Program effectively contribute to improving the conditions of social, political and cultural participation in the world of work of these agents, instead of producing yet another action of social containment. There is yet another challenge at a higher level: transforming this program into a public educational policy of the Brazilian state.

The defense of YAE integrated with vocational training was highlighted at two National Education Conferences, held in 2010 and 2014, and was consolidated as one of the main objectives of the National Education Plan (PNE) 2014-2024 (Brasil, 2014). Goal 10 of the PNE establishes that, by 2024, 25% of YAE enrollments should be offered in conjunction with secondary-level technical vocational education.

However, the data provided by the PNE Monitoring Panel (Brasil, 2024) shows the persistent challenges in achieving this goal, with significant variations over the years. From 2013 to 2016, the percentage remained relatively stable, with a national average of around 2.8%. From 2017 to 2020, there was a sharp reduction, reaching approximately 1.6%. In 2022, there is a slight recovery, reaching 3.5%, although this result is still far short of the established target of 25%.

It is important to note that this national average does not reflect the reality of the country's different regions in a homogeneous way. In addition to the distance from the commitments made in the PNE, the scenario shows the persistence of a marked regional asymmetry, which deepens inequalities in access to comprehensive education. While the Northeast region has made more significant progress, reaching 6% of EJA enrollments integrated with EFA, other regions, such as the South and Southeast, remain with significantly reduced percentages, limited to 1.1%. The North (1.4%) and Center-West (1.8%) regions also show low adherence to this modality, which highlights the lack of structuring public policies capable of effectively promoting the expansion and consolidation of this offer in the national territory (Machado D'Avila; Caetano, 2024).

Given this context, it is clear that the proposal to link the EJA with Professional Education, far from materializing as a structuring policy to combat inequalities, continues to be treated in a peripheral way, often dependent on isolated initiatives, without the state's due commitment to its expansion and consolidation. This not only compromises the effectiveness of Goal 10, but also reflects an educational project that has yet to concretely incorporate the principles of social justice and the right to lifelong education for historically excluded young people and adults.

This gap between the targets set and the concrete reality jeopardizes the expansion of qualified access and, above all, the consolidation of a proposal for integrated professional education that promotes the omnilateral training of individuals. As advocated in the Proeja Base Document (Brasil, 2007b), it is essential to break away from an instrumental and restricted concept of training aimed exclusively at the job market, taking on an emancipatory perspective that enables students to understand, make sense of and intervene in the world in which they live.

Given this scenario, it is imperative that public policies, as well as educational institutions, develop effective and structuring strategies that include continuing teacher training, the strengthening of physical and pedagogical infrastructure, the production of contextualized teaching materials and the implementation of practices for monitoring, welcoming and supporting students. Only through committed and coordinated action will it be possible to guarantee not only access, but also permanence, success and the effective social inclusion of YAE students in integrated professional education.

To summarize, Proeja is an unprecedented public policy in the Brazilian educational scenario, bringing significant innovations to the reflections and discussions that had been developed so far on Youth and Adult Education. In addition, it establishes principles and concepts that tension and confront the technical and professional training model historically adopted (Ivo; Hypolito, 2012). Given this context, which articulates EJA and EPT within the scope of the IFs, the next topic will analyze the paths taken by Proeja at the IFF, as well as the prospects and challenges facing the provision of this modality in the context investigated.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROEJA AT IFF

The expansion of the RFEPCT has allowed the IFF to broaden its educational activities to include different levels and types of education, in line with social, economic and training demands. In this context, the IFF began to offer FIC programs for workers; high school technical courses, in both integrated and subsequent modalities; distance education courses; as well as higher education courses, including undergraduate, bachelor's and higher technology courses, and postgraduate programs.

Within this institutional scope, Proeja emerges as a strategic proposal, guided by the concept of education as a right, seeking to ensure that those historically excluded from the educational process complete basic education, combined with vocational training. This initiative reaffirms the institutional commitment to public, free, inclusive and socially referenced education.

The implementation of Proeja at the IFF began between 2005 and 2006, in line with the guidelines established by the federal government, which guided its creation and implementation until 2007. This process was regulated by Ordinance No. 2.080, of June 13, 2005 (Brasil, 2005b), which defined the guidelines for offering professional education courses integrated with high school in the EJA modality, within the scope of the Federal Technological Education Centers

(CEFETs), Federal Technical Schools, Federal Agrotechnical Schools and Technical Schools linked to Federal Universities.

According to this regulation, the integrated offer includes both FIC courses and programs for workers, as well as high school-level EFA, reaffirming the institutional commitment to promoting comprehensive training. This guideline aims to articulate basic education with professional qualification, recognizing the specificities of the EJA subjects and seeking to confront the historical processes of educational and social exclusion that mark their trajectories.

Although the implementation of Proeja at the IFF began in 2006, the challenges related to its consolidation and implementation are still present. As it is a proposal that breaks with traditional models of curricular organization, combining basic education and vocational training in the EJA modality, the program still requires constant reflection processes, teacher training and institutional improvement. The pedagogical, methodological and organizational specificities of this modality require permanent debate within the IFs, especially with regard to building integrated practices and overcoming fragmented conceptions of teaching.

In this context, Silva (2010) states that, in 2006, the IFF, at the time called CEFET-Campos, a member of the RFEPT,

[...] aware of the potential that the institution has in the regional context and with the concern to democratize access and permanence for young people and adult workers, giving them, like other young people in regular high school, the chance to be in a quality educational environment with resources that only a few universities in the state would have, has also invested in the following programs: Elementary and High School Supplementary Education Program in partnership with the State Public Network (NACES), Adult Literacy Program and, during 2006, it developed with SETEC/MEC its Integrated Professional Education Program for Youth and Adults (Cefet Campos Management Report 2006, p. 29) (Silva, 2010, p. 73).

The initial offer of Proeja at the IFF was based on previous experiences with the offer of EJA, considering its specificities and demands. Of particular note in this context was the work of the Núcleo Avançado do Centro de Estudos Supletivos (NACES), established by Decree No. 10.335/1987, which aimed to provide EJA subjects with permanent schooling opportunities, through the use of diversified methodologies and individualized pedagogical assistance. Although NACES was not directly replaced by Proeja, its trajectory formed an important basis for the implementation of integrated courses, serving as a reference in meeting the specific needs of this public (Silva, 2010).

Considering the changes in the educational context and the multiple vocations of the state of Rio de Janeiro, in 2008 the IFF operated in four municipalities: Campos dos Goytacazes, Macaé, Cabo Frio and Itaperuna. In the period between 2006 and 2008, the institution expanded significantly, increasing the range of levels and types of education on offer. Between 2006 and 2008, the IFF underwent a phase of significant expansion, broadening its educational offer in both levels and teaching modalities.

Specifically, the IFF began to offer integrated and subsequent high school education, as well as higher education, including degree, bachelor's and technology courses. Specifically, within the scope of EFA at secondary level integrated with high school, we highlight the technical courses in Electrotechnics, offered by the Campos Centro campus from 2006, and the technical courses in Electronics and the Environment, which began at the Campos Guarus campus in 2007 and 2008, respectively. In addition, the technical course in Electromechanics was implemented at the Campos Guarus campus in 2008. At the same time, higher education began to be offered on the same campuses, with emphasis on the higher technology courses in Systems Analysis and Development, which joined the institutional portfolio in 2006. These courses reflect the IFF's focus on promoting the articulation between technical professional education and higher education, with a focus on professional qualification and insertion into the job market.

It is important to note that these offers, which began between 2006 and 2008, will remain active until the year 2024, showing the continuity of the institutional commitment to vocational training integrated with EJA, adapting to regional demands and current public policies. This trajectory reflects the IFF's alignment with the guidelines of the PNE and the consolidation

of Proeja as a strategic modality for expanding access and permanence for young people and adults in professional and technological education (Brasil, 2024). In the context of the expansion, the first Proeja classes began, anchored in the experiences and actions that underpinned its implementation. At the Campos Centro campus, the offer was made through the Electrotechnical Technical Course. The following year, the Electronics Technical Course was introduced at the Campos Guarus campus and, in 2008, the Environment Technical Course.

The institutional expansion process also involved the internalization of educational activities, with the creation of new campuses in the municipalities of Cambuci, Bom Jesus do Itabapoana, Itaboraí, Maricá, São João da Barra, Santo Antônio de Pádua and Quissamã, expanding the institution's reach to a total of twelve campuses. From a theoretical point of view, the integrated offer of technical vocational education and education for young people and adults is a fundamental strategy for guaranteeing the right to lifelong education, as provided for in the 1988 Federal Constitution and reaffirmed in the PNE. According to Demo (2008), EJA should promote an emancipatory education that enables the social and professional integration of individuals, taking into account their specificities and life trajectories. In this sense, by linking vocational education with basic training, Proeja responds to a historical demand for inclusion and social justice (Sacramento, 2016; Ivo; Hypolito, 2012).

Thus, the introduction of Proeja at the IFF is an institutional response to the need to offer educational opportunities to young people and adults who have had their educational trajectories interrupted, fragmented or limited, in line with the guidelines that guide the democratization of education and the appreciation of students' socio-cultural diversity (Freire, 1996; Tardif, 2014). In this way, the program reaffirms the IFF's commitment to promoting comprehensive, inclusive and socially referenced education, capable of combining general and technical training, in line with regional and national demands.

In this context, the Institutional Development Plan (PDI) is an official, mandatory document, in accordance with MEC regulations. It sets out the institutional identity, mission, strategic planning, guidelines and policies that will guide the institution's development over a five-year period. It is therefore a guiding instrument for expanding and diversifying the range of courses on offer.

Although still incipient, the PDI identifies possibilities for expanding the offer of FIC courses in the EJA modality, as recorded on the Cabo Frio campus in 2009. In the same period, Proeja was expanded with the implementation of the Technical Course in Electrotechnics at the Itaperuna campus. Continuing the expansion process, in 2013 the Technical Course in Occupational Safety was started at the Quissamã campus, showing the gradual progress of the modality at the institutional level.

When analyzing the IFF's IDP (2010-2014), it was observed that the implementation of FIC courses and High Level EFA courses in the Proeja modality were planned for the period. Among the courses planned were: Electrician Building Installer, Fishing and Aquaculture, both linked to the Cabo Frio campus; Technical Course in Electronics (Proeja), at the Campos Centro campus; as well as the FIC courses in Boilermaking and the Technical Course in Electrotechnics, at the Macaé campus.

Despite these advances, it was found that the expansion of the offer, when compared to the growth of other modalities and the number of campuses set up in the same period, occurred in a restricted and punctual way. This is evidenced by the limited number of Proeja courses actually implemented in relation to all the demands of the territories served by the institution. This scenario reflects the historical challenges of consolidating Proeja within the Federal Network, which, as Sacramento (2016) points out, faces structural, pedagogical and cultural obstacles, both in formulating internal policies and in mobilizing institutional conditions to effectively serve this public.

The proposals presented in the Course and Vacancy Offering Plan (POCV), contained in the IFF's IDP (2018-2022), constitute guidelines for institutional decisions regarding the expansion, maintenance or extinction of courses, as well as the definition of the distribution of vacancies on the various campuses. These guidelines include compliance with the provisions of paragraph 1 of Article 2 of Decree No. 5.840/2006, which stipulates that, within the scope of the RFEPT, at least 10% of the institution's total entry vacancies must be allocated to Proeja courses.

However, when analyzing the 2018-2022 IDP (Instituto Federal Fluminense, 2018), it can be seen that the institutional projection for the sum of EJA-FIC (training itinerary) and EJA-Technical (Proeja integrated high school) offers corresponds to approximately 3% of the institution's total vacancies by the end of the plan's term, a percentage substantially lower than that established in current legislation.

This tendency to under-supply, however, is not a recent phenomenon. Since the initial implementation of Proeja courses at the IFF, in mid-2006, there has been a very limited percentage participation in all institutional offers. At that time, courses such as Building Electrician (Campus Campos Centro), Electronics (Proeja at Campus Campos Centro), Fishing and Aquaculture (Campus Cabo Frio) and FIC in Boilermaking (Campus Macaé) were implemented, in addition to the Technical Course in Electrotechnics at Campus Itaperuna, implemented in 2009, and later, the Technical Course in Work Safety at Campus Quissamã, in 2013.

Despite these initiatives, the percentage of places allocated to Proeja has always remained below the 10% legally stipulated. According to data extracted from the institutional documents themselves, such as the 2010-2014 PDI and the 2018-2022 PDI, this percentage fluctuated between 2% and 3% of the total number of admission places, both in the initial period and in the most recent projections. In 2024, considering the available data, the participation of EJA-Technical and EJA-FIC courses remains at this level, without reaching the minimum target set by Decree No. 5,840/2006.

This situation can be attributed to a number of factors, including: structural and pedagogical difficulties in implementing and maintaining these courses; low demand due to socio-economic factors that affect the EJA's target audience; challenges in linking general and technical training; and, not least, possible weaknesses in the political-institutional commitment to expanding this educational segment.

Also according to the 2018-2022 IDP, in order to achieve the legal target, it is necessary to reconfigure the offer, which will require a review of pedagogical projects and the application of new strategies for the EJA public. Therefore, the next revision of the POCV could provide for an expansion of the offer, taking into account the policies for Youth and Adult Education that have been discussed at the IFF. When considering the construction of the courses offered, the IFF's Institutional Political Project (PPI), a document that is part of the PDI, advocates the development of "[...] an inclusive curriculum that considers the different social profiles, age groups and regionalities of incoming students, adopting theoretical-methodological lines appropriate to the teaching-learning process" (Instituto Federal Fluminense, 2018, p. 61).

Nevertheless, since 2018, given the various legal possibilities, concrete actions have been taken to expand the offer of YAE, linked to EFA, with a focus on increasing schooling and training for the world of work. When it comes to ensuring the right to education, it is imperative to understand the need for integration between public education and social development policies, since denial of this right contributes directly to the precarious living conditions of young people and workers and to deepening social inequalities.

It is therefore understood that through processes of dialogue with communities, the productive sectors and education networks, it is possible to identify social priorities, recognize limits, as well as explore the potential and most appropriate strategies to guarantee an effective training offer. From this perspective, the IFF has developed some significant actions to expand this offer. Among them, we highlight the experience of the Campos Guarus Campus, which, in 2018, signed a partnership with the Campos dos Goytacazes/RJ Municipal Education Department, to implement FIC courses in the EJA-EPT modality, such as Low Voltage Building Installations Electrician, Computer Operator and Pharmacy Clerk, in order to meet the demand of young and adult workers looking for professional qualification combined with schooling. In addition, in 2020, the Macaé Campus began offering the Logistics Technical Course, in the Proeja modality (High School Integrated to Professional Education), an action foreseen in the IDP (Instituto Federal Fluminense, 2018) and which marks the expansion of the offer of technical courses integrated to the EJA at the institution.

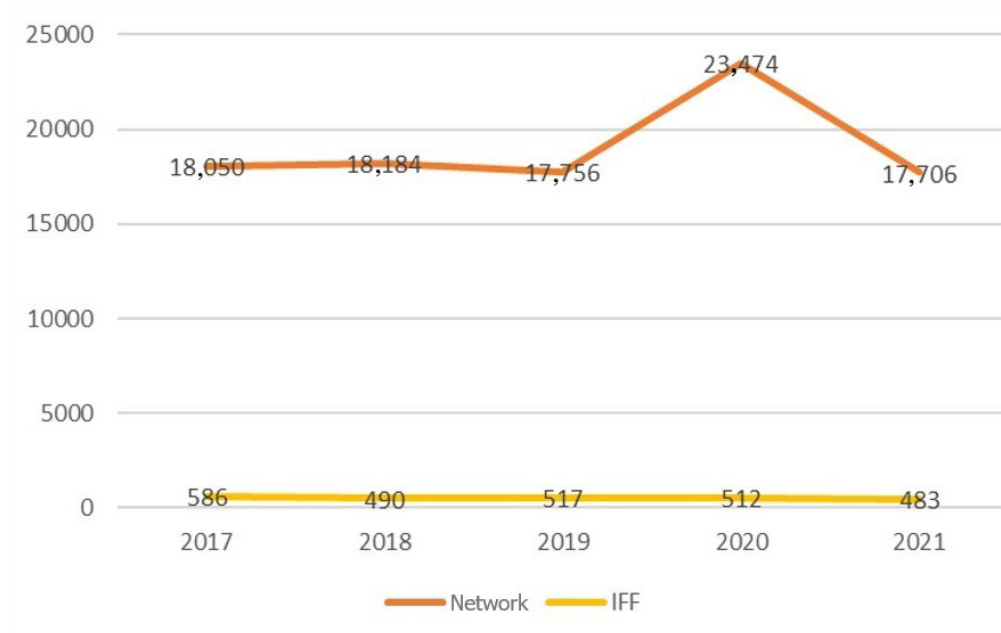
In quantitative terms, although these initiatives represent progress, growth is still timid compared to what is required by law. Based on the institutional data available, it can be seen

that in 2018, the percentage of places allocated to Proeja offers represented approximately 2.1% of the institution's total places. With the actions implemented until 2024, this percentage has risen to around 3%, which, despite representing an increase, is still significantly below the minimum percentage legally established. Therefore, this data reinforces the need to review pedagogical projects, expand inter-institutional coordination processes and adopt more assertive and integrated strategies to guarantee effective access, permanence and success for EJA students, reaffirming the institutional commitment to democratizing access to education and overcoming educational inequalities.

According to the information contained in the Nilo Peçanha Platform (PNP) (Brasil, 2022), implemented by Setec of the MEC, designed to collect, process and publicize official RFEPCT data, Proeja courses throughout Brazil in 2021 had 17,706 enrolments (see graph 1). It can be seen that there was a sharp increase from 17,756 to 23,474 enrollments (+32.2%) from 2019 to 2020, accompanied by a drop of almost 25% between the last two years of the series. The decrease can largely be explained by the coronavirus pandemic. Of the total enrollment in Proeja across the country, 483 were at the IFF, or 2.73%. It should be noted that enrollment numbers in the institution's Proeja courses also fluctuated between 2017 and 2022, with a significant drop in the last two years.

In the 2020 academic year, the suspension of face-to-face academic activities, due to the covid-19 pandemic, led to changes in the Proeja course indexes, both at RFEPCT and IFF. This was reflected in the indicators and the drop in enrollment, as can be seen in the results shown in Graph 1. It should be borne in mind that teachers were instructed throughout that year to adapt and make their teaching and assessment methodologies more flexible during remote teaching. In the same way, they used different "rescue" strategies, with the aim of guaranteeing the permanence and success of the largest number of students. Furthermore, the data on the offer of FIC-EJA/EPT (Fundamental) courses on IFF campuses is still too limited to be included in the discussion. This data could be dealt with in a future paper.

In 2019, the Quissamã and Santo Antônio de Pádua campuses deactivated the technical courses in Workplace Safety and Logistics in the Proeja modality, respectively. In the case of the Quissamã campus, the discontinuation of the course was linked to the process of restructuring the offer, with the proposal to redirect it to another technological axis aligned with the training demands of the territory and the capacity installed on the campus. On the other hand, on the Santo Antônio de Pádua campus, the reconfiguration of the offer and the adoption of new strategies aimed at the EJA public resulted in the implementation of the



Graph 1. Evolution of Proeja enrollment from 2017 to 2021.

Source: Authors' own elaboration (2023) based on PNP data (Brasil, 2022).

Technical Course in Subsequent Administration by Formative Itinerary, which began in 2020. Nevertheless, Santos (2014, p. 102) points out that the process of implementing Proeja, not only at the IFF but also at other institutes, faces numerous challenges, which he highlights:

[...] the difficulties with the functioning of the various sectors at night, such as social services, dentistry, psychology, pedagogy, secretariat, among others; the weakness of the continuing education process for EJA teachers; the difficulties with school transportation, due to municipal neglect; the lack of teachers with experience in Proeja; the lack of specific teaching material for the modality and the awareness that the distribution of teachers' workload should include this modality.

In 2022, the largest number of students on Proeja courses is concentrated on the Campos Guarus campus, with 230 students regularly enrolled on the Electronics and Environment Technical Courses. At the oldest campus, Campos Centro, 89 students are enrolled. The campus began offering two Proeja courses, but today only the Electrotechnical Technical Course is running. On the other hand, the Macaé campus offers the Logistics Technical Course, with 66 students enrolled. Lastly, the Itaperuna campus has 98 students enrolled on the Electrotechnical Technical Course, data taken from the PNP (Brasil, 2022).

In its planning, the IFF's strategic objectives "[...] to provide broad and qualified training" and "[...] to expand the scope of service, diversifying the range of courses on offer, taking into account regional social demand" reinforce the organization's intention to expand its effectiveness as a public institution of professional, scientific and technological education, actively seeking to meet the demands of society. Considering these challenges, the institute's offer is dynamic, and the number of vacancies may change, and courses may be created or discontinued (Instituto Federal Fluminense, 2018, p. 118).

Within the scope of the institutional guidelines defined in the IDP, the IFF has set targets for expanding the offer of courses in the Proeja modality. However, analysis of the data presented in Table 4.4 of the IDP (2018-2022, p. 115), the projections of vacancies reported for this period, shows that the percentages allocated to Proeja remain significantly below the minimum level required by the legislation, which spells out the quantitative targets for offering vacancies in the modality, as established in the IDP 2018-2022, as shown below in Table 1.

The analysis of the data reveals that the goals set institutionally are not materializing in line with the normative requirements established in article 2, paragraph 1, of Decree 5.840/2006. Although the institutional discourse in the PDI points to the intention to expand the Proeja offer, it can be seen empirically that this expansion remains incipient, representing, on average, approximately 3% of the total institutional vacancies during the period analyzed, a percentage significantly lower than the 10% determined by current legislation. Although the formalization in the PDI of the goal of expanding the offer of courses in the Proeja modality is recognized as a step forward, it should be noted that the incorporation of the proposal into institutional strategic planning does not in itself guarantee that it will be implemented in practice. As several studies on the implementation of public policies have warned (Lotta, 2019), there has historically been a mismatch between normative formulation and implementation, especially when it comes to policies aimed at socially vulnerable audiences, as is the case with EJA subjects.

Given this scenario, it is clear that the materialization of the projected goals remains restricted to specific initiatives with limited scope, which are insufficient to meet the social

Table 1. Proeja course vacancies (Table 4.4 do PDI).

Total annual indicators	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Admission places on Proeja courses (VIng)	216	211	211	211	211
	3.31%	2.93%	2.89%	2.81%	2.83%
Equivalent student capacity on Proeja courses (CAEq)	535	479	423	463	463
	2.82%	2.46%	2.09%	2.21%	2.15%

Source: Taken from the IDP (Brasil, 2018, p. 115).

and educational demands of the EJA public. This finding imposes an urgent need for a critical review of institutional practices, as well as the strengthening of public policies to induce, finance and monitor supply, in order to ensure not only compliance with the legislation, but above all the realization of the right to public, free, quality and socially referenced education for young and adult workers (Brasil, 2006a; Frigotto; Ciavatta; Ramos, 2005).

It should be noted that the implementation of Proeja courses at the IFF, although structured on the basis of the technological axes already consolidated on the campuses, in a strategy to take advantage of the physical infrastructure and staff, cannot be restricted to a logic instrumentalized by the immediate demands of the job market. This perspective distances itself from the concept of Proeja as a public policy based on the concept of work as an educational principle and on the omnilateral training of individuals, linking basic education to vocational training, as advocated by Arroyo (2005), Frigotto, Ciavatta and Ramos (2005) and Moura and Henrique (2012).

According to Saviani (2007), education, as a social practice, should not be subject to the dictates of the market, but should be guided by the principles of comprehensive, critical and emancipatory education. In this sense, Proeja assumes a formative intentionality that transcends mere qualification for work, with the aim of guaranteeing working class people access to historically produced knowledge and increasing their schooling in an integrated way, thus overcoming the fragmented and exclusionary logics that have historically marked the offers made to the EJA (Arroyo, 2005; Freire, 2005).

In view of this, it is imperative that the institutions of the Federal Network, such as the IFF, advance in the effective implementation of affirmative and structuring policies for Proeja, overcoming timid and weakened movements, in order to ensure the fulfillment of the social function attributed to them, contributing to the construction of a democratic, inclusive and socially referenced education (Ciavatta, 2012, Soares; Devechi, 2020).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The analysis carried out in this study shows that the implementation of Proeja courses at the IFF reflects the historical contradictions that run through the provision of Youth and Adult Education integrated with Professional and Technological Education in Brazil. Although it is a public policy of great social relevance, its implementation reveals weaknesses that are expressed in the discontinuity of the offer, the reduction in enrolment and the lack of robust institutional strategies to guarantee its consolidation.

It can be seen that the proposal, designed to ensure comprehensive training, has been strained by practices that often prioritize the logic of institutional arrangements and pre-existing technological axes, subordinating itself, to a certain extent, to the immediate demands of the job market. This reality distances itself from the principle of work as an educational foundation, reducing the program's formative power to fragmented actions that are sometimes detached from the concrete needs of EJA subjects.

The recurring drop in enrollment, coupled with weaknesses in monitoring, induction and permanence actions, denounces not only a local weakening of the policy, but also the reflexes of a national scenario marked by the historical devaluation of the EJA, the discontinuity of public policies and the insufficiency of structuring investments. It must be reaffirmed that education for young people and adult workers cannot be treated as a compensatory or residual policy.

The effectiveness of Proeja presupposes a training concept that transcends the strict logic of qualification for the market, committing itself to omnilateral training, capable of articulating scientific, technical, cultural and humanistic knowledge. Only in this way will it be possible to guarantee not only job placement, but above all social inclusion, increased schooling and the full exercise of citizenship. Overcoming the challenges identified requires a break with lightweight and decontextualized pedagogical practices, as well as institutional models that do not recognize the specificity of the EJA subjects. It also means tackling the barriers imposed by the socio-economic conditions of these students, which have a direct impact on their permanence and success in school.

The construction of an effective educational policy for Proeja demands urgent investment in specific teacher training, the development of contextualized teaching practices, actions that

guarantee the permanence and success of students, as well as the strengthening of inter-institutional support networks. More than that, it requires institutions to take an ethical and political stance on the EJA as a fundamental human right, an inseparable part of a social, democratic and sovereign development project.

The challenge is no less: to give new meaning to educational practice within the Proeja framework, recognizing workers as bearers of knowledge, stories and rights. Only in this way will it be possible to build emancipatory training processes that are not restricted to meeting the demands of the market, but above all contribute to social transformation, to building a more just, equitable and democratic society.

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