

**THE WORLD BANK AND UNESCO IN THE CONTEXT OF THE HEALTH CRISIS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: THE INTERFACES BETWEEN EDUCATION, HEALTH, LEARNING AND POVERTY AND THE 2030 EDUCATION AGENDA**

***O BANCO MUNDIAL E A UNESCO NO CONTEXTO DA CRISE SANITÁRIA DA PANDEMIA DE COVID-19: AS INTERFACES ENTRE EDUCAÇÃO, SAÚDE, APRENDIZAGEM E POBREZA E A AGENDA DA EDUCAÇÃO 2030<sup>1</sup>***

***EL BANCO MUNDIAL Y LA UNESCO EN EL CONTEXTO DE LA CRISIS SANITARIA DE LA COVID-19: LAS INTERFACES ENTRE LA EDUCACIÓN, LA SALUD, EL APRENDIZAJE Y LA POBREZA Y LA AGENDA DE EDUCACIÓN 2030***



Ireni Marilene Zago FIGUEIREDO <sup>2</sup>  
e-mail: irenifigueiredo@hotmail.com



Giselle Cristina Martins REAL <sup>3</sup>  
e-mail: gisellereal@ufgd.edu.br

**How to reference this article:**

FIGUEIREDO, I. M. Z.; REAL, G. C. M. The world bank and UNESCO in the context of the health crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic: the interfaces between education, health, learning and poverty and the 2030 education agenda. **Revista Ibero-Americana de Estudos em Educação**, Araraquara, v. 19, n. 00, e024104, 2024. e-ISSN: 1982-5587. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21723/riaee.v19iesp.2.18670>



| Submitted: 09/11/2023  
| Revisions required: 17/01/2024  
| Approved: 08/03/2024  
| Published: 06/09/2024

**Editor:** Prof. Dr. José Luís Bizelli

**Deputy Executive Editor:** Prof. Dr. José Anderson Santos Cruz

<sup>1</sup> This article is the result of post-doctoral internship studies at the Postgraduate Program in Education at the Federal University of Grande Dourados (UFGD), specifically linked to the line of Educational Policies and Management, under the guidance of Prof. Dr. Giselle Cristina Martins Real. The motivation for the studies was linked to the research project Trajectories from the global to the local in educational assessment policies in Latin America: an international network study, coordinated by Prof. Dr. Fabiano Antonio dos Santos, from the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul (UFMS). The project integrates research groups from 7 universities: Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul/UFMS; Federal University of Grande Dourados/UFGD; University of the State of Mato Grosso do Sul/UEMS; State University of Western Paraná/ Unioeste ; University of Chile/ Uchile – Chile; Francisco José de Caldas District University/ UDistrictal - Colombia and Center for Research and Higher Studies in Social Anthropology/CIESAS – Mexico.

<sup>2</sup> State University of Western Paraná (Unioeste), Cascavel – PR – Brazil. Professor of the Postgraduate Program in Education and the Pedagogy Course. Center for Education, Communication and Arts (CECA).

<sup>3</sup> Federal University of Grande Dourados (UFGD), Dourados – MS – Brazil. Full professor of the Postgraduate Program in Education and the Faculty of Education (FAED).

---

**ABSTRACT:** International organizations, such as UNESCO and the World Bank, play a prominent role in forming the global educational agenda, which makes the unveiling of their statements relevant in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic health crisis, the objective of this research. This is documentary and bibliographical research, with a qualitative approach. As a result, the convergence of UNESCO and the World Bank was identified regarding the defense of the right to quality, inclusive and equitable Education; protecting health, well-being, and nutrition; to groups in situations of social vulnerability; to the confrontation of the crisis/poverty in learning; food insecurity, among others, which make up the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Education Agenda. In summary, there is a tendency towards a humanitarian discourse conveyed by International Organizations, which gains legitimacy in favor of the 2030 Education Agenda.

**KEYWORDS:** World Bank. UNESCO. COVID-19 Pandemic Health Crisis. 2030 Education Agenda.

**RESUMO:** Os organismos internacionais tais como a UNESCO e o Banco Mundial cumprem papel de destaque na construção da agenda educacional global, o que torna relevante o desvelar de seus enunciados no contexto da crise sanitária da pandemia de COVID-19, objetivo deste artigo. Trata-se de pesquisa documental e bibliográfica, de abordagem qualitativa. Como resultado, identificou-se a convergência da UNESCO e do Banco Mundial no que se refere à defesa do direito à Educação de qualidade, inclusiva e equitativa; à proteção à saúde e ao bem-estar e à nutrição; aos grupos em situação de vulnerabilidade social; ao enfrentamento da crise/pobreza de aprendizagem; à insegurança alimentar, dentre outros, que compõem os Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável (ODS) da Agenda da Educação 2030. Em síntese, observa-se a tendência de um discurso humanitário veiculado pelos Organismos Internacionais, o qual ganha legitimidade em prol da Agenda da Educação 2030.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Banco Mundial. UNESCO. Crise Sanitária da Pandemia de COVID-19. Agenda da Educação 2030.

**RESUMEN:** Los Organismos Internacionales, tales como la Unesco y el Banco Mundial, cumplen papel de destaque en la construcción de la agenda educacional global, situación que torna relevante el desvelar de sus enunciados en el contexto de la crisis sanitaria de la pandemia de COVID-19, objetivo de este artículo. Se trata de una investigación documental y bibliográfica, de abordaje cualitativo. Como resultado, se identificó la convergencia de la Unesco y del Banco Mundial con relación a la defensa del derecho a la Educación de calidad, inclusiva y equitativa; a la protección a la salud, al bienestar y a la nutrición; a los grupos en situación de vulnerabilidad social; al enfrentamiento de la crisis/pobreza del aprendizaje; a la inseguridad alimentar, entre otros, que componen los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS) de la Agenda de la Educación 2030. En síntesis, se observa la tendencia de un discurso humanitario vehiculado por los Organismos Internacionales, lo cual conquista legitimidad en pro de la Agenda de la Educación 2030.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Banco Mundial. UNESCO. Crisis Sanitaria de la Pandemia de COVID-19. Agenda de la Educación 2030.

---

## Introduction

The health crisis<sup>4</sup>, represented by the COVID-19 pandemic, a disease caused by the Sars-Cov-2 Coronavirus, is a cyclical crisis, typical of the current historical context of capitalism. This crisis increased the impact in the areas of economy, health, education, social, among others. When contrasting with the continued implementation of educational reforms, with a neoliberal dimension, in the context of the COVID-19 health crisis, we can see the trend towards a humanitarian discourse conveyed by International Organizations, such as the United Nations Educational Organization, Science and Culture (UNESCO) and the World Bank, which gains legitimacy in favor of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Education Agenda.

The article, organized into three sections, aims to answer the following problem: what are the statements prescribed by UNESCO and the World Bank, in the context of the health crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic, on Education, Health, Learning and Poverty, with reference to the 2030 Education Agenda?

This is a bibliographic and documentary research with a qualitative approach, in which the document is considered as

[...] a powerful source from which evidence can be taken to substantiate the researcher's claims and statements. [...] They are not just a source of contextualized information, but they arise in a certain context and provide information about that same context (Lüdke; André, 2018, p. 45, our translation).

The documents analyzed originate from UNESCO and the World Bank. From UNESCO the following were considered: Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development UNESCO (2015); Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for education: towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong education for all UNESCO (2016); UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report Inclusion and Education: Everyone, without exception (Unesco, 2020); and UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report Non-State Actors in Education: Who Chooses? Who Loses? (Unesco, 2021; 2022).

The World Bank documents are: World Bank 2020 Annual Report: Supporting countries in unprecedented times (World Bank, 2020); World Bank Annual Report 2021: From crisis to

---

<sup>4</sup>The pandemic period is considered to begin on January 30, 2020, when the World Health Organization (WHO) declared human infection by the new Coronavirus as a Public Health Emergency of International Importance. (Observatório Fiocruz, 2022, p. 1) and its end on May 5, 2023, when the WHO itself declared its end. Available at: <https://www.paho.org/pt/noticias/5-5-2023-oms-declara-fim-da-emergencia-saude-publica-importancia-internacional-referente>. Accessed on May 7, 2023.

green, resilient and inclusive recovery (World Bank, 2021); and World Bank Annual Report 2022: Supporting countries as they adapt to a volatile world (World Bank, 2022).

### **Situational crisis of capitalism: The health crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic**

To analyze the consequences of economic, political and international movements, especially in the context of the health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the 1990s are taken as a reference, because they portray the context of enabling and implementing adjustment policies with a neoliberal dimension, still ongoing.

It is interesting to clarify, in this sense, that “[...] the historical novelty of the structural crisis of capital” (Mészáros, 2002, p. 796, our translation) is located “[...] in the context of the social, economic and political events of the 20th century.” (Mészáros, 2002, p. 796, our translation). The difference between the structural crisis of capitalism and the non-structural crisis of capitalism can be analyzed in simple and general terms:

*[...] a structural crisis affects the entirety of a social complex in all relations with its constituent parts or subcomplexes, as well as other complexes to which it is articulated. In contrast, a non-structural crisis affects only some parts of the complex in question, and thus, no matter the degree of severity in relation to the affected parts, it cannot jeopardize the continued survival of the global structure. (Mészáros, 2002, p. 796-797, our emphasis, our translation).*

With the structural crisis of capitalism, manifested more dramatically from the 1970s onwards, the ideology of globalization was constructed. Neoliberals, in this sense, maintained that the reforms constitute a new Era, that of globalization. With this, they asserted themselves as the “[...] carriers of the 'true capitalist doctrine' and undertake reforms in this mode of production in structural crisis.” (Leher, 1998, p. 96, our translation). The set of reforms was, therefore, “[...] based on the notion and assumptions of economic neoliberalism, and the planned adjustments were considered urgent for the supposed sustainable development of the country in the globalized era.” (Deitos, 2005, p. 72, our translation).

It was in the 1970s and 1980s that the consequences of the international financial crisis and the debt crisis (1982) reached peripheral countries as a result of the association of monetary and exchange rate crises from 1971 to 1973; the rise in oil prices (1973 and 1979); the US unilateral action to raise interest rates (1979); the revaluation of the dollar by the North American Central Bank (1979); the elections of Margaret Thatcher (1979) and Helmut Kohl (1982), which supported the North American decision to sustain the resumption of its hegemony

and initiate one of the most extensive and radical “conservative restorations” in modern history (Fiori, 1997; Tavares; Fiori, 1997).

In the debt renegotiation process of peripheral countries, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and, particularly for Latin America, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), took the lead through a series of economic, financial, and political conditionalities, limited to Stabilization Plans and loans for structural (1980) and sectoral (1983) adjustments (Leher, 1998). It is important to consider, in this sense, “that adjustment policies are part of a global adjustment movement, which develops in a context of financial and productive globalization” (Soares, 2002, p. 16, our translation).

In this reasoning, it is important to consider that the financial crisis that broke out worldwide in 2007/2008 constitutes one of the manifestations of the structural crisis of capital. As a result, the neoliberal pattern of capital accumulation went through an important crisis on a global scale, starting in 2007/2008 (Reis; Macário, 2022).

The signals issued until the end of August 2020 indicate that the World Bank's position in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic does not signal any break with the prescribed neoliberal agenda. In this sense, the fight against the pandemic in Brazil follows the World Bank's prescriptions that do not question the neoliberal prescription, advocating the normative primacy of fiscal adjustment (Pereira, 2020).

One of the main roles publicly assumed by UNESCO, the World Bank and the OECD is the transfer of cutting-edge educational knowledge (Beech, 2012). The World Bank, in addition to financing projects and programs, is an intellectual that, through its publications, acts as a “global catalyst” of knowledge that, together with financial resources, the “client country” receives a particular vision of education (Beech, 2012, p. 419). It turns out that since the 1980s, and with greater strength since the Jomtien Conference (1990), Latin America has constituted a great laboratory of educational reforms in which the World Bank, together with other International Organizations, such as ECLAC, UNESCO and the IDB play a key role (Vior; Cerruti, 2014, p. 132).

International organizations, such as UNESCO and the World Bank, play a prominent role in the context of the health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The health crisis, represented by the COVID-19 pandemic, is a cyclical crisis, as it is typical of the current moment of capitalism and which “must pass, allowing the continuity of human life” (Saviani, 2020, p. 2, our translation).

On February 3, two years later, it was possible to see the scale of the disaster, through the numbers of cases and deaths in the world and in Brazil:

For cases, it totaled 388 million in the world and 26 million in Brazil, corresponding to 6.7% of the total. For deaths, 5.71 million were recorded worldwide and more than 630 thousand in Brazil, corresponding to 11% of the total. While in the world mortality per million inhabitants was 720, in Brazil it reached 2,932, that is, 4 times higher, resulting in a calamity that directly affected the health and living conditions of millions of Brazilians. (Observatório Fiocruz, 2022, p. 1, our translation).

In Geneva, Switzerland, on May 5, 2023, the World Health Organization (WHO), in relation to COVID-19, declared the end of the Public Health Emergency of International Concern (ESPII). This decision was taken by the Director-General of the WHO, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, which received the recommendation of the Emergency Committee in charge of periodically analyzing the disease scenario (WHO, 2023)<sup>5</sup>.

However, the announcement of the end of the Public Health Emergency of International Concern does not mean that COVID-19 is no longer a health threat. This means that the worldwide spread of the disease is still characterized as a pandemic. Tedros Adhanom, director-general of WHO, emphasized that countries need to transition out of COVID-19 emergency mode along with other infectious diseases (WHO, 2023).<sup>6</sup>

In the face of global crises, it is possible to see in the documents of International Organizations, such as UNESCO and the World Bank, statements that signal the protection of Human Capital, which integrates the relationships between Education, Health, Learning and Poverty, pointing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Education Agenda, so that global Education goals are achieved, as will be presented in the next section.

<sup>5</sup>Available at: <https://www.paho.org/pt/noticias/5-5-2023-oms-declara-fim-da-emergencia-saude-publica-importancia-internacional-referente>. Accessed on May 7, 2023.

<sup>6</sup>Available at: <https://www.paho.org/pt/noticias/5-5-2023-oms-declara-fim-da-emergencia-saude-publica-importancia-internacional-referente>. Accessed on May 7, 2023.



## UNESCO and the 2030 education agenda

At the beginning of the 1990s, State, Education and Health reforms were made possible, using productivity, quality, competitiveness, efficiency and effectiveness as criteria. However, at the end of that decade, it became clear that the economic bias gave way to a humanitarian face, in which educational policy would be responsible for solving the “[...] most burning human problems, especially the problem of survival in today's society.” (Evangelista; Shiroma, 2004, p. 2, our translation). Of the concepts, justice, social cohesion, equity, inclusion, *empowerment*, opportunity and security, articulated by the idea that the survival of a society is related to the bonds of “solidarity” that are built between individuals (Evangelista; Shiroma, 2004).

The *slogan* Education for All was advocated in the World Declaration on Education for All, from Jomtien, Thailand (Unesco, 1990); in the Declaration of Dakar, Senegal (Unesco, 2000); and the Incheon Declaration (2015), the latter aiming to “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (Unesco, 2015, p. 1, our translation), with UNESCO being responsible for induction and coordination of the implementation of Education 2030 – E2030, in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The argument related to the Education for All *slogan* came from the observation that, over the last few decades, there has been a great evolution, especially in developing countries, in enrollment, school retention and gender equality at school, a result of the operationalization of the guideline “Education for All”, defined at the Jomtien Conference (1990), as well as national efforts to achieve the Millennium Goals (Pronko, 2014, p. 106).

However, the shift from Education for All to Learning for All is linked to the World Bank Group's new strategy for Education. This finding is found in the document called *Strategy 2020 for Education: Learning for All – Investing in People's Knowledge and Skills to Promote Development* (World Bank, 2011), which considers that these advances, although important, are not enough in view of the contemporary challenges, which requires the World Bank and its development partners to develop a new Education strategy for the next decade (Pronko, 2014). In this context, for the World Bank (2011), education constitutes a central tool for development and should not be considered exclusively from the perspective of schooling, but especially and in a strategic way, from the perspective of learning. In this sense, the gap that exists between the years of schooling and the knowledge and skills that individuals need to develop should contribute to the economic growth of their respective countries (Pronko, 2014, p. 106).

In this sense, in the 21st century there is a glimpse of a humanitarian discourse conveyed by International Organizations, which gains legitimacy in favor of the 2030 Education Agenda. Therefore, it stands out in this process that UNESCO, together with UNICEF, the World Bank, the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (*United Nations Population Fund – UNFPA*), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), UN Women and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), organized the 2015 World Education Forum, held in Incheon, South Korea, between May 19 and 22, 2015.

In the *Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for education: towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong education for all*, “[...] the novelty of the Education 2030 agenda is that it is universal and belongs to the around the world, both developed and developing countries” (Unesco, 2016, p. 25, our translation).

In UNESCO's document *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (Unesco, 2015), the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with 169 associated targets are integrated and indivisible. The aim is to merge the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda aims to ensure the human rights of all and respect national policies and priorities (Unesco, 2015).

In the Incheon Declaration for Education 2030, SDG-4 corresponds to Education, which is conceived as a public good and a fundamental human right, constituting the basis that guarantees the realization of other rights. In this sense, it becomes essential for the promotion of peace, tolerance, human fulfillment and sustainable development, and is therefore recognized as a key element in achieving full employment and eradicating poverty. In the context of a lifelong education approach, the focus of efforts is on access, inclusion and equity, as well as on the quality and results of learning (Unesco, 2016, p. 7).

The two UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Reports, respectively *Inclusion and Education: Everyone, without exception* (Unesco, 2020) and *Non-State Actors in Education: Who Chooses? Who Loses?* (Unesco, 2021, 2022), reiterate that the Education: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action specifies/determines that the mandate of the Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM Report) is a mechanism to guide monitoring and reporting on SDG 4 and on education in the other proposed SDGs. The responsibility is to inform the implementation of national and international strategies to help partners hold themselves accountable to their commitments as part of the monitoring and overall review of the SDGs. (Unesco, 2020; Unesco, 2021; 2022).



In the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report *Inclusion and Education: All without exception (2020)* the commitment made under Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) to ensure 'inclusive and equitable quality education' and promote lifelong learning of life for all, integrates the efforts of the 2030 Agenda, to leave no one behind. The 2030 Agenda, by promising a fair, equitable, tolerant, open and socially inclusive world, aims to meet the needs of those who are most disadvantaged (Unesco, 2020).

In the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report *Non-State Actors in Education: Who Chooses? Who Loses? (2021/2)* addresses the 2030 Education Agenda for Sustainable Development and the health crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, although there have been important advances in relation to the “[...] development of a monitoring action framework and the goals determined by the countries [...] the COVID-19 pandemic caused major setbacks on both fronts” (Unesco, 2021; 2022, p. 21, our translation).

In reviewing progress towards SDG 4, including emerging evidence on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic health crisis, it calls on non-state actors to intervene at various educational levels and spheres of influence, as well as governments that need to consider all institutions, students and teachers. The indication is that Education financed with public resources does not need to be provided by the government, “[...] but disparities in educational processes, student results and teachers' working conditions must be addressed” (Unesco, 2021; 2022, p. 31, our translation).

It is in the context of the health crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic that the UNESCO document, *Cuando las escuelas cierran: El impacto de género del cierre de las escuelas por el COVID-19 (2022)*, highlights that UNESCO will lead and coordinate the 2030 Education Agenda, in which the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were outlined. In particular, SDG 4-Education 2030 aims to “[...] guarantee inclusive, equitable and high- quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (Unesco, 2022, p. 2, our translation).

In the 21st century, the challenges announced in UNESCO documents in relation to the 2030 Education Agenda, in the context of the health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, are related to a broad vision of development. In this case, it contemplates the relationship between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4) and the other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda, among them, ensuring the right to quality, inclusive and equitable Education; promoting lifelong learning for all; the focus on learning outcomes; the eradication of poverty; food security; the health; employment and work; and a just, equitable

and tolerant world. This humanitarian panorama is also seen in the arguments prescribed in the World Bank documents in their relationship with the 2030 Education Agenda, below.

### **The World Bank and the 2030 education agenda**

In the World Bank's 2020 Annual Report *Supporting Countries in Unprecedented Times*, digital technologies are considered the “[...] vanguard of development and offer a unique opportunity for countries to accelerate economic growth” (World Bank, 2020, p. 56, our translation). However, it highlights that at the end of 2019, half of the world's population did not have access to the *Internet*, with the vast majority of people concentrated in developing countries. It warns, on the one hand, that the persistence of a digital divide could worsen inequalities, with the creation of a new class of “digital poor”. On the other hand, it signals that digital technologies could also play an indispensable role in sustaining social and economic activities during the COVID -19 pandemic (World Bank, 2020).

In the World Bank's 2021 Annual Report, *From crisis to green, resilient and inclusive recovery*, highlighted, *Digital transformation to drive green, resilient and inclusive development*”, explains that the COVID 19 pandemic crisis -has led to significant changes driven by technologies digital technologies, among them, “[...] teleworking, distance learning, telemedicine and the *online provision* of government services [...]”, but also, the greater dependence on digital technologies has exposed new risks and vulnerabilities.” (World Bank, 2020, p. 37, our translation).

The World Bank's 2022 Annual Report, *Supporting countries as they adapt to a volatile world*, signals that even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the world was already facing a global learning crisis, with at the height of school closures, in April 2020, the situation worsened, removing 94% of students from classrooms, with “[...] at least a third of school-age children around the world – 463 million – unable to attend school remotely” (World Bank, 2022, p. 58, our translation). The likelihood of returning to school after the COVID-19 pandemic becomes lower for girls, students with disabilities, and younger children, who have faced significant barriers to remote learning (World Bank, 2022, p. 58, our translation).

In the World Bank's 2020 Annual Report, a new concept was presented by the World Bank Group at the UN General Assembly in September 2019, learning poverty, developed in close collaboration with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. In low- and middle-income countries, the finding on the learning poverty rate was 53%, “[...] meaning that more than half of all 10-year-old children could not read and understand a simple story.” (World Bank, 2020,

p. 51, our translation). With action anticipated to achieve education goals to address this crisis, a new global goal was launched at the 2019 Annual Meetings to reduce the rate of learning poverty by at least half by 2030. (World Bank, 2020). To address the global learning crisis and protect the poorest and most vulnerable, the World Bank's 2021 and 2022 Annual Reports address the concept of learning poverty, which refers to children aged 10 who cannot read and understand simple text.

Of the global challenges, “[...] despite great advances in recent decades, the world was not on track to achieve the goal of eradicating poverty by 2030, even before the start of the COVID -19 pandemic” (World Bank, 2020, p. 43, our translation). Low-quality education demonstrated very little learning, with disadvantaged children and young people having the worst access to school, in addition to higher school dropout rates and greater learning *deficits*. (World Bank, 2020).

In this reasoning, what can be seen is that the context of the health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic highlights the relevance of protecting Human Capital, which encompasses health, knowledge, capabilities, skills, qualifications, resilience and the nutrition that people accumulate throughout their lives to reach their potential (World Bank, 2020; 2021; 2022). Therefore, it is necessary that “each child grows up well-nourished and ready to learn, achieves real learning at school and enters the job market as a healthy, qualified and productive adult” (World Bank, 2021, p. 58, our translation), or in other words, the protection/training of human capital even becomes a condition for tackling learning poverty.

The World Bank (2020) maintains that investment in Human Capital raises people's potential, making them productive members of society, in addition to constituting a fundamental engine of economic growth, poverty reduction and shared prosperity. As a result, it signals investment in an efficient and equitable way in the construction, protection and mobilization of human capital; This way, countries “[...] will be well prepared to compete in a global economy that rewards higher-level cognitive skills” (World Bank, 2020, p. 49, our translation).

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the health, economic and social impacts were catastrophic throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. The increase in health risks related to COVID -19 has led to the highest mortality rates in the world; high levels of urbanization and informality and the aging of the population. In the region, more than half of families reported income losses and 18 million people suffered food insecurity. More than 170 million students were affected by school closures, with learning losses estimated at 1.7 years (World Bank, 2021).

The World Bank Group expresses the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people's health and well-being, learning losses, and women and girls have faced an increase in gender-based violence. It emphasizes that in 2020, close to 100 million more people were forced into extreme poverty. In 2020, between 720 million and 811 million people went hungry, approximately 161 million more than in 2019. Around 1.6 billion students were left without classes due to school closures, generating significant learning losses. With disruptions to health services, many non-communicable and preventable diseases have gone untreated (World Bank, 2021).

What is clear is that even before the COVID-19 pandemic, it was estimated that up to two thirds of the world's extremely poor would be concentrated in countries affected by fragility, conflict and violence by 2030. With COVID-19, in 2020, Around 18 million more people have been driven from fragile and conflict-affected environments into extreme poverty, as well as the number of people experiencing food insecurity has doubled, reaching 270 million globally. Furthermore, the world is facing the largest forced displacement crisis in history, with more than 82 million people fleeing conflict and violence (World Bank, 2021).

In relation to climate change that could increase the condition of extreme poverty, natural risks, pandemics and food insecurity, the World Bank's 2022 Annual Report, with a reference of up to 2030, points to climate change that could leave 132 million of people in situations of extreme poverty, and by 2050 it could cause the displacement of more than 216 million people in developing countries (World Bank, 2022).

It is possible to see in the World Bank's arguments, in the context of the COVID-19 health crisis, the centrality of the condition of vulnerability, that is, people's condition of extreme poverty. In this way, the statements are conceived as fundamental variables to support a humanistic vision of Education and Health, with an emphasis on the protection/training of Human Capital. The ongoing changes, therefore, incorporate the defense of challenges related to tackling school dropout and poverty/learning crisis; climate change; food insecurity and violence, among others, recommended by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Education Agenda.

## Final remarks

This article dealt with the articulations between Education, Health, Learning and Poverty and the 2030 Education Agenda, in the context of the health crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially through statements from UNESCO documents (2015; 2016; 2020; 2021; 2022) and the World Bank (2020; 2021; 2022).

The configuration outlined in the documents produced by UNESCO and the World Bank intensifies the convergence of the centrality of Education, Health, Learning and Poverty for the formation/protection of Human Capital, to the extent that it is sustained, even in conjunction with the continued implementation of educational reforms, with a neoliberal dimension, in the context of the COVID-19 health crisis, the defense of protecting health and well-being, for groups in situations of social vulnerability; tackling school dropout and poverty/learning crisis; food insecurity; climate change and natural risks, among others, which make up the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Education Agenda.

In this reasoning, the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic are inherent to the concerns of UNESCO and the World Bank for the reproduction of human life, through the protection/formation of Human Capital. This means that the mediations between Education, Health, Learning and Poverty are inseparable and, effectively, incorporate and disguise socioeconomic and political objectives in the context of the health crisis.

Within the limits of this article, it was possible to identify statements that highlight and substantiate relevant propositions and that provide data that can support other studies, including the process of implementing reforms in the areas of Education and Health in a given historical context.

## REFERENCES

BANCO MUNDIAL. **Aprendizagem para todos: investir nos conhecimentos e competências das pessoas para promover o desenvolvimento – resumo executivo.** Washington DC, 2011. Disponível em <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/461751468336853263/pdf/644870WP00PORT00Box0361538B0PUBLIC0.pdf>. Acess: 24 Apr. 2024.

BANCO MUNDIAL. **Relatório Anual de 2020 do Banco Mundial.** Apoiar os países em tempos sem precedentes. Washington, DC: Banco Mundial, 2020.

BANCO MUNDIAL. **Relatório Anual de 2021 do Banco Mundial.** Da crise à recuperação verde, resiliente e inclusiva. Washington, DC: World Bank, 2021.

BANCO MUNDIAL. **Relatório Anual de 2022 do Banco Mundial**. Apoio aos países em sua adaptação a um mundo volátil. Washington, DC: World Bank, 2022.

BEECH, J. O. Quem está passeando pelo jardim global? Agências internacionais e transferência educacional. *In*: COWEN, R.; KAZAMIAS, A. M.; UNTERHALTER, E. (org.). **Educação comparada: panorama internacional e perspectivas**, v. 1, 2012, Brasília, DF: UNESCO, CAPES, 2012. p. 413-435.

DEITOS, R. A. **O capital financeiro e a educação no Brasil**. Campinas, SP, 2005, p. 394. Tese (Doutorado em Educação) – Faculdade de Educação. Universidade Estadual de Campinas – UNICAMP, 2005.

EVANGELISTA, O.; SHIROMA, E. O. O combate à pobreza nas políticas educativas do século XXI. *In*: CONGRESSO LUSO-AFRO-BRASILEIRO DE CIÊNCIAS SOCIAIS, 8., 2004, Coimbra. **Anais [...]** Coimbra, 2004. p. 2-17. Available at: [https://www.ces.uc.pt/lab2004/pdfs/OlindaEvangelista\\_EneidaShiroma.pdf](https://www.ces.uc.pt/lab2004/pdfs/OlindaEvangelista_EneidaShiroma.pdf). Acess: 24 Apr. 2024.

FIORI, J. L. **Os moedeiros falsos**. 5. ed. Petrópolis, RJ: Vozes, 1997.

LEHER, R. **Da ideologia do desenvolvimento à ideologia da globalização: a educação como estratégia do Banco Mundial para “alívio” da pobreza**. 267 f. Tese (Doutorado em Educação) – Universidade de São Paulo – USP, São Paulo, 1998.

LÜDKE, M.; ANDRÉ, M. E. D. A. **Pesquisa em Educação**. 2. ed. Rio de Janeiro: E.P.U, 2018.

MÉSZÁROS, I. **Para além do capital: rumo a uma teoria da transição**. São Paulo: Boitempo, 2002.

OBSERVATÓRIO COVID-19 FIOCRUZ. **Boletim Especial**. Balanço de dois anos da pandemia Covid-19, 2020-2022.

ORGANIZAÇÃO PAN-AMERICANA DA SAÚDE. ORGANIZAÇÃO MUNDIAL DA SAÚDE. **OMS declara fim da Emergência de Saúde Pública de Importância Internacional referente à COVID-19**. 2023. Available at: <https://www.paho.org/pt/noticias/5-5-2023-oms-declara-fim-da-emergencia-saude-publica-importancia-internacional-referente>. Acess: 07 May 2023.

PEREIRA, J. M. M. A atuação do Banco Mundial ameniza ou piora o impacto da pandemia global? **Cadernos de Saúde Pública**, v. 36, n. 12, 2020. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1590/0102-311X00230620>. Acess: 08 Mar. 2023.

PRONKO, M. O Banco Mundial no campo internacional da educação. *In*: PEREIRA, J. M. M.; PRONKO, M. (org.). **A demolição de direitos: um exame das políticas do Banco Mundial para a educação e a saúde (1980-2013)**. Rio de Janeiro: Escola Politécnica de Saúde Joaquim Venâncio - EPSJV, 2014. p. 89-112.



REIS, L. F. DISPUTA PELO FUNDO PÚBLICO: dívida pública e o financiamento das universidades federais e da ciência e tecnologia no Brasil (2013-2021). In: PELETTI, A. B.; REIS, L. F.; DEITOS, R. A. (org.). **Estado e políticas educacionais**. Curitiba: CRV, 2022. v. 2, p. 197-211.

REIS, L. F.; MACÁRIO, E. Fundo público em disputa: gastos orçamentários do Governo Central com a dívida pública, as universidades federais e a ciência e tecnologia no Brasil (2003-2020). In: GONÇALVES, A. M.; ZANARDINI, J. B.; DEITOS, R. A. (org.). **Estado e políticas educacionais**. Curitiba: CRV, 2022. v. 1, p. 137-169.

SAVIANI, D. Crise estrutural, conjuntura nacional, coronavirus e educação – o desmonte da educação nacional. **Revista Exitus**, [S. l.], v. 10, n. 1, p. e020063, 2020. Available at: <http://www.ufopa.edu.br/portaldeperiodicos/index.php/revistaexitus/article/view/1463>. Acess: 26 Feb. 2023.

SOARES, L. T. **Os custos sociais do ajuste neoliberal na América Latina**. 2. ed. São Paulo: Cortez, 2002.

TAVARES, M. da C.; FIORI, J. L. (org.). **Poder e dinheiro: uma economia política da globalização**. 6. ed. Petrópolis, RJ: Vozes, 1997.

UNESCO. ORGANIZAÇÃO DAS NAÇÕES UNIDAS PARA A EDUCAÇÃO, A CIÊNCIA E A CULTURA. **Declaração mundial sobre educação para todos: satisfação das necessidades básicas de aprendizagem**. Jomtien, Tailândia: UNESCO, 1990.

UNESCO. ORGANIZAÇÃO DAS NAÇÕES UNIDAS PARA A EDUCAÇÃO, A CIÊNCIA E A CULTURA. **Educação para todos: o compromisso de Dakar**. Dakar, Senegal: UNESCO, 2000.

UNESCO. **Transformando nosso mundo: a Agenda 2030 para o Desenvolvimento Sustentável**. UNESCO, 2015.

UNESCO. **Declaração de Incheon e Marco de Ação para a educação: rumo a uma educação de qualidade inclusiva e equitativa e à educação ao longo da vida para todos**. Brasília, DF, 2016.

UNESCO. **Resumo do Relatório de Monitoramento Global da Educação 2020: Inclusão e educação: Todos, sem exceção**. Paris, UNESCO, 2020.

UNESCO. **Relatório de Monitoramento Global da Educação – Resumo 2021/2. Atores não estatais na educação: quem escolhe? Quem perde?** Paris, UNESCO, 2021.

UNESCO. **Cuando las escuelas cierran: el impacto de género del cierre de las escuelas por el COVID-19**. UNESCO, 2022.

VIOR, S.; CERRUTI, M. B. O. O Banco Mundial e a sua influência na definição de políticas educacionais na América Latina (1980-2012). In: PEREIRA, J. M. M.; PRONKO, M. (org.). **A demolição de direitos: um exame das políticas do Banco Mundial para a educação e a saúde (1980-2013)**. Rio de Janeiro: Escola Politécnica de Saúde Joaquim Venâncio, 2014.

---

**Acknowledgements:** Thanks to CNPq for the financial support.

**Funding:** The research received financial support from CNPq.

**Conflicts of interest:** Not applicable.

**Ethical approval:** As this was documentary research, there was no need to go through an ethics committee. It should be noted that the work respected all ethical standards used in research in the field of Education.

**Availability of data and material:** These are open access documents.

**Author contributions:** The article is the result of post-doctoral research by Ireni Marilene Zago Figueiredo, responsible for producing the article. The post-doctoral internship supervisor is co-authored.

---

**Processing and editing: Editora Ibero-Americana de Educação.**  
Review, formatting, standardization, and translation.

