

Research article

Intersectionality of violence against childhood: potentialities of social innovation to ensure the well-being of children and adolescents in situation of child poverty

Interseccionalidade de violências sobre a infância: potencialidades da inovação social para efetivação do bem-estar de crianças e adolescentes em situação de pobreza infantil

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Abstract

In this text we analyze the potential of social innovation to achieve the well-being of children and adolescents in situations of child poverty based on reflection on the intersectional violence experienced in their daily lives. The data presented throughout the text come from empirical research carried out in four different educational institutions, located in the south and southeast of Brazil, which captured perceptions about the well-being and discomfort of 110 students aged 12 to 18 years old. The construction of the text and data analysis are based on theoretical/epistemic assumptions that contribute to the multidimensional understanding of well-being and the potential of social innovation in improving quality of life and overcoming child poverty. The perceptions expressed are impacted by the intersectionality of suffered deprivations, with an emphasis on the emotional and intrapersonal dimension, obscuring the interpersonal and collective perspective, necessary for everyone's well-being and quality of life.

Keywords: child well-being; social innovation; intersectionality; child poverty.

Resumo

No presente texto analisamos as potencialidades da inovação social para a efetivação do bem-estar de crianças e adolescentes em situação de pobreza infantil a partir da reflexão acerca das violências interseccionais experienciadas em seus cotidianos. Os dados apresentados ao longo do texto são provenientes de uma pesquisa empírica realizada em quatro distintas instituições educacionais, localizadas no sul e sudeste brasileiro, e que apreendeu percepções acerca do bem-estar e mal-estar de 110 estudantes de 12 a 18 anos de idade. A construção do texto e análise dos dados partem de pressupostos teóricos/epistêmicos que contribuem para a compreensão multidimensional do bem-estar e das potencialidades da inovação social na efetivação da qualidade de vida e superação da pobreza infantil. As percepções enunciadas são impactadas pela interseccionalidade de privações sofridas, com ênfase na dimensão emocional e intrapessoal, ofuscando a perspectiva interpessoal e coletiva, necessária ao bem-estar e qualidade de vida de todos(as).

Palavras-chave: bem-estar da infância; inovação social; interseccionalidade; pobreza infantil.

INTRODUCTION

Children and adolescents in situation of social vulnerability and child poverty reveal the fragility from the ineffectiveness of public policies for the protection of children's rights. Historically, as a generational category and as holders of rights, with specificities inherent to their biopsychosocial development, the "discovery" and visibility of childhood is recent and

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Data availability: Research data are available in the body of the article. Study conducted at Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Paraná (PUCPR), Curitiba, PR, Brasil.



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deeply marked by exclusionary processes (Pacheco; Eying, 2020) which promote and maintain the precariousness of children and adolescents in the world's economic peripheries.

Based on these considerations, this text seeks to reflect on the intersectional violence which permeates the lives of children and adolescents and how such violence impacts their perceptions of well-being and ill-being in their daily lives.

The problem that guides this reflection seeks to elucidate the following question: how do the dynamics and structures of subordination, to which children and adolescents in situations of child poverty are subjected, affect their narratives and perceptions of well-being and ill-being in their daily lives?

Based on this issue, our main objective is to analyze the potential of social innovation to improve the well-being of children and adolescents living in situation of childhood poverty. The theoretical and epistemological assumptions of the discussion and analysis of empirical data are anchored in the perspectives of Alanen (2010), Assis (2019), Bastos (2016), Veiga and Araújo (2016), Buckland and Murillo (2013), Gaspar et al. (2006), among others, who contribute to a multidimensional understanding of well-being, childhood poverty, and the potential of social innovation to promote well-being and quality of life in childhood.

From a multidimensional perspective, the realization of well-being in the daily lives of children and adolescents involves access to material goods (food, health, housing, clothing, etc.), but is not limited to them, taking into account immaterial aspects (identity, autonomy, participation, protection, prevention, future prospects, etc.) and subjective aspects that stem from individuals' perceptions of well-being. Thus, in:

[...] when assessing the well-being of children and adolescents, it is essential to consider subjective experience rather than living conditions. Since the relationship between objective conditions and psychosocial status is imperfect, and in order to understand the experience of quality of life, it is necessary to directly refer to the individual's own description of how they feel about their life. (Gaspar et al., 2006, p. 48).

Therefore, regardless of the perspective from which the concept of well-being is approached, the fact is that the existing forms of violence that intersect in children's daily lives affect their perceptions and narratives.

Violence, which manifests itself in different ways in the daily lives of children and adolescents, cannot be analyzed in a one-dimensional way, as there are several overlapping factors that violate children's rights to provision, participation, and protection (United Nations, 1990). And, consequently, they produce and maintain children and adolescents in situation of childhood poverty, that is, in a state of deprivation that directly impacts the well-being and quality of life of children, causing them to be denied and/or restricted in their "[...] access to their fundamental rights" and to experience "[...] discrimination and stigmatization in their daily lives, and their voices may not be heard." (European Anti-Poverty Network, 2013, p. 9).

Such context of violations and lack of guaranteed rights is evidenced in an empirical study conducted in four educational institutions located in southern and southeastern Brazil, which aimed to verify the relationships and contributions between education and the guarantee of rights "[...] in the collective construction of the well-being of all in the school and community context." (Eying et al., 2023, p. 14).

In this scenario, an empirical study was conducted with 110 students aged 12 to 18 to understand and map their perceptions of well-being and malaise in their daily lives. Data collection was coordinated in partnership with the Marist Network in Brazil "[...] for the prospecting and selection of educational and health institutions in territories of childhood vulnerability, where it was possible to contact subjects who constitute the groups that the research sought to hear from." (Eying et al., 2023, p. 8).

Participation in the study was by invitation and signing of a free and informed consent form by the participants. Forms with open and closed questions were used as instruments for data collection. The data were organized and analyzed to compose the final research report. The process included the exploration and categorization of the material, identifying recurring themes and responses. Based on the systematization of the data, graphs and tables were

prepared for the analysis and interpretation of the results, which were subsequently discussed in dialogue with the adopted theoretical framework.

Table 1 shows the location and number of participants from each institution investigated.

Table 1. Institutions and number of research participants.

Institution	Location	Participants	%
INSTITUTION A	Almirante Tamandaré - PR	24	21,8%
INSTITUTION B	Ponta Grossa - PR	67	60,9%
INSTITUTION C	São José - SC	02	1,8%
INSTITUTION D	Ribeirão Preto - SP	17	15,5%
GENERAL TOTAL	04	110	100%

Source: Research Report “Education and Well-being: Participatory Management to Improve Quality of Life in Schools and Communities” (2022–2025), Volume II (Eyng, et al., 2023).

Regarding gender identification and self-declaration, 54.5% of respondents identify as male, 44.5% as female, and 0.9% as non-binary. Considering self-identifications regarding race/ color (classification used by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics IBGE), we can observe the prevalence of identifications as white (54.5%), followed by brown (23.6%), black (11.8%), yellow (1.8%), and did not know how to declare (8.2%).

The high percentage (8.2%) of respondents who were unable to declare their ethnicity and ancestry calls attention. These numbers suggest the effectiveness of colonial processes in destituting colonized populations of their identity, as well as cultural homogenization policies that tend to value some cultures and ethnicities over others. These desired and valued attitudes are usually linked to the white, Christian, European/North American standard and other identity markers of the global economic elite, and when individuals are unable to position themselves and/or be positioned within this stereotype (white-Christian-European), there is an emptying of identity and a sense of not belonging to any ethnic group.

The empirical research included open and closed questions in eight different blocks, namely: 1) Social, cultural, and economic characteristics; 2) Rights, expectations, and guarantees; 3) Right to participation; 4) Right to provision; 5) Right to protection; 6) Right to education; 7) Right to health; and 8) Well-being: views and proposals. In the last section, which is the subject of analysis in this text, students were asked about their understanding of well-being, malaise, and the factors necessary to ensure the first one in their daily lives.

Perceptions of well-being in the daily lives of children and adolescents

In recent years, amplified by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the well-being of children and adolescents has been at the center of global political discourse and debate. In fact, since the feeling of childhood awakening in early modernity, cultural, social, and political perspectives have turned to childhood to protect and regulate this age group of the population (not always in that order, and not always with the necessary intensity).

On the other hand, Alanen (2010, p. 751) mentions that such concern for the welfare of children “[...] comes from apprehension about the rapid aging of Western societies: people today live longer than previous generations, while children are being born in decreasing numbers.” This reasoning comes from the need and interest in maintaining the structure of the capitalist economic system, which, in addition to accumulating capital, protecting private property, and regulating the means of production, constantly provides a functional, operative, and profitable workforce, a situation that contrasts with the natural and biological process of aging, since “[...] the disposable nature of the elderly is functional to consumer society, openly reproducing the ills of capitalism” (Goldman, 2000, p. 19).

In this sense, thinking about the well-being of children and adolescents must start from an analysis of the current situation, with special attention to the voices of children, since “[...]”

scientific research of a social nature on well-being seems to be very outdated,” and this is because its main protagonists, children and adolescents, have never, “[...] been at the center of well-being research” (Alanen, 2010, p. 752).

In an attempt to overcome this gap, we bring to the debate the perceptions of children and adolescents about well-being and malaise in their daily lives.

When analyzing the empirical data presented in Table 2, we identified several dimensions of well-being that were organized into ten categories. It is important to note that, when categorizing the data collected in the survey, we found that the students’ responses covered more than one category, which is why the results presented in the tables indicate a number higher than the number of survey participants.

Table 2. Students’ perceptions of well-being in their daily lives.

Integrating categories	A	B	C	D	TOTAL	%
Guarantee of rights: covers responses relating to access to rights	2	2	0	0	4	2,7
Provision: covers responses relating to access to basic rights, material aspects, food security, and financial security	0	2	0	0	2	1,4
Protection: covers responses relating to being safe, secure, physically and emotionally, and public safety	1	1	0	2	4	2,7
Participation, coexistence: covers responses related to respect for others, getting along with others, family and community coexistence, community well-being, referring to the social dimension and interpersonal relationships.	2	6	0	2	10	6,8
Health: covers responses that relate to physical, emotional, or spiritual well-being and overall health, referring to the dimension of personal health.	4	22	0	10	36	24,5
Intrapersonal: covers responses related to feeling good about yourself, feeling well, being comfortable, satisfaction, feeling good about your actions, referring to the emotional, personal, and individual dimensions.	17	35	2	8	62	42,1
Quality of life: covers responses that include this expression	0	3	0	0	3	2,1
Balance: in all aspects of life, it encompasses responses that relate to being well in all dimensions of life, physical, mental, and spiritual, integral well-being, a full life, living well, satisfaction	0	3	0	0	3	2,1
Satisfaction: covers responses related to being satisfied, fulfilled.	2	1	0	1	4	2,7
Others: peace, happiness, a fair society, preserving the environment, sanitation, sincerity, having friends, having motivation/goals, having free time, work, freedom of expression, leisure, tranquility, exercising, not having problems	4	10	0	5	19	12,9
Total of responses	32	85	2	28	147	100%

Source: Research Report “Education and Well-being: Participatory Management to Improve Quality of Life in Schools and Communities” (2022–2025), Volume II (Eyng, et al., 2023).

The perceptions that children and adolescents have about well-being in their daily lives (Table 2) expose the contradiction between contemporary discourses on protection, care, and concern for children and the reality they experience, which is permeated by an intersection of violence in their daily lives.

The analysis of the perceptions expressed reveals that the dynamics of subordination to which children and adolescents in situations of child poverty are subjected must take into account the diverse and overlapping layers of violence that structure the daily lives of children and,

consequently, influence their quality of life, well-being, and present and future possibilities for their full development.

Some of the students' narratives attest that the "[...] interrelationship between deprivation, exclusion, and vulnerability [...] prevents the achievement of well-being at these stages of life" (Fundo das Nações Unidas para a Infância, 2018, p. 7) and affects both the physical and mental aspects of their experiences. When asked about what well-being means to them, according to their understanding:

Having the mental, health, financial, emotional, etc. conditions to feel good (EBRPG.026).

Feeling comfortable and safe where you live and being in good mental and physical health (EBRSP.008).

Being in tune with your body and mind (EBRPG.047).

Good health, having a good psychologist (EBRSP.012).

Good and adequate physical and mental health that makes you happy (EBRSP.015).

The excerpts reveal that children's perception of well-being goes beyond economic aspects. Protective, participatory, interpersonal, and intrapersonal aspects—which are even included in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1990)—identified by children and adolescents as essential to ensuring well-being in their lives, show that, far from being an abstract concept belonging to a distant past, childhood remains invisible, silenced, and marginalized from society, culture, politics, and other spheres that make up the human experience.

Bastos (2016, p. 30) corroborates this analysis when he defines well-being as "[...] the satisfaction of a diverse set of material and immaterial needs." In this sense, the multidimensionality that the concept of well-being assumes, both at the theoretical level and in the voices of the children and adolescents participating in the study, reiterates the conception that "[...] the child is a complete being, bio-psycho-social-cultural, and as such, to measure their well-being, it is important to keep in mind several dimensions (Veiga; Araújo, 2016, p. 134).

The data point to the prevalence of the individual dimension represented in the intrapersonal category: feeling good, being comfortable with oneself, linked to the personal and emotional dimension – highest response rate. Next, the health category was the second category with the most responses, with the sum of the two categories mentioned totaling 66.6% of the responses. The responses presented reveal that the students' perception of well-being indicates that the individual character prevails over the collective dimension of well-being. It can be inferred that the neoliberal economic, political, and cultural model has been successful in its ideology of sociability. Furthermore, it cannot be ignored that the vulnerability experienced by students is also a contributing factor to the need for individual survival.

It is worth noting that the perception of well-being can also be developed from its absence, that is, the deficit of well-being reverberates in demands for access to a coordinated set of rights that meet the multidimensional needs of human beings. In the context of childhood, the realization of well-being represents the full materialization of human rights and respect for the human dignity of children and adolescents. It is necessary to consider that:

[...] Child well-being and deprivation represent different sides of the same coin. From a child rights perspective, well-being can be defined as the realization of children's rights and the fulfillment of every child's opportunity to be all that they can be. The degree to which this is achieved can be measured in terms of positive outcomes for the child, while negative outcomes and deprivation point to the denial of children's rights. (Bradshaw; Hoelscher; Richardson, 2007, p. 6)

In this perception presented by Bradshaw, Hoelscher and Richardson (2007), the materialization of well-being implies the rupture inequality expressions manifested in various contexts and

territories (Eyng; Pacheco; Padilha, 2023). It is worth recalling the historical process of Brazil, based on slavery, rural oligarchies, patrimonialism, and other elements of command and favor that have entrenched structural inequality in the country. From this perspective, even with the process of democratization, the previewed guarantees in legislation, and the implementation of public policies in response to society's demands, these changes are still residual, focused, and fragile in their intersectoral dimension.

Thus, reflecting on the well-being of children and adolescents implies breaking with the narrow perception of this concept, when reduced to the relationship between health and quality of life. Since quality of life includes a multidimensionality of aspects constituted in the intersectoral perspective of childhood human rights. Therefore, with an in-depth look at the reality of the absence and/or fragility of access to social, political, economic, and cultural rights, a more thorough analysis of this reality is necessary. It seems prudent, then, to evoke the concept of intersectionality to understand the set of human rights violations present in the reality of children and adolescents in situations of child poverty.

Intersectionality, according to Assis (2019), is one of the tools for understanding the multiple deprivations experienced by individuals. It should be noted that this is a concept that originated in black feminism in the United States, which allows us to reflect on the combinations of determinants (intersections) that lead to human rights violations. Intersectionality is directly linked to the markers and social positions that individuals occupy in society, namely:

[...] a conceptualization of the problem that seeks to capture the structural and dynamic consequences of the interaction among two or more axes of subordination. It deals specifically with the way in which racism, patriarchy, class oppression, and other discriminatory systems create basic inequalities that structure the relative positions of women, [children], races, ethnicities, classes, and others. (Crenshaw, 2002, p. 177).

Furthermore, “[...] intersectionality deals with how specific actions and policies generate oppressions that flow along these axes, constituting dynamic or active aspects of disempowerment” (Crenshaw, 2002, p. 177), bringing the necessary intersectorality. Thus, intersectionality, used as a tool for social analysis, allows us to take a multidimensional look at the overlaps of violence in individuals’ daily lives. In this sense, using the lens of intersectionality, we will analyze students’ perceptions of what malaise is according to their understanding.

The categories with the highest incidence, presented in Table 3: intrapersonal, poor health, and lack of participation/social interaction, account for 76.4% of the responses.

Table 3. Students’ perceptions of malaise in their daily lives.

Integrating categories	A	B	C	D	TOTAL	%
Absence of guaranteed rights: covers responses relating to lack of access to rights	1	2	0	0	3	2,3
Lack of Provision: covers responses relating to lack of access to basic rights, material aspects, food security, and financial security.	0	1	0	0	1	0,8
Lack of Protection: covers responses relating to not feeling safe, secure, physically and emotionally, and to a lack of public safety	0	1	0	0	1	0,8
Lack of participation, coexistence: covers responses that relate to conflicts with others, not getting along with others, fragility in family and community life, lack of community well-being, referring to the social dimension of interpersonal relationships.	3	10	0	2	15	11,8
Health Fragility: covers responses that relate to physical, emotional, or spiritual malaise and lack of overall health, referring to the dimension of personal health.	6	21	0	8	35	27,6

Source: Research Report “Education and Well-being: Participatory Management to Improve Quality of Life in Schools and Communities” (2022–2025), Volume II (Eyng, et al., 2023).

Table 3. Continued...

Integrating categories	A	B	C	D	TOTAL	%
Intrapersonal: covers responses related to not feeling good about oneself, feeling bad, being uncomfortable, bothered, dissatisfied, worried, feeling bad about one's actions, referring to the emotional, personal, individual dimension.	13	27	1	6	47	37
Quality of life lack: covers responses that present this dimension	0	3	0	0	3	2,3
Lack of balance: in all aspects of life, it encompasses responses that relate to feeling unwell in all dimensions of life, physical, mental, and spiritual, overall malaise.	0	2	0	0	2	1,6
Others: lack of peace, sadness, being unhappy, having problems, bad place, not feeling calm, tired, I don't know	5	12	1	2	20	15,8
Total of responses	28	79	2	18	127	100%

Source: Research Report "Education and Well-being: Participatory Management to Improve Quality of Life in Schools and Communities" (2022-2025), Volume II (Eyng, et al., 2023).

Although the other categories had a low incidence of responses, a multidimensional view of them indicates that rights violations occur when there is a perception of such discrepancies in the daily lives of participants. The responses also represent claims for unmet needs and demands in their territories. Furthermore, intersectionality is evident when we analyze the total number of responses and participants, that is, students indicate more than one factor of discomfort in their daily, social, and community contexts.

This scenario reiterates the understanding that child poverty:

[...] is a distal risk phenomenon whose effects are mediated by proximal factors. Characterized by a lack of developmental support and stimulation resources and by environmental exposure to physical and psychosocial risk, child poverty has harmful effects on children's physical, cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioral well-being (WB). Children live in a social ecology with specific characteristics, facing a set of physical and psychosocial conditions that are less than optimal, many of which are co-occurring and pervasive. (Oliveira, 2014, p. 13).

Such exposure to physical and psychosocial risks, as described by Oliveira (2014), suggests that the combination of violence, oppression, and lack of rights constitutes a violation of the human rights of the adolescents participating in the study, "[...] which includes not only individual and family functioning, but also the neighborhood, school, and community social services." (Oliveira, 2014, p. 13).

As the centrality of perceived absences is also found in the individual dimension of relationships, it is possible to infer that students experience violations of their rights in their everyday lives. This highlights the need to develop intersectoral strategies that address the multidimensional needs of individuals. These strategies involve actions by the subjects themselves in their contexts, but with the State apparatus playing a leading role in implementing public policies that are translated into territorialized programs and services that promote active citizenship among children and adolescents.

Potentialities of social innovation to promote well-being

The countless social inequalities engendered by the capitalist system, which profoundly mark the contemporary context and are exacerbated by crises in democracies, begin what Moura (2005) calls "New Wars." This context of violence, "[...] which manifests itself in urban micro-spaces in countries that officially live in peace" (Moura 2005, p. 77), places children in hostile territories where their rights to a dignified life and integral development are not guaranteed, since in uncertain times it is childhood, and other subalternized groups, who are the first to perish and lose their rights and possibilities of becoming someone.

At structural levels, overcoming this logic will only be possible when exclusionary mechanisms are unveiled and individuals recognize themselves as subjects of rights, holders of dignity,

and critically idealize equitable conditions (social, participatory, cultural, and political) for life in society.

This path necessarily passes through the educational sphere, since education “[...] is a form of intervention in the world” (Freire, 2000, p. 110) that must always aim to overcome inequalities. Furthermore, “[...] education, in addition to constituting a specific type of right, a social right, is a necessary, although insufficient, condition for the exercise of all rights, whether civil, political, social, economic, or of any other nature” (Saviani, 2013, p. 745).

In this sense, as a strategic tool for mobilizing resources and formulating and managing public policies, social innovation can significantly contribute to improving the well-being of children and adolescents in their daily lives, since:

[...] policies are always dynamic due to social demands that are not fixed, especially since many of them have never been consolidated throughout history. What brings public policies to life is the effective dynamic of understanding and transposing what is textually established in current legislation into micro-contexts. (Mallmann; Schneider, 2021, p. 1118).

According to Buckland and Murillo (2013, p. 9), there are five variables necessary for analyzing social innovation, namely: Impact and social transformation, intersectoral collaboration, economic sustainability and long-term viability, type of innovation, and scalability and replicability. For theorists, these five variables allow for a comprehensive, intersectoral, and multidimensional understanding of social innovation, analyzing its results as processes and observing its potential and positive impact on society.

When we apply the concept of social innovation to the promotion of well-being in children's daily lives, we understand that social innovation “[...] is an intervention by actors with the aim of meeting a specific need or proposing a solution with the aim of changing social relations, transforming a situation, or proposing cultural guidelines” (Martins; Batista; Olave, 2021, p. 143).

In this sense, the variables presented by Buckland and Murillo (2013) allow us to consider policies that guarantee children's rights that are intersectoral (health, education, social assistance, etc.) and that overcome the fragmentation and discontinuity of programs and policies aimed at overcoming social inequalities, especially in the context of Brazilian children and youth. Thus, “[...] unlike the terms social entrepreneurship and social enterprise, social innovation transcends sectors, levels of analysis, and methods to discover processes—strategies, tactics, and theories of change—that produce lasting impact” (Phills Junior; Deiglmeier; Miller, 2008, p. 37).

Such initiatives can contribute substantially to promoting healthier, more democratic, and participatory environments for childhood, prioritizing children and adolescents in situations of vulnerability and child poverty. Because:

[...] social innovations are innovations that are social in both their ends and their means [...]. Specifically, we define social innovations as new ideas (products, services, and models) which simultaneously promote the resolution of social needs (more effectively than alternatives) and create new social relationships or collaborations. In other words, they are innovations that are not only good for society but also strengthen society's capacity to act. (Bureau of European Policy Advisers, 2011, p. 9).

To this end, education and health act as key intersectoral pillars of social innovation, working to train agents and strengthen actions in primary and higher education schools, with a view to overcoming child poverty and strengthening the multidimensional guarantee of the well-being of children and adolescents.

As a real possibility for achieving well-being in the daily lives of children and adolescents, and as a practice of social innovation, the SPIRAL (Societal Progress Indicators for the Responsibility of All) methodology, launched by the Council of Europe as part of its strategy and action plan for social cohesion, is understood “[...] as society's ability to ensure the well-being of all” (Societal Progress Indicators for the Responsibility of All, 2021) and analyzed through collectively constructed indicators based on defined well-being criteria and with broad participation by children and adolescents— which understand that well-being is a shared responsibility—it has significant potential for future social interventions as it promotes decentralized decision-making and greater participation by individuals in the areas of: 1. Building a common and

shared vision; 2. Open and accessible processes; 3. The debate on “living well together”; 4. Equal right to speak; 5. The right of expression of stakeholders; 6. Summaries that include a diversity of viewpoints; 7. Participatory and transparent preparation of summaries; 8. Preparation of summaries at different levels; 9. Indicators for network action; 10. Results that can be reproduced and extended beyond themselves.

From this perspective, the SPIRAL methodology aims, through collective contribution, to “[...] progressively outweigh the difficulties so that, gradually, the construction of co-responsibility for the well-being of all becomes a more natural process in our societies and is recognized as a key element of our common future.” (Societal Progress Indicators for the Responsibility of All, 2021).

In the collective construction process, participatory relationships take on both regulatory and emancipatory aspects, since participation “[...] is simultaneously regulatory and emancipatory, and is intentionally constructed to articulate the flows of communication and power that manifest themselves in the interaction of subjects (social actors)” (Vieira, 2017, p. 36). Thus, emancipation comes from the continuous development of the capacity for participation. In this way, it is a gradual achievement, not granted by a statute or certificate, but built through the exercise of emancipatory participation that “[...] aims to transform individual subjects into collective subjects, increasing their capacity for representation and their power of pressure or negotiation within decision-making centers, in order to influence the allocation and distribution of resources” (Vieira, 2017, p. 37).

In this regard, social innovation resulting from the application of the SPIRAL methodology in the public policy cycle for promoting child welfare offers the possibility of broad emancipatory participation by citizens in making real contributions to overcoming social inequalities and, consequently, increasing the well-being of children and adolescents in situation of poverty.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The reflection presented in the text sought to understand how the dynamics and structures of subordination to which children and adolescents in situations of child poverty are subjected affect their narratives and perceptions about well-being and malaise in their daily lives.

In this journey, we have observed that childhood as a generational category is constantly used as a bargaining chip in political, social, and cultural discourses, that is, its protection and defense are repeatedly invoked by the so-called “defenders” of values, norms of conduct, and traditions desired for the construction of a welfare society. However, in practice, such discourses are empty, since they do not materialize in improved well-being through the protection and participation of children in the construction of their life projects and improvements in their daily lives.

Based on the data collected empirically, we found that the perceptions expressed are impacted by the intersectionality of deprivations suffered, with an emphasis on the emotional and intrapersonal dimension, overshadowing the interpersonal and collective perspective necessary for the well-being and quality of life of all.

Thus, it is clear that well-being is far from being a reality in the daily lives of children and adolescents living in situation of poverty. And that perceptions of malaise in their daily lives reveal the fragility of such discourses in a scenario in which, even though there are national and international policies to protect children’s rights, which have been ratified by Brazil, they do not materialize in the lives and daily routines of children in the global south.

As a possible way to overcome this context, we present the potential of social innovation as a political strategy in the formulation and management of policies and programs to guarantee children’s rights, and we highlight the SPIRAL methodology as a methodological proposal. In this sense, when used in an intersectoral manner, that is, breaking with fragmentation and including the “[...] participation of children in defining actions that concern them, in accordance with their age and developmental characteristics” (Brasil, 2016), innovation has great potential for promoting well-being and citizenship in the daily lives of children and adolescents in situations of child poverty.

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