

EDUCATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND EQUITY: THE CASE OF THE PROGRAM 'LITERACY AT THE RIGHT AGE' (MAIS PAIC)¹

ESTRATÉGIAS DE GESTÃO DA EDUCAÇÃO E EQUIDADE: O CASO DO PROGRAMA APRENDIZAGEM NA IDADE CERTA (MAIS PAIC)

ESTRATEGIAS DE GESTIÓN DE LA EDUCACIÓN Y EQUIDAD: EL CASO DEL PROGRAMA APRENDIZAGEM NA IDADE CERTA (MAIS PAIC)

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ABSTRACT: The aim of the current article is to present the management strategies of the 'Literacy at the Right Age' Program (Paic, Portuguese initials). This educational policy was implemented in Ceará State in 2007; according to different studies, it helped increasing educational equity. Data collection methodology was based on bibliographic references and on interviews conducted with managers of the State Educational Secretariat and with teachers who worked in the City of Fortaleza. The main management strategies adopted in 13 years of Program lied on reorganizing the Secretariat by creating a department focused on enabling its cooperation with different municipalities; on adopting axes capable of organizing Paic's action in cascade, starting from the Secretariat until reaching schools; on adopting instruments and tools to enable implementing agents to focus on common goals; on implementing systemic actions; on following-up and monitoring actions and results, with subsequent progress disclosure; as well as on mobilizing municipalities and several social actors.

KEYWORDS: Public educational policies. Equity. Literacy. Paic. Educational management.

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RESUMO: O artigo visa apresentar as estratégias de gestão do Programa Alfabetização na Idade Certa (Paic), uma política educacional implementada no estado do Ceará desde 2007 e que, segundo pesquisas, tem ampliado a equidade educacional. O estudo fez uso de referências bibliográficas e de entrevistas com gestores da Secretaria Educacional do Estado e professores de Fortaleza. Conclui-se que as principais estratégias de gestão adotadas nos 13 anos do Programa foram a reordenação da Secretaria, com a criação de um departamento dedicado à cooperação com os municípios; a adoção de eixos que organiza a ação do Paic em cascata, partindo da Secretaria até chegar às escolas; a adoção de instrumentos e ferramentas que colocam os agentes implementadores em torno de objetivos comuns; a ação sistêmica; o acompanhamento e o monitoramento das ações e dos resultados, com divulgação dos avanços; e a mobilização dos municípios e outros atores sociais.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Políticas públicas em educação. Equidade. Alfabetização. Paic. Gestão educacional.

RESUMEN: El artículo tiene como objetivo presentar las estrategias de gestión del Programa de Alfabetización en la Edad Adecuada (Paic), una política educativa implementada en Ceará desde 2007 y que a partir de la investigación mostró que ha aumentado la equidad educativa. El estudio utilizó referencias bibliográficas y entrevistas con gerentes de la Secretaría de Educación del Estado y maestros de Fortaleza. Se concluyó que las principales estrategias de gestión adoptadas en los 13 años del Programa fueron: la reorganización de la Secretaría, con la creación de un departamento dedicado a la cooperación con los municipios; la adopción de ejes que organizan la acción de Paic en cascada, desde la Secretaría hasta las escuelas; la adopción de instrumentos y herramientas que ubican a los agentes implementadores en torno a objetivos comunes; la acción sistémica; el seguimiento y monitoreo de acciones y resultados, con la difusión del progreso; y la movilización de municipios y otros actores sociales.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Políticas públicas en educación. Equidad. Alfabetización. Paic. Gestión educativa.

Introduction

The main objective of this article is to present the management strategies of the Learning at the Right Age Program (Mais Paic, Portuguese initials), an initiative that, according to research, managed to increase educational equity in the early years of elementary school.

The concept of equity presented here, starts from the understanding that the distribution of educational public goods should favor the most vulnerable population (DUBET, 2009) and promote social justice. Equity “supposes a principle capable of correcting inequalities in favor of those who have less in the distribution of social goods” (RIBEIRO, 2014, p. 1102, our translation). Considering these authors, the concept of equity used in this text, as a principle of justice, provides that an educational policy should promote

adequate levels of performance for all children, with emphasis on those with lower socioeconomic status.

Equity in education, in the terms mentioned above, is not an easy result to be achieved. In the 1960s, the Sociology of Education demonstrated that there is a correlation between the socioeconomic level of families and the academic performance of students (COLEMAN *et al.*, 1966; BOURDIEU; PASSERON, 1975). Since then, surveys, even those that point to other intervening factors in student performance, have not failed to recognize socioeconomic status as the strongest predictor of school inequality (BROOKE; SOARES, 2008). Producing educational equity implies, in some way, focusing on the aforementioned correlation. Paic has managed to contribute to the expansion of equity in the early years of elementary school, reducing the gap in the performance of students who live in locations that are less and more poor (PADILHA *et al.*, 2008), or who are from schools with a larger or lesser number of families with lower socioeconomic status (KASMIRSKI; GUSMÃO; RIBEIRO, 2017).

The Literacy at the Right Age Program (Paic) was created in 2007 by the Ceará government with the aim of promoting the literacy of all children in the public network of Ceará, focusing on the 2nd year of elementary school (ES). According to documents and interviews, Paic sought to create an institutional culture focused on student learning and changing municipal and school management (CEARÁ, 2012; CRUZ, 2007). The Secretariat of Education (Seduc) coordinates the policy, which aims to reduce inequalities and expand access to education and cooperates technically and financially with the municipalities to implement the education policy through programs and technical assistance (SEGATTO, 2015).

Paic originates from the experience implemented in education in Sobral, which, since 2000, started to carry out actions to guarantee the right to literacy and universalization of access. These actions start after the identification, through a diagnostic evaluation, that most children, after 2 or 3 years of enrollment in public schools in the city, could not read. From 2001 to 2004, Sobral enrolled all 7-year-old children in ES; reduced the age-grade distortion rate, in the early years of ES, from 28.5 to 13.6; and the dropout rate, from 3.8 to 0.7 (INEP, 2005). The work was organized based on “strategic fronts” with activities in institutional management, strengthening school management, strengthening pedagogical action and valuing teaching, but with the vision that all children “could learn” (SUMIYA, 2019).

This experience was taken to the state Legislative Assembly when the municipal education secretary of Sobral was elected state deputy for the mandate from 2003 to 2006 with the banner of improving education. In 2004, it was organized the Ceará Committee for

the Elimination of School Illiteracy, coordinated by the Assembly, with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef), the Association of Municipalities and Mayors of the State of Ceará (Aprece), of the Union of Municipal Directors of Education of Ceará (Undime), of the National Institute of Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira (Inep) and of the of the Ceará State university (UEC), Federal University of Ceará (UFC), State University of Vale do Acaraú (UVA), and the Regional do Cariri (Urca) and Fortaleza universities (Unifor) (CEARÁ, 2016a). The Committee's actions were based on the 2001 national assessment and a sample assessment of the learning stages of reading, writing and text comprehension of students in the second grade of the ES (current 3rd grade) and the results showed that only 15% read and understood the text (GUSMÃO; RIBEIRO, 2011; CEARÁ, 2016a). Other research also contributed to this diagnosis of illiteracy in the state, which identified that the curriculum of most universities in Ceará did not promote the formation of literacy teachers and it was necessary to improve the mechanisms used by teachers to teach children to read and write (CRUZ, 2019).

School illiteracy in the state came to be faced through a pact between the various actors, to guarantee the right of all children to be literate up to 7 years. Thus, Paic appeared in 2005, still as a non-governmental initiative, with the objective of “supporting the municipalities of Ceará in improving the quality of teaching, reading and writing in the early years of elementary school” (CEARÁ, 2016a). This action had the partnership of Aprece, Undime and Unicef and was organized from a pilot project, carried out from 2005 to 2006, with 56 municipalities (GUSMÃO; RIBEIRO, 2011). In the course of its implementation, several communication strategies were adopted to disseminate the results of learning inequality to municipalities and civil society, aiming at the mobilization for everyone's right to learning and the need to expand the institutional capacity of municipalities and the formation of teachers of all municipalities, with a view to reducing regional and intra-municipal inequalities.

In 2007, when Governor Cid Gomes, former mayor of Sobral, took over the state government, he transformed Paic into a public policy, with the support of Undime, UFC and Unicef. There was also a favorable context for the implementation of Paic due to actions carried out by state education secretaries since 1995, such as the professionalization of teams, the strengthening of the collaboration regime with municipalities, monitoring and evaluation of results (NASPOLINI, 2001; VIEIRA; PLANK; VIDAL, 2019).

For its implementation, managers and technicians from the municipality of Sobral started to integrate positions of the Secretary of Education of the State of Ceará (Seduc). The

Sobralense experience contributed to its formulation and the program was institutionalized through Law 14,026/2007 (SUMIYA, 2019).

The educational policy of the State started to prioritize, in the process of cooperation with the municipalities, literacy at the right age. Since its creation, Paic has been constantly reformulated and, in 2011, it expanded the service until the 5th year of ES, and since then has been called Paic+5. New learning actions started to be developed for Mathematics. In 2015, the State began designing the expansion of initiatives for the 9th year, also involving the discipline of Sciences. At that time, the Program was called the Learning Program at the Right Age (Mais Paic). The results of Paic led the federal government, in 2012, to disseminate a Program inspired by it, the National Pact for Literacy at the Right Age (Pnaic, Portuguese initials).

For the preparation of this article, a qualitative research approach was used. The methodological procedures were developed in two stages. The first occurred: a) documentary analysis of publications, legislation and materials that originated the creation of Paic as well as promoted its transformations during its implementation; b) Scielo searches to identify articles on the initiative. In the second, there was field research with in-depth semi-structured interviews with key players from Seduc and former members of the Ceará government and partner institutions, carried out in 2016 (for the elaboration of the thesis of one of the authors) and 2018 and 2019 with Seduc managers, teachers and other actors (within the scope of the Research Implementation of Educational Policies and Equity in Contexts of Social Vulnerability, funded by Fapesp). Most of the interviews were in person, took place in the participants' workplaces, with signed Free and Informed Consent Form (ICF). To complement the analyzes, requests for information were requested, through the Access to Information Law (LAI), in the period of 2019 and 2020.

This article is structured in two parts in addition to the introduction. The first describes the educational results achieved in the State of Ceará. The second deals with the main Paic management strategies. Finally, the final considerations are presented.

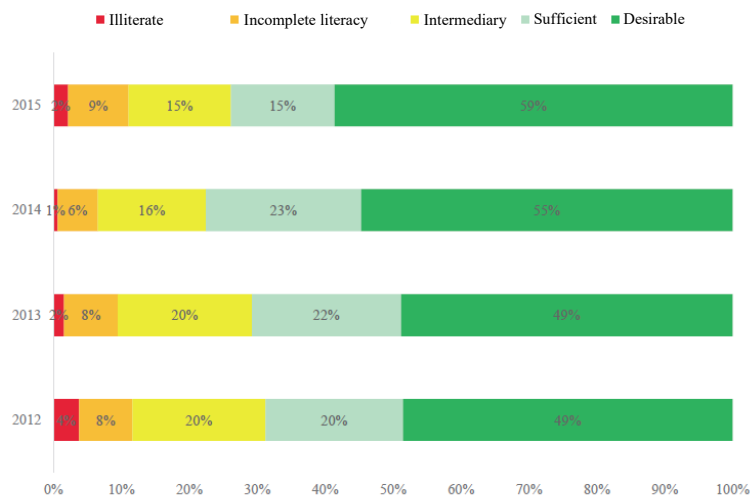
Equity and other educational outcomes in the State of Ceará

Ceará is one of the poorest states in Brazil and has an estimated population of 9,132,078 inhabitants (IBGE, 2019). In 2010, 17.1% of the state's population was in extreme poverty (IPECE, 2015), a rate higher than that of Brazil (8.5%). Inequality in the state is high and the Gini Index was 0.560 in 2017.

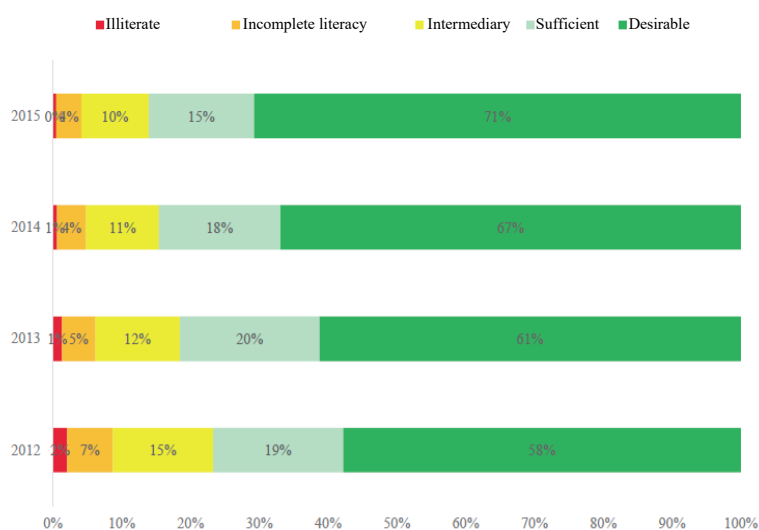
Its Human Development Index (HDI) improved from 1991 to 2010, from 0.45 to 0.682 (UNDP; FUNDAÇÃO JOÃO PINHEIRO; IPEA, 2013). In education, it went from 0.204 to 0.615. In 2017, its HDI-M was 0.735, assuming the 15th position in Brazil (0.778), growing in all dimensions (IPEA, 2019).

In 2017, the rate of literate children at the end of the 2nd year in Ceará (89%) was higher than that of Brazil and the Northeast (IPECE, 2018), whereas a decade ago (2007) that number was only 39, 9% (CEARÁ, 2016b; 2019). The considerable increase in students in the desirable standard of performance in the municipal and state networks is accompanied by a reduction in the percentage of illiterate students when analyzing the performance standards of public networks between 2012 and 2015 (Figures 1 and 2). In assessing the end of this period, a decrease in educational inequality in the state is revealed since all municipalities in Ceará are in sufficient and desirable standards regarding literacy.

Figure 1 – Graph of the percentage of students by performance standard in the 2nd year of ES - state network (2012 to 2015)



Source: Ceará (2016)

Figure 2 – Graph of percentage of students by performance standard in 2nd year of ES - municipal network

Source: Ceará (2016)

ANA's results for 2016 also point to improved literacy. The pedagogical interpretation of this assessment establishes that those who are at level 3 (adequate) and 4 (desirable) on the proficiency scale have sufficient learning with regard to reading. In 2016, 54.76% of Ceará's 3rd year students had sufficient learning in reading, pointing to a similarity, or even improvement, in relation to São Paulo, 58.65%; Espírito Santo, 52.64%; Rio Grande do Sul, 51.06%; and Rio de Janeiro, 40.25%, which are states with greater economic power than Ceará (INEP, 2017).

In writing, ANA considers the proficiency of the 3rd year student at levels 4 (adequate) and 5 (desirable) to be sufficient. In Ceará, there are 70.71% with sufficient writing, a percentage similar to or above the result of São Paulo (82.9%), Espírito Santo (74.91%), Rio Grande do Sul (71.03%) and of Rio de Janeiro (64.78%). In Mathematics, in Ceará, 51.72% of students have sufficient proficiency; in São Paulo, it is 60.82%; in Espírito Santo, 53.59%; Rio Grande do Sul, 51.24%; and Rio de Janeiro, 39.5% (INEP, 2017).

The Basic Education Development Index (Ideb) in the early years of ES, in Brazil, in all Brazilian regions, advanced in public networks. In 2017, the country's index was 5.5 in the assessment of the 5th year, exceeding the target established for the year by 0.3 point. In the Northeast region, the target is also exceeded by 0.6 points. Ceará is the Brazilian state that evolves the most in the 5th year: the Ideb was 2.8 in 2005 and changes to 6.1 in 2017 (Table 1), above the national average and the projected goals for 2017 (4.5 points) and 2021 (5.1 points).

Table 1 – Observed IDEB and projected goals of the Ceará public education network, by ES grades (2005 to 2017)

Grade/Year	Observed Ideb							Projected goals							
	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019	2021
4 ^a grade / 5 ^o year	2,8	3,5	4,1	4,7	5,0	5,7	6,1	2,9	3,2	3,6	3,9	4,2	4,5	4,8	5,1
8 ^a grade / 9 ^o year	2,8	3,3	3,6	3,9	4,1	4,5	4,9	2,8	3,0	3,3	3,6	4,0	4,3	4,6	4,8

Source: Inep (2018)

Observation: The results marked in green refer to the Ideb that reached the target.

In the 2017 Ideb assessment, from the early years of ES, 82 of the 125 best Brazilian public schools are in Ceará (IPECE, 2018).

The learning of 5th grade students in Portuguese Language and Mathematics also improves, in Ceará, from 2008 to 2017. In Portuguese, in 2008, 6.8% of students in the public school system were at the appropriate level, while in 2017, 50, 3%. In Mathematics, it was 3.6% and increases to 36.71% (CEARÁ, 2016b; 2019).

Kasmirski, Gusmão and Ribeiro (2017) highlight that Paic increased the proportion of students who reach the appropriate proficiency in Portuguese Language, especially in schools whose majority of students are poor, expanding equity in education in the state. Between 2005 and 2013, the state's average proficiency increased by 26%; the Northeast, 16%; and the Brazilian, 13%. Average proficiency in Ceará grew in all economic classes (approximately 13%) and the state more than doubled the percentage of students reaching 200 points - adequate knowledge on the Saeb scale -, with emphasis on children from lower socioeconomic level. The program had a minimum effect of 9 percentage points (p.p.) for non-poor schools and an additional impact for poor schools ranging from 2 to 6 p.p. (KASMIRSKI; GUSMÃO; RIBEIRO, 2017, p. 22).

At both the student and school levels, for both control groups, Paic increased the likelihood of a child reaching the appropriate level of proficiency in Portuguese Language. The coefficients vary from 9.6 to 13 percentage points (p.p.). Considering that the percentage of students with performance above or equal to the floor increased by 25 p.p. between 2007 and 2011 for the cohort (Table 2), it can be said that Paic was responsible for at least 39% of this increase (KASMIRSKI; GUSMÃO; RIBEIRO, 2017, p. 22, our translation).

In the final years of ES, children will be monitored by the Permanent Evaluation System for Basic Education in Ceará (Spaeece, Portuguese initials), starting in 2012. In that

year, 8.6% of students were at the appropriate level in Portuguese Language and, in 2017, expands to 18.7%. In Mathematics, it went from 3.9% in 2012 to 9.6%, in 2017 the percentage at the appropriate level. The focus in the early years of elementary school overflowed, somehow, generating effects also in the final years.

In 2008, no municipality had adequate standards in Mathematics and Portuguese in the 4th grade/5th grade and in the 8th grade/9th (Table 2). In 2017, there are 84 in adequate levels in Portuguese and 40 in Mathematics in the 5th year, and two suitable in Portuguese and one in Mathematics in the 9th year, and none at the very critical level.

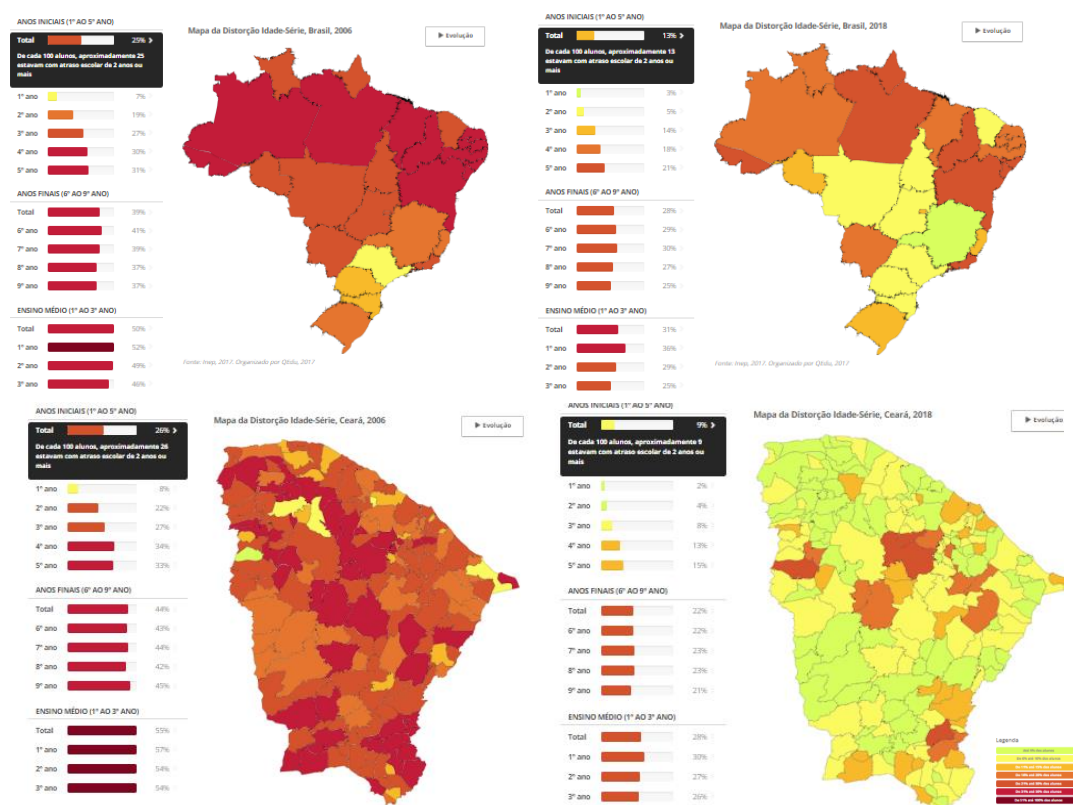
Table 2 – Number of municipalities in Ceará, by proficiency standards in Mathematics and Portuguese (2008 and 2017)

Year/Grade	2008		2017	
	Portuguese	Mathematics	Portuguese	Mathematics
4 ^a grade / 5 ^o year	0 very critical municipalities	2 very critical municipalities	0 very critical municipalities	0 very critical municipalities
	166 critical	180 critical	0 critical	6 critical
	18 intermediaries	2 intermediaries	100 intermediaries	129 intermediaries
	0 adequate	0 adequate	84 adequate	49 adequate
8 ^a grade / 9 ^o year	17 very critical municipalities	125 very critical municipalities	0 very critical municipalities	0 very critical municipalities
	166 critical	57 critical	52 critical	151 critical
	0 intermediaries	1 intermediary	130 intermediaries	32 intermediaries
	0 adequate	0 adequate	2 adequate	1 adequate

Source: Ceará (2018)

There is also an improvement in the age-grade distortion rate in the public network of Ceará. This rate was 26% in 2006 and, in 2018, it is 9%, while in Brazil it was 25% and 13%, respectively (QEDU, 2018, 2006), as can be seen from Figure 3.

Figure 3 – Graph of the evolution of the age-series distortion rate in Ceará and Brazil (2006 and 2018)



Source: Qedu (2006; 2018)

The illiteracy rate in 2017 is high (14.2%), but it is decreasing more sharply than in other states in the Northeast and in Brazil, especially in the age group between 7 and 14 years, post-2008 (IPECE, 2018; COSTA; CARNOY, 2015). Illiteracy starts to focus on older generations, who did not have access to education at the correct age.

Costa and Carnoy (2015) sought to identify whether the fastest declines in the illiteracy rate, after 2007, and the better performances in Reading and Mathematics in ES, compared to other states, were directly linked to Paic or if they had effects of other actions and educational programs applied from 2007 to 2011. The authors show that the program has an impact on student performance in Portuguese and Mathematics. The study by Kasmirski, Gusmão and Ribeiro (2017) also shows the relevance of Paic in improving the performance of students in Portuguese Language, indicating that the program was responsible for at least 39% of this increase in results.

In Ceará, performance rates, important for the concept of equity, in ES are also better than in Brazil in 2017. The failure rate is 3.0% in the initial years and 6.1% in the final years; abandonment is 0.5% and 2.2%, respectively, and approval, 96.5% and 91.6% (QEDU, 2018).

Still as results that affect equity are: expansion of the technical profile of the Municipal Directors of Education and its importance for the municipal administrations; expansion of teachers' education level; strengthening of teachers' self-esteem and their appreciation; importance given to early childhood, among others (SEGATTO, 2015; CRUZ, 2017).

Codes *et al.* (2019, p. 8) show other results of equity in learning in Ceará that contradict the tendency that: "children's learning is lower in places with high illiteracy rates". According to these authors, the:

illiteracy rate is well above the national rate, but their children are learning, on average, more than the average of Brazilian children. The other eight northeastern states - surrounded by the rectangle - follow the general pattern, with high illiteracy rates associated with low Ideb values (CODES *et al.*, 2018, p. 8, our translation).

Despite efforts to universalize access and progress in equity, the net enrollment rate for ES - 6 to 14 years old - in 2018 was 98.7% (ANUÁRIO BRASILEIRO DA EDUCAÇÃO BÁSICA, 2019), indicating that there are children out of school and new strategies need to be adopted, particularly, with respect to children in the final years of ES.

Seduc's organization for the implementation of Paic and its management strategies

The election of Governor Cid Gomes, in 2007, was a window of opportunity for Paic to enter the governmental agenda, creating instruments of collaboration between the state and the municipalities (KINGDON, 1995). The results of Sobral's experience (INEP, 2005), the pact signed in the Legislative Assembly with the Ceará Committee for the Elimination of School Illiteracy and the communication process with society were essential for its formulation and implementation (CEARÁ, 2012).

The former Secretary of Education (2007-2014) stated, in an interview that:

[...] we had the experience of Sobral, in the fight against school illiteracy, as a reality that we found, in the case of Sobral, in 2001, and the committee in the Legislative Assembly had already happened, which had been implemented when Ivo went to the Legislative Assembly as a state deputy. He made a proposition to the board of directors of the Assembly to install the Ceará Committee for the Elimination of School Illiteracy, that is, this Committee, I consider that it was a very important seed of Paic. [...] It was a process of calling, inviting the municipalities to join, at first we made some arrangements regarding the assessment that would be made, the very challenge that moved us, which was to guarantee the success of the students' literacy children at the right age.

The interviews and references show that there was an agreement, among the various actors, on the importance of the state providing quality education for all and that this was the basis for the generation of wealth in the state and an alternative for the reduction of poverty and inequality, resulting in a convergence of efforts for the adhesion of all Ceará municipalities to Paic. The Program was adopted by all 184 municipalities and has been a key factor for Ceará to obtain good results in the state and national ES evaluation processes.

Seduc had 59,537 employees in March 2019, of which 48,923 were effective and 10,614 were hired for a fixed period (CEARÁ, 2019a). From 2008 to 2010, there was an investment of R\$ 104,331,586.38 in Paic (CEARÁ, 2012). From 2012 to 2018, R\$ 92,313,179.73 (CEARÁ, 2019a) was paid. Ceará has a low financing capacity and is dependent on complementing from the Union with respect to the Fund for the Maintenance and Development of Basic Education and the Valorization of Education Professionals (Fundeb). In 2017, “his student/year value was the sixth lowest - R\$ 2,184.94 - among the twenty-seven federates, demanding a transfer of R\$ 1.33 billion to reach the national floor - R \$ 2,875.03” (CODES et al., 2018, p. 8), a situation that justifies the importance of studies on Paic management strategies, considering the results presented above.

Based on the cooperation between the state and municipalities, the roles of each actor were established (Seduc and its agencies, city halls and Municipal Education Departments (SMEs), universities, school management, teachers, students and family); standardized procedures are defined; continuous formation offered with a focus on learning; materials made available; mechanisms to induce policy implementation have been established; and strengthened the monitoring and evaluation system. The policy provides for the same strategies for all municipalities, which unifies guidelines and at the same time seeks to adapt them to the reality of each municipality, as well as a permanent evaluation process.

Paic creates technical and instrumental standards, produces guiding materials and offers formation for teachers to organize classes in order to promote the expected learning, breaking the inequalities between municipalities and between schools. There are also strategies for school reinforcement to regularize the school flow. State technical support reduces the effort required for each municipality to create its own learning model. The program has also managed to spread a collective belief that it is possible to educate all children, regardless of their origin. There is a movement of decentralization of management to the municipalities and one of centralization of educational policy with the induction of the state through agreed conditions, called by Padilha and Batista (2013) “orchestrated decentralization”.

In its original conception, Paic was structured with five axes (municipal education management, literacy, reader formation, external evaluation and early childhood education), prioritizing literacy and management. With the results achieved, this has been increased incrementally until the 9th year and including other disciplines.

In 2020, the Program had six lines of action: a) municipal management; b) ES I; c) ES II and comprehensive education; d) Child Education; e) children's literature and training of readers; and f) external evaluation (Chart 1). Each axis has objectives and goals that have been agreed upon between state and municipal actors, and any changes are agreed upon by those involved. In each one there are objectives, established goals, involved actors and recommended actions that are monitored by the municipal, regional and central teams of the secretariat.

Chart 1 – Paic axes

Axis	Objective	Goals	Involved actors	Actions
Municipal Management	- Institutionally strengthen the “municipal education systems, involving technical assistance for the structuring of a management model focused on the learning outcome” (CEARÁ, 2016c).	Create and disseminate a culture of management of the municipal system and school management focused on student learning, with the valuation of teaching and permanent formative processes	Seduc and municipalities	Actions to improve the institutional capacity of Municipal Education Secretariats (SMEs, Portuguese initials) and schools, creating a culture of planning and monitoring actions, including supporting the active search of students and the learning process of each student
ES I	- Implement literacy teaching proposals; - Produce structured teaching materials for teachers and students of the 1st and 2nd years and pedagogical support material; - Carry out continuing and in-service teacher formation in the municipalities by educators from Mais Paic; among other practices.	Literacy of 100% of the children, until the end of the 2nd year of ES, and the literacy of illiterate students from the 3rd to the 5th year of ES (CEARÁ, 2016d), as well as continuing classroom formation for teachers from the municipal and state networks and the strengthening of the pedagogical monitoring process with the provision of teaching materials	ES teachers from 3rd to 5th grade	- Technical-pedagogical cooperation to the municipalities; - Routines, activities, theoretical support

<p>Childhood education</p>	<p>- “Contribute to the promotion of the quality of care offered to children and their families in the institutions”; - “collaborate in the process of implanting and implementing pedagogical proposals and continuing education programs for early childhood teachers in the municipalities participating in the program” (CEARÁ, 2016e).</p>	<p>Expand the care of children up to 3 years of age and universalize care for children of 4 and 5 years of age</p>	<p>Partnership of the State Forum for Early Childhood Education of Ceará (Feic) and universities</p>	<p>- Curricular guidelines for Early Childhood Education worked on in the formative courses - Financing of early childhood education units - The municipalities of Ceará attend from Early Childhood Education to the final years of the ES (5th to 9th grade), and the state supports them, with technical assistance for learning at the right age, through the Program.</p>
<p>ES II and integral education</p>	<p>- Strengthen student learning</p>	<p>Ideb in the public network of 5.0 in 2018; have at least 25% of students at the adequate level and at most 44% at the critical and very critical levels in Portuguese Language, and at least 16% of students at the adequate level and at most 70% at the adequate level in Mathematics; reduce abandonment to 2.5%, among others (CEARÁ, 2016f).</p>	<p>Students and teachers</p>	<p>Teacher formation with follow-up guidelines, recognition mechanisms and specific incentives</p>
<p>Literature and reader formation</p>	<p>- Guarantee the “child’s right to human development, cultural formation and social inclusion, with access to children’s literature, promoting the acquisition, distribution and dynamization of collections” (CEARÁ, 2016g).</p>	<p>100% of children in the municipalities with access to the literary collection and read a minimum of five books per year; conducting workshops to stimulate reading to Early Childhood Education teachers and initial grades of ES, with at least 40 hours per year, since 2008 formation of literary collections in classrooms, with at least five books per student, among others</p>	<p>Students and Teachers; Seduc</p>	<p>- Teacher formation guiding them to make the collection more dynamic and encouraging students and teachers to read. - Acquisition and distribution of books by publishers to municipalities - Organization of <i>Pense!</i> journal with literary reviews, reports of experiences, articles and essays aimed at reader formation</p>

External evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disseminate a culture of assessment of the students' learning process, in an appropriate, responsible and ethical manner, aiming for continuous improvements in the teaching and learning process; - Diagnose the learning situation and communicate the evaluation results by municipality, school, class and student; and - Provide subsidies for Seduc to develop a management focused on learning, among others. (CEARÁ, 2016h). 	Annual diagnostic assessments, with children enrolled in the initial grades of ES (2nd to 5th year) in all municipalities; provision of a computerized system for entering data from external evaluations; dissemination of the results among principals, supervisors and teachers, aiming to improve the quality of education in the initial grades of ES, among other practices.	Seduc, Credes, municipal departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessments at the end of the school year; - Wide dissemination of its results; - Creation of a "surveillance chain" (KASMIRSKI, GUSMÃO; RIBEIRO, 2017, p. 11)
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Source: Devised by the authors. Our translation.

It is noteworthy that the focus of the evaluation axis is to know what is learned and the difficulties of each student and to propose actions to correct course and support those municipalities, schools and teachers that are not achieving the expected results. The relevance of evaluation as a means of monitoring results is confirmed in interviews with teachers in Fortaleza:

We see the questions that the students made the most mistakes and the one they most got right to have an idea of what they have mastered and what they still need to master. In addition, we also see students who, in general, scored well and students who did not score well. So, we have an idea of the student who is having the most difficulty... (5th grade teacher, school 2, our translation).

The measures originated in Seduc are supported by the 20 Regional Education Development Coordinators (Credes, Portuguese initials) and municipal secretariats and should reach schools and classrooms in all municipalities, creating what Kasmirski, Gusmão and Ribeiro (2017, p. 11) call "surveillance chain". In the program there are diagnostic evaluations with the formative and summative perspectives, which allows the definition of strategies to promote learning directed to each student, classroom and school. External evaluations are also carried out to assess whether students are acquiring the competences and skills expected with the advances obtained and the problems to be faced (SPAECE, 2018).

According to Gusmão and Ribeiro (2011), the evaluation processes are an instrument of pedagogical intervention and everyone involved - Seduc, Credes, SMEs, directors, teachers

and family and society - are aware of the results. Performance also guides formation. The Program teams have been qualified to develop focused actions and technical assistance to those municipalities and schools with the worst performances (CRUZ, 2017).

Paic relied on Seduc's internal restructuring, which made a commitment to provide technical advice to municipalities along the program's axes, seeking to respect local contexts, developing formation and evaluating results through its own evaluation system. The municipalities, on the other hand, provided the logistical support and materials needed for Paic's activities (CEARÁ, 2012) and made local teams available to implement the proposals.

Among these mechanisms for implementation, the Coordination for Cooperation with Municipalities (Copem) is created as the executive arm of Seduc. Copem restructures the 20 Credes which, with the Regional Nucleus for Cooperation with Municipalities (NRCOM), which help three fronts that guarantee actions at the policy end, are: communication, implementation and monitoring of local educational policy. Another aspect that contributes to Copem's implementation arrangement is its action strategy organized according to the program's axes.

The performance in the formation and monitoring of this process occurs at two levels: performance at the tip with the multiplier teachers at Credes and, managerial monitoring through Seduc. Each participating municipality has a local Mais Paic manager, who is responsible for monitoring and responsible for being an interlocutor between Seduc and the municipalities, and with a multiplier teacher for each educational segment. The work with multiplier teachers is based on continuous formation based on the political-pedagogical work of each educational segment. Such formation takes place periodically, and these professionals reproduce the formative activities for the network to which they belong, and the successful practices of the municipalities are disseminated in this environment (VIEIRA; VIDAL, 2013). The implementing agent at the macro level, who directs the management cell of Paic at Copem, states that Crede uses visits as a means of verifying local needs:

[...] when I was at Crede, I visited [the municipalities] and I saw the reality, what they needed. [...] After the formation [which brings together the Crede educators], the team here at Copem will make a visit at each Crede [...] And they follow the formation that is happening there to know if they are being passed on according to what was planned (our translation).

In order for the formation contents to be applied in direct action with students, the implementation has a municipal team of four to six people and the support of the state government subsidizing technological extension grants for the local manager and multiplier

teachers, taking into account the local reality of each municipality and, grants to assist the specialized team, which focuses on its activities, to implement the strategic objectives of the program.

In Fortaleza, teachers affirm that the formation organized within the scope of Paic is related to what is given in the classroom:

Formation is organized by district [in Fortaleza]. Part of SME and then the district. Formation takes place every month. I usually go. (4th grade teacher, Fortaleza school, our translation).

We have formation in the district once a month. They talk about the contents. Match the content being given in the classroom. Because it is accompanied by the contents of textbooks. [The formation question is] how would you work with such content in the classroom so that the student has a satisfactory learning? (5th grade teacher, Fortaleza school, our translation).

In addition to this arrangement of state and municipal actors, there is also coordination with the Ministry of Education. This implementation process is also part of, strategic partnerships with UFC, Unicef, the Association for the Development of Municipalities of the State of Ceará (APDM/CE), Feic, Aprece, the National Union of Municipal Councils of Education (Uncme), Undime and the Cearense Foundation for Support for Scientific and Technological Development (Funcap), publishers of teaching materials and support consultancies.

This arrangement of technical and financial support with various governmental and non-governmental institutions has been built since the 1970s, based on the achievement of results, continuous learning, bonds of trust, innovations and the “role of political and technical leaders capable of structuring and defending certain projects, bridging the gap between the technical model and political dynamics” (ABRUCIO; SEGATTO; PEREIRA, 2016, p. 29, our translation).

Based on Sobral's experience, two financial induction mechanisms were structured: a) allocation of a portion of the municipalities' share of the Tax on Operations related to the Circulation of Goods and Provision of Interstate and Intermunicipal Transport and Communication Services (ICMS) to city halls, depending on their learning results (CEARÁ, 2012); and b) *Escola Nota Dez* award to the best schools (CRUZ, 2019). These inducing instruments allow education to enter the municipal agenda and prioritize the learning process in schools and to start a culture of monitoring results and using indicators.

The criteria for distributing the municipalities' share of the ICMS (25% of the total) were changed by Law 14,023/2007 and the transfers are based on the performance of

education (18%), health (5%) and the environment (2%). The 18% of the municipalities' share is distributed according to the Municipal Educational Quality Index of each locality, formed by the approval rate of students from the 1st to the 5th year of the ES and the average obtained by the students of the 2nd and 5th years of the network in assessments of learning at Spaece. In this way, mayors begin to monitor their educational results. According to Segatto (2015, p. 109) the distribution of the ICMS, despite prioritizing education, “does not consider the socioeconomic level of the students, that is, it does not aim to reduce educational inequalities between the municipalities”. However, according to the author, this change in the quota benefited most municipalities. According to a macro-level implementing agent/Seduc, coordinator of the *Nota Dez* Award:

[...] what happens? In this 25%, transformed into 18 for education, 5 for health, 2 for the environment. Before the Cid Gomes government, these 25% were distributed practically [equally]. And it only went to the big municipalities. Today, with this 18% here, there is a municipality that doubled its ICMS with the result in education. It is the main source of resources - it is the result of education. And then, for the mayor who understands this, and from time to time they are called to show this data... And he, if he really has an interest in doubling his ICMS, he will put pressure on the Secretary of Education and will say: "look, let's go, let's go"... This is how it is done, this is how it is achieved. Because there is a whole policy behind it, right? (our translation)

The Escola Nota Dez award is given annually to schools that present the best performances in the learning process and involves school teams with the learning process. Created by Law 14,371/2009, it was initially linked to improving the results of literacy and socialization of educational practices. The transfer, carried out in two installments, required that the awarded school support another school unit, with poor performance, for one year. This cooperation arrangement between school units is a way to socialize knowledge, promote collaboration and seek equity across the network (VIEIRA; VIDAL, 2013; CALDERÓN; RAQUEL; CABRAL, 2015).

The award is publicized in the media and highly valued by mayors and school teams, because in addition to the resource received, there is public recognition of its quality (SEGATTO, 2015; ARAÚJO; LEITE; ANDRIOLA, 2019). Reformulations were carried out to improve the award by laws 15,052/2011, 15,523/2015 and 15,923/2015, and in 2020, it rewards the 150 school units with the best results in the 2nd, 5th and 9th years, but the school's result is linked to that of the municipality and other schools in Crede, indicating a “guideline for improving education for the entire network, all regions and all students” (CRUZ, 2019, p. 17).

The Award has a very strong political capital: the mayor would bring his schools... The school is awarded, takes a prize, a trophy, a plaque, takes it into the municipality and says "Look, we got the results!", receives from the governor and a huge party is held with thousands of people... We have already put up to 10,000 people in an Event Center for this award. So, it has a very large political capital (Coord. Nota Dez Award, at Copem, our translation).

Seduc's team is composed of professionals who have worked in municipalities and, according to the interviewees, are sensitive to municipal demands, favoring listening and permanent dialogue, which provides for the continuous improvement of actions. The three directors of the State Secretariat interviewed were university professors who worked in the Sobral/CE experience. The technicians who gave interviews are professionals from the education networks who started to act in the implementation of Paic, after having excelled in performances (as teachers, pedagogical coordinators, superintendents, education secretaries, technicians from Credes and from municipal secretaries).

The team also supports the implementation of educational policy through state programs (Centers for Early Childhood Education, support for school transport) and publicizing and advising municipalities to access federal initiatives.

Seduc coordinates education policy and cooperates with municipalities through technical and financial partnerships (SEGATTO, 2015; CRUZ, 2019). Technical and financial assistance has been continuously expanding, seeking to maintain a pact between governmental and non-governmental actors that "the child is from Ceará, no matter where he/she was born or studies" has the right to learning (CRUZ, 2017, p. 208, our translation).

In 2013, the Secretariat initiated an action focused on those who did not become literate until the 3rd year, with the Luz do Saber Program - software that stimulates, through games, the necessary skills for learning to read and write. The initiative aims to contribute to children's literacy, in addition to promoting inclusion in digital culture. New strategies should be created to work in other specific groups, such as children with disabilities, indigenous people, among others.

Ribeiro, Bonamino and Martinic (2020) use the concept of instruments, techniques and tools by Lascoumes and Les Galès (2005) to explain several of Paic's strategies: the Program would, for these authors, have adopted a set of instruments that comply with the role of placing implementing agents around common goals, as theorized by French sociologists. They consist of measures designed to institute surveillance of the system on the interactions and practices of education professionals and to conduct the actions of municipal leaders, which made the behavior of these actors "oriented" towards the expected objectives. It is a

model that conducts governance experiments aimed at what managers call improving the quality of education, and this notion of quality is linked to standards that indicate the terms of the distribution of knowledge that is defined as relevant and also to the perspective of promoting intra-school and systemic equity. From this relationship between standards and surveillance over actions, new educational measures emerge aiming at correcting or reframing the interactions and actions of implementing agents. This result converges with Crahay (2000), who deals with requirements for achieving equity at school.

Ribeiro, Bonamino and Martinic (2020, p. 716, our translation) also highlight the relevance of the symbolic aspect introduced by mediation instruments of interactions between federated entities in the state:

according to the testimonies, the tools that guide the division of the share between the municipalities and the Nota Dez Award involve the mayors in the implementation of the Paic, leading them to strengthen the management capacity of the Education Secretariats. In addition to the interest in more financial resources, the mayors raise, by symbolic means, in the award events and its consequences, political power from their peers and voters.

Final considerations

This text presents management strategies for Paic, a program designed by the government of the state of Ceará and which, according to research, has increased educational equity. With technical and financial cooperation to the municipalities in the implementation of public education, the state seeks to promote the coordination of educational policy, understanding that it is its role to support the improvement of education, reduce inequalities of access and guarantee the quality of care and learning at the right age to all children from Ceará.

Paic has sought to maintain a coalition, in the state of Ceará, for universal access to quality education and for the right to learning at the right age, in order to guarantee these objectives on state and municipal government agendas. With the adoption of various formation strategies, availability of materials, permanent monitoring and evaluation, Paic seeks to ensure a constant movement of intervention strategies in the educational reality of Ceará.

The continuity of the experience for 13 years with the Chief Executive supporting Seduc managers and inducing the actions of regional, municipal and school teams has allowed advances in implementation, as well as the impact on educational inequality, improving the levels of learning of all students and, thus, expanding equity.

The existence of actions to improve municipal management and schools; reading support; provision of teaching materials, books, instruments and tools; continuing formation for managers and teachers; constant monitoring; external evaluation; permanent communication with society and financial incentives for municipalities and schools to improve performance have generated good results in the learning of all, including the poorest (COSTA; CARNOY, 2015; KASMIRSKI; GUSMÃO; RIBEIRO, 2017; VIEIRA; PLANK; VIDAL, 2019).

Highlight to the systematic monitoring of the management team at the central and regional level of the municipal teams, schools and teachers' actions in the classroom, with “listening” to the demands of the various actors, transforming them into actions. Studies point out that this permanent surveillance makes it possible to identify conflicts and adaptations to the demands that arise, which may be part of the factors for promoting equity improvement in Ceará (CRAHAY, 2000).

The study indicates that the results achieved by this policy may also be related to the way in which the mobilization of various actors in the State was built, generating a sense of responsibility; with the action of Seduc with the municipalities, based on the search for mutual trust; with a monitoring and evaluation system capable of showing, with agility, the stages of learning and the progress achieved; and with the instruments and tools adopted, capable of placing the implementing agents around common objectives.

Other research may contribute to understand the instruments and strategies used to promote equity in a poor Brazilian state.

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