

YOUTH AND ADULT EDUCATION IN BRAZIL: CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN PUBLIC POLICIES AND EDUCATIONAL QUALITY

EDUCAÇÃO DE JOVENS E ADULTOS NO BRASIL: CONTRADIÇÕES ENTRE POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS E QUALIDADE EDUCACIONAL

EDUCACIÓN DE JÓVENES Y ADULTOS EN BRASIL: CONTRADICCIONES ENTRE POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS Y CALIDAD EDUCATIVA

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ABSTRACT: The present study, from a bibliographic and documentary nature, proposes to make reflections from a survey of historical, political and legal studies that structure the Youth and Adult Education (YAE) policy in Brazil, having as a guiding question: how they are configured the contradictions between public policies and quality in the scenario of YAE in Brazil? In the context of public policies for education, YAE assumed a secondary position because it was perceived in its origins as a compensatory policy, designed to offer a second schooling opportunity to those who were unable to attend school at the “appropriate” age. Although there were no shortages of legal provisions, such as campaigns and programs considering the different periods, the initiatives did not involve transformations with qualitative leaps that would make it possible to substantially change the framework of social exclusion and inequality, seated on the precariousness of access and objective conditions of staying in a school of quality for all.

KEYWORDS: Youth and adult education. Public policy. Educational quality.

RESUMO: *Este estudo, de cunho bibliográfico e documental, se propõe a fazer reflexões a partir de um levantamento de estudos históricos, políticos e legais que estruturam a política da Educação de Jovens e Adultos (EJA) no Brasil, tendo como questão orientadora: como se configuram as contradições entre políticas públicas e qualidade no cenário da EJA no Brasil? A EJA assumiu no quadro das políticas públicas para a educação uma posição secundária por ser percebida em suas origens como uma política compensatória, destinada a oferecer uma segunda oportunidade de escolarização àquelas pessoas que não puderam frequentar a escola*

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na idade “apropriada”. Embora não tenham faltado dispositivos legais, a exemplo de campanhas e programas considerados os diferentes períodos, as iniciativas não implicaram em transformações com saltos qualitativos que possibilitassem alterar, substancialmente, o quadro de exclusão e desigualdade social, assentado na precariedade do acesso e das condições objetivas de permanência numa escola de qualidade para todos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Educação de jovens e adultos. Políticas públicas. Qualidade educacional.

RESUMEN: Este estudio, de carácter bibliográfico y documental, propone hacer reflexiones a partir de un relevamiento de estudios históricos, políticos y legales que estructuran la política de Educación de Jóvenes y Adultos (EJA) en Brasil, teniendo como pregunta orientadora: ¿Cómo se configuran las contradicciones entre políticas públicas y calidad en el escenario de EJA en Brasil? En el contexto de las políticas públicas para la educación, EJA asumió una posición secundaria porque fue percibida en sus orígenes como una política compensatoria, orientada a ofrecer una segunda oportunidad de escolarización a aquellas personas que no pudieron asistir a la escuela en la edad “apropiada”. Si bien no faltaron disposiciones legales, como campañas y programas teniendo en cuenta los diferentes períodos, las iniciativas no implicaron transformaciones con saltos cualitativos que permitieran cambiar sustancialmente el marco de exclusión social y desigualdad, basado en el acceso precario y las condiciones objetivas. permanezca en una escuela de calidad para todos.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Educación de jóvenes y adultos. Políticas públicas. Calidad educativa.

Introduction

The present study, of bibliographic and documentary nature, proposes to make reflections from a survey of historical, political and legal studies that structure the Youth and Adult Education (YAE) policy in our country. Therefore, we delimited the guiding question: how are the contradictions between public policies and quality configured in the scenario of YAE in Brazil?

To discuss education in the national scenario, in general, implies, initially, to highlight that public policies for quality education were “[...] emanated from the class that holds power, associated with a nationalist, progressist and modernizer discourse that, in practice, became effective in a quality school for the elite [...]” (MARIANO, 2011, p. 189, our translation).

Thus, when thinking about the contradictions between public policies and educational quality in Brazil, among the groups of individuals who have been denied this right throughout history, is that of young people and adults, who were unable to attend school at the “appropriate age”. The fight for an education for all, although it is a guaranteed right both in the Federal

Constitution (BRASIL, 1988) and in the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education - LDBEN (BRASIL, 1996), is still deficient.

That said, it is possible to show that in Brazil, although the speech does not make it explicit, education is still not a priority for the State. As a concrete example of this statement, revealed today, is the scenario of social exclusion and educational inequality, manifested in the exorbitant number of illiterate youth and adults still existing in the country. Many countries carried out the task of literacy in the 19th century, however, Brazil has extremely worrying numbers of people who have not yet earned the right to be literate.

According to data released in 2018 by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (BRASIL, 2017), in the last National Household Sample Survey (PNAD Continuous Education), as explained in Table 1, Brazil had at least 11.5 million people with over 15 years that were illiterate, which corresponds to 7% illiteracy, while the goal established by the National Education Plan - PNE (BRASIL, 2014) for the year 2015 was to reduce the rate to 6.5% in the country.

Table 1 – Illiteracy rate of people aged 15 and over, according to regions of Brazil

REGION	ILLITERATES (%)
SOUTH REGION	3,6%
SOUTHEAST REGION	3,8%
MIDWEST REGION	5,7%
NORTH REGION	8,0 %
NORTHEAST REGION	14,5%

Source: IBGE/PNAD Contínua Educação (BRASIL, 2017)

The survey also explained the states of the federation that managed (or not) to reach the established goal. The Northeast region has the most alarming results, with a rate of 14.5% illiteracy, equivalent to more than half of the national total. This means, numerically, that on average, among the 11.5 million Brazilians, aged 15 or over who do not know how to read and write, 6.5 million (56% of the total) live in the Northeast. And among these states that failed to reach the PNE/2014 target is Piauí, which ended 2017 with a 16.6% illiteracy rate.

In relation to other regions of the country, the Midwest has an index equivalent to 5.7% of its population as being illiterate; in the North Region, this rate was 8.0%; in the Southeast, the indexes fell to 3.8% for illiterates and, in the South, it has the lowest national index, with 3.6% of illiterates.

These high illiteracy rates demonstrate that, in the capitalist mode of production in force

in our country, there is a preponderance of economic policy over social, which ends up determining the directions of meeting social demands according to the system's greatest interest, that is, capital value.

Thus, although national milestones aim to have YAE interface with issues capable of improving the quality of life in the world, being related to issues such as interculturality, employability and survival, solidary economy, socio-environmental sustainability, economic democracy and culture of peace, Brazilian society did not present the necessary advances to break with the logic of denying educational rights to young people and adults.

After considering, this text, in addition to the introduction, was structured with sections for the historicization of YAE: from Colonial Brazil to the period of the Military Dictatorship; analysis of the YAE materialized in the Federal Constitution of 1988, in which we highlight the multiple perspectives on its historical, political and legal trajectory and the final considerations.

Brief historicization of YAE: from Colony Brazil to the period of the Military Dictatorship

There are many views that we can take on the historical, political and legal trajectory of YAE in Brazil. Looks that make us show how the path of this modality of Basic Education is marked by intense struggles, by guaranteeing the right to education for young people and adults, in a country that despite being a democratic state, still presents itself as a society that violates human rights and, by extension, the right to education.

The analysis of some historical, political and legal milestones is crucial in discussing the contradictions between public policies and educational quality. It is worth noting, therefore, that it is not our intention to deal with the totality, to exhaust the subject, but to build paths so that we can understand the nature of the relationships of exclusion and silences that this type of teaching has undergone (and still suffers), historically, it took a secondary position in the framework of public policies for education in Brazil, as it was perceived in its origins as a compensatory policy, aimed at offering a second schooling opportunity to those who were unable to attend school at the “appropriate age”.

Thus, the initial concern in this discussion is to reinforce and understand the origins of YAE and, from that, better locate it in the set of social relations that mark Brazilian society, in the scenario of social exclusion and inequality, resulting from the contradictory logic of the system capitalist. And why talk about exclusion and social inequality when it comes to YAE?

Historically, YAE appeared in Brazil in the Colonial period, as a form of religious indoctrination, when the Jesuits arrived here, they developed a missionary educational action

with adults, with the objective of catechizing the children of the landowners and adapting the indigenous to the needs the Portuguese colonizers, who yearned for labor for farming and extractive activities. During the Imperial Period, from the arrival of the royal family, the concern with education remained focused on the elite and the interests of the monarchy, with the creation of higher education courses (MOURA, 2003; SILVA, 2017).

In this period, there was a total abandonment in relation to the other levels of education, which demonstrated that it was not in the monarchy's interest to expand basic schooling for the population as a whole, a fact attributed to the concept of education and citizenship of the Imperial Period that it considered, in first, the rights and privileges of the dominant elites. As Vieira Pinto (2010, p. 50, our translation) complements so well on this issue,

The society where inequalities in opportunities prevail, due to the strength of its present state of development and its interests, is continually making a judgment of its human elements, assigning some to systematic, schooled, erudite education; and others to informal, free, uneducated education.

Even with the Imperial Constitution (BRASIL, 1824), granted by D. Pedro I, who ensured in his text that education was free for all citizens, based on the ideals of security and freedom, there was no school for everyone at the time. As examples, we can highlight the indigenous peoples who, in the view of the ruling class, for not being free as a man, considered as “barbarians”, constituted an obstacle to think about the right to education and, blacks, seen as “property” of the rural oligarchy. Both were used in slave labor, benefiting the economic model of agrarian production (MOURA, 2003).

With the proclamation of the Republic (1889), the educational situation did not change much in the country. We continued with elitist education and a high percentage of an illiterate adult population. A legal landmark of the time was the 1891 Constitution, which recognized the institutionalization of primary and secondary education, incorporating the restriction of voting to the illiterate.

This fact led the states to “worry” about the provision of education and, consequently, adults with the demand for schools, which was not possible, as the innumerable educational reforms proposed in the period from 1890 to 1920 did not guaranteed budgetary provision for adult education and even less offered conditions to study, given the time constraints that the working adult had to face.

However, in the 1930s, given the nationalist sentiment of the right, the climate of democracy that prevailed in the country and among the high number of people who did not have the right to vote, because they were illiterate, there were some “[...] movements against

illiteracy, demanding the creation of a school and the universalization of Elementary Education. Among these, we highlight the Escola Nova, led by educators such as: Anísio Teixeira, Lourenço Filho, Fernando de Azevedo [...]” (MOURA, 2003, p. 35, our translation).

That said, only in the mid-1940s, under the Getúlio Vargas government, with the industrialization and urbanization process, YAE began to be considered in the country, from the need to expand the school network and with the objective of reducing the illiteracy of adults, considered at the time, a disease, a national shame. To this end, one of the measures taken was the creation of the National Fund for Primary Education (BRASIL, 1942), which aimed to establish the transfer of funds to the states, aiming to meet the primary education of children and adults (BRANCO, 2015, p. 78).

In this regard, Fávero (n.d., p. 2) explains that the practices of YAE at that time had a dimension of accommodation and adaptation to the social project of industrialization and urbanization:

At that moment, the discourse against illiteracy began to be emphasized. There was a great influence of doctors, in a hygienist view of the problem. Since the 1920s, Miguel Couto, in particular, had called illiteracy a “wound”. The illiterate was then seen as incapable, incompetent for the new Brazil that was being announced. “Eradicating illiteracy” was almost understood as “eradicating the illiterate”, as if a plague is eradicated - a concept that persists today, when educational actions of mere literacy are repeated (our translation).

Thus, in 1947, the Adolescent and Adult Education Campaign (CEAA) was created, the first expanded school education initiative in the country, under the government of Eurico Gaspar Dutra, whose creator was Lourenço Filho and had the idea of serving non-schoolchildren, aiming literacy and insertion in the productive market.

In the 1950s, the National Rural Education Campaign (CNER) and the Rural Social Service were created. Both developed projects to prepare technicians for rural education and life improvement programs, through missions and rural training centers, aimed at lay teachers and the preparation of farmers' children for agricultural activity.

In 1958 the National Campaign for the Eradication of Illiteracy (CNEA) was launched, which was intended to be an experimental program aimed at general popular education, which provided for further studies on the social, economic and cultural problems of the areas selected for carrying out the Pilot Plan (SOUZA, 2011). Despite not reaching the expected results, the CNEA and other campaigns implemented in the 1940s and 1950s were important, because they marked the beginning of a new stage in the discussions and sparked a process of national mobilization on educational action in YAE.

Still in 1958, under the delegation of Pernambuco, the Second National Congress on Adult Literacy takes place. The aim of the discussions was to think about education aimed at the most disadvantaged sections of the population, reflecting on the construction of people who are critical and aware of their rights and duties, in order to intervene in political decisions, effectively participating in democracy (MOURA, 2003).

It is worth noting that at the aforementioned congress, in which Paulo Freire was part of the delegation, the defense of the problem of illiteracy in Brazil was justified because it is “[...] a social problem, not an educational problem; it was the misery of the population that generated illiteracy. Either one faced the poverty of the population or there was no point in facing illiteracy” (FÁVERO, n.d., p. 5, our translation).

In the 1960s, President João Goulart extinguished national campaigns of adults that existed until then, giving way to regional and local movements of a governmental and non-governmental character. Such groups were influenced by the Catholic Church and sought popular participation, in addition to the emphasis given to literacy, as commented by Moura (2003, p. 46, our translation):

Within this historical and cultural context, the Popular Culture Movements (MCP), the Basic Education Movement (MEB), the Popular Culture Centers (CPC) and the Systematization of the Adult Literacy Method by Paulo Freire emerged. This period is considered a landmark in the history of adult education in Brazil, where culture, education and political participation have gained theoretical and pedagogical consistency, having as reference Paulo Freire, whose influence was fundamental for the development of YAE in Brazil.

In this scenario, the influence of the Freirean conception of education was present in popular education spaces until the early 1960s. With the exhaustion of the democratization of education, the contradictions of populist politics and the resignation of President Jânio Quadros, installed itself in Brazil the Regime of the Military Dictatorship in 1964. During this period, the experiences of YAE with a character of emancipation and political conscience suffered repression and demobilization in the face of government initiatives and ended up being extinguished.

In 1967, the Brazilian Literacy Movement (MOBRAL, Portuguese initials) was created, which sought to meet the wishes of the leaders of the military regime to bring their political ideology to young people and adults. Paulo Freire and Mobral started from different pedagogical conceptions and purposes, as well as different methods. For Mobral, education was seen as an investment, aiming to qualify the workforce, with a minimum education that would

meet the perspective of the new development cycle, which began in Brazil in the late 1960s and 1970s.

In 1971, Mobral was supplemented by Supplementary Education, with the aim of offering schooling corresponding to primary education. The substitution was understood with the function of "supplying" regular schooling for young people and adults who had not followed or completed basic education at "their own age" (MOURA, 2003, p. 50). It was characterized by distance learning and work modules.

The analysis of this period shows the discontinuity of governmental actions for YAE in the country and the provisional nature of this modality. The educational policy printed in the YAE brings these marks of improvisation, of neglect, but above all of the social debt towards the most marginalized people. Mobral, an attempt by the military government to address the gap created by the state itself by preventing the process of literacy and schooling developed by Paulo Freire, failed due to the inadequate pedagogical proposal for young people and adults.

The beginning of the 1980s was marked by an intense mobilization of civil society, in which the process of political opening in the country began, which contributed to the extinction in 1985 of Mobral, which was soon replaced by the National Foundation for Education of Youth and Adults (Educar Foundation), an organ of technical and financial support for YAE, implemented through the signing of agreements with states and municipalities, companies and community entities, a matter to be explored in the next section.

Multiple other perspectives on the historical, educational and legal policy of YAE and its materialization in the 1998 Federal Constitution

As we can infer, due to the quick historical process, YAE has a historical and political trajectory of discontinuous actions, marked by a diversity of programs, movements and legislation. With the approval of the Federal Constitution of 1988 (BRASIL, 1988), the Law of Directives and Bases of National Education - LDBEN 9,394/1996 (BRASIL, 1996), of the National Curriculum Guidelines for Youth and Adult Education (BRASIL, 2000) and of Opinion CNE/CEB no. 11/2000 (BRASIL, 2000), YAE starts to be recognized, in the legal scope, as an integral modality of Basic Education, destined to attend students who did not have, at their "own age", access or continuity of studies in elementary and high school.

In our Magna Carta, the Federal Constitution (BRASIL, 1988), some regulatory frameworks on educational assistance at YAE appear. For Moura (2003, p. 56, our translation), the referred Constitution, therefore, brought

[...] within it, some achievements for the working class, including the illiterate's right to vote and the guarantee of basic education to all who seek it. "The Citizen Constitution" legitimizes claims by segments of society, establishing basic rights, which point to a greater commitment by the government to this part of the marginalized population in the educational processes.

In this way, the 1988 Constitution expands the state's duty towards those who have not completed basic education, regardless of age, placing YAE on the same level as other levels of education and, above all, recognizing, from a political intentionality, that the Brazilian state was unable to guarantee basic education for all at the age considered regular or adequate. Thus, in the Brazilian Legislation the starting point for the systematization of YAE, as an educational policy, was the Federal Constitution of 1988, which established the universalization of the basic school, as can be seen in its articles 205 to 214 (BRASIL, 1988, our translation):

Art. 205. Education, the right of all and the duty of the State and the family, will be promoted and encouraged with the collaboration of society, aiming at the full development of the person, their preparation for the exercise of citizenship and their qualification for work.

Art. 206. Education will be given based on the following principles:

I - equal conditions for access and permanence at school;

IV - free public education in official establishments;

Art. 208. The State's duty to education will be carried out through the guarantee of:

I - compulsory and free basic education from 4 (four) to 17 (seventeen) years of age, including its free offer for all those who did not have access to it at right age;

VI - provision of regular evening teaching, appropriate to the student's conditions;

Art. 214. The law will establish the national education plan, lasting ten years, with the objective of articulating the national education system in a collaborative regime and defining guidelines, objectives, goals and implementation strategies to ensure the maintenance and development of education at its various levels, stages and modalities through integrated actions by public authorities from different federal spheres that lead to:

I - eradicating illiteracy;

- universalization of school attendance;

IV - formation for work.

On the other hand, in LDBEN 9,394/1996 (BRASIL, 1996), in articles 37 and 38, YAE once again appears as an integral modality of Basic Education for students who did not have, at their own age, access or continuity of study in Elementary and High School:

Art. 37. The education of young people and adults will be aimed at those who have not had access to or continued their studies in elementary and high school at their right age.

1. The education systems will provide free of charge to young people and adults, who were unable to carry out their studies at the regular age,

appropriate educational opportunities, taking into account the characteristics of the students, their interests, living and working conditions, through courses and exams.

2. The Public Power will make possible and stimulate the access and the permanence of the worker in the school, through integrated and complementary actions among themselves.

3. The education of young people and adults should be linked, preferably, with professional education, in the form of the regulation.

Art. 38. The education systems will maintain supplementary courses and exams, which will comprise the common national base of the curriculum, enabling the continuation of studies on a regular basis.

1. The exams referred to in this article will be carried out:

I - at the level of completion of basic education, for those over fifteen years old;

II - at the level of completion of high school, for those over eighteen years old.

2. The knowledge and skills acquired by students through informal means will be assessed and recognized through exams (our translation).

For Bernardim (2008), a new spirit for YAE emerged with Resolution CNE/CEB no. 11/2000 (BRASIL, 2000), which dealt with the National Curricular Guidelines for Youth and Adults Education, when he conceived it as an unpaid social debt to those who did not have access to it, nor mastery of reading and writing as social goods, whether at school or outside it. In this document, YAE also expresses the concept of rescuing a social debt from negative colonial heritage, when an education that has strengthened social inequalities has been tangibly preserved.

CNE/CEB Resolution 11/2000 (BRASIL, 2000), which provides for National Curriculum Guidelines for Youth and Adult Education, also assumes that YAE has its own character, and the context and the public must be considered that meets (age group, interests), in order to meet their basic needs, going beyond: with their own functions of repairer, equalizer and qualifier.

Such guidelines emphasize that YAE, as a modality of Basic Education, must consider the profile of students and their age when proposing a pedagogical model, in order to ensure equity, which would be the specific distribution of curricular components, in order to provide an egalitarian level of formation and reestablishing equal rights and opportunities in the face of the right to education, as well as the difference that materializes with the identification and recognition of the own and inseparable otherness of young people and adults in their formative process, of the valorization of merit of each one and the development of their knowledge and values.

In these conditions, more than thirty years after the recognition, by the Brazilian State, of education as a right of all, in the different stages of life, the conditions of supply are still precarious and the policies of access, permanence and elevation of schooling are very fragile,

a much more accentuated situation with socially vulnerable groups, such as Afro-descendant, elderly, illiterate, women and indigenous peoples. According to Capucho (2012, p. 25, our translation),

This situation reveals that the social rights are declared in terms of laws demanding distributive justice, through which criteria of material equality must be applied to ensure their implementation, as there is no point in trumpeting the universalization of education if there are no policies that guarantee it to all, with social quality and conditions of permanence and continuity.

Thinking in this direction, YAE, in addition to methodological and pedagogical issues, needs to be faced as a public policy problem. Why do we say that? Because even though this type of education today is guaranteed in the legal field, the actions of the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), during the eight years of the government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-2002), were limited to the establishment of parameters and national curriculum guidelines and the formulation of national certification exams. Among the programs of the period are: the Solidarity Literacy Program (PAS), the National Education Program on Agrarian Reform (PRONERA) and the National Plan for Professional Training and Qualification (Planfor), all characterized by a compensatory policy.

Thus, in order to make up for the lack of public policies for this modality, the federal government of the period sought, in partnerships with universities, municipalities, non-governmental organizations and social movements, a strategic and palliative solution to the problem, transferring to society the responsibility for YAE (BRANCO, 2015).

However, with the arrival of the government of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in 2003, we had great expectations of social changes in the country, which stemmed from his history in union activism. However, it was found that this government did not effectively represent an alternative to the problems of illiteracy in the country, but, rather, a new stage in the development of the bourgeois project linked to international capitalism. What actually happened during the Lula government was a significant expansion of the supply of YAE through the programs created in his government, policies that reiterated the logic of capital and that were insufficient to guarantee the right to Basic Education for young people and adults (BRANCO, 2015).

So, it is worth mentioning here some programs and actions implemented in Brazil since 2003, during the Lula government, which were brought together in the extinct Secretariat of Continuing Education, Literacy, Diversity and Inclusion (SECADI), namely: the Literate Brazil Program, ProJovem, the Saberes da Terra Program (ProJovem Campo), the National Program

for the Integration of Basic Education with Professional Education in the Youth and Adult Education Modality (Proeja) and the National Program for the Integration of Professional Education with Basic Education in Youth and Adult Education Modality, Initial and Continuing Education with Elementary School (Proeja-Fic). In the field of actions, there was the implementation of the National Examination of Competencies Certifications in Youth and Adult Education (ENCCEJA), which aims to assess the skills of young people and adults and offer certification of completion at the level of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Also in this period, in 2014, after several struggles by social movements, the Federal Congress sanctioned the National Education Plan (PNE), with the purpose of directing efforts and investments to improve the quality of education in the country. With force of law, the PNE established 20 goals to be achieved in the next 10 years. To meet the needs of YAE, the PNE (BRASIL, 2014) establishes two goals for the area:

Goal 9: Increase the literacy rate of the population aged 15 or over to 93.5% by 2015 and, by the end of this PNE's term, eradicate absolute illiteracy and reduce the functional illiteracy rate by 50%.

Goal 10: Offer at least 25% of youth and adult education enrollments, in primary and secondary education, in an integrated manner with professional education (our translation).

Specifically about goal 9, what can be assessed is that, in 2015, according to data from the PNE Observatory (OPNE), the literacy rate of young people and adults aged 15 or over should be 93.5%, however, it was not fulfilled because, in 2015, only 92% of the population was literate. By 2024, the National Plan aims to eradicate absolute illiteracy and reduce the functional illiteracy rate in the country to 13.5%.

In goal 10, which deals with YAE integrated with professional education, according to the 2016 OPNE results, only 2.9% of YAE enrollments in Elementary Education were integrated with professional education. In the case of YAE enrollments in high school, the rate was 3.3% in 2014 and 2.5% in 2016, which indicates a regression in relation to the target.

In summary, on the experiences and results of the implementation of these programs, actions, plans and goals, “certainly all these initiatives resulted in some access to schooling, but none of them managed to extend schooling to the public that participated in it, with results that corresponded to at least the conclusion of four years of studies” (COSTA; MACHADO, 2017, p. 89, our translation).

In fact, the provision of basic education is not sufficient for young people and adults, but social quality and socioenvironmental sustainability are necessary, which implies thinking about an inclusive, quality education “that is opposed to any and all types of exclusion due to

age, gender, ethnicity, immigrant status, language, religion, rurality, sexual identity or diversity, poverty, displacement or incarceration” (CAPUCHO, 2012, p. 44, our translation). On this issue, Branco (2015, p. 206, our translation) explains that

it is a question of questioning this situation, depending on the defense of politically compromised school education and in conditions to enable access, permanence and expansion of the social horizons of young and adult workers, an expression of their right to education and the duty of the public Power.

In this perspective, educating young people and adults, ultimately, is not restricted to dealing with intellectual content, but implies dealing with values, with ways to respect and recognize differences and equals. And this is done from the place they start to occupy in public policies, as subjects of rights. No learning, therefore, can be done without the ethical, human and solidary sense that justifies the condition of humanized beings, provided with intelligence, subjects of alienable rights (PAIVA, 2009).

In this sense, the experiences at YAE have more political and social sense when articulating theory in practice, starting from a conception of the educational act marked by political awareness and intentionality. Arroyo (1998, p. 143, our translation) contributes to this debate by emphasizing that,

Although in a compensatory way, the students of YAE, mostly workers who have already passed the conventional age, should be provided with an education that also “compensates” for the damage caused by the neglect of the educational system. Therefore, it needs to be the “best” education, which provides the approximation of the student with the process that forms life and knowledge, work and productive techniques, and where personal freedom that passes through the community is achieved.

Therefore, as there were many causes that led YAE students to leave school in their childhood or adolescence, many are also those that make them return. In this way, one of the biggest challenges for YAE is not only to encourage the arrival of this student at school, but, above all, to encourage their permanence, which is closely related to the continuing education of teachers, public financing policies and school management and organization factors.

Barcelos (2007) affirms that YAE is a privileged territory for the coexistence of values, as it brings together people of different age groups, with different ethnic, religious, economic and cultural backgrounds. This diversity, instead of revealing a difficulty, may mean the possibility of expanding to build school knowledge and more just social life spaces.

Final considerations

In view of the reflections presented here, it is necessary to explain that it is not the objective of this text to deepen the analysis of the proposals and results of each of the programs and actions mentioned. What we did here was an immersion in the position of some education researchers, in particular from YAE, who denounce the small advances that have occurred in this type of teaching throughout history. This represents, in fact, minimal contributions to its strengthening, given the existence, throughout the country, of an educational demand that has been repressed since the colonization period, as we have seen here.

Thus, this study revealed to us the various contradictions between public policies and educational quality. We found that, although there were no shortages of legal provisions, as well as campaigns and programs, considering the different periods, these initiatives did not imply transformations with qualitative leaps that would make it possible to substantially change the framework of social exclusion and inequality, based on precarious access and objective conditions of staying in a quality school for all.

Thus, the heterogeneity peculiar to this type of teaching makes the space for the diverse be filled with social and cultural wealth. There are aspects that make these students unique subjects who, through their life stories, memories and representations, fill the daily life of YAE and, in turn, must necessarily be filled by “schools” and other spaces that understand and respect their particularities.

In such a way, inventing and reinventing may be what every YEA teacher has to do most. Reinventing pedagogical practices, didactics, methodologies, curricula, habits, customs, values and, above all, the hope that it is always possible to learn, trying daily to face the new, since we are unfinished beings and, as such, our life is in permanent transformation (ARROYO, 2017). And, as Freire complements (1996, p. 109, our translation), “the pedagogical space is a text to be constantly “read”, “written” and “rewritten””. In this sense, the more solidarity there is between the educator and students in the "treatment" of this space, the more possibilities for democratic learning open up at school.

Therefore, it is necessary to build changes in the school, in the sense of emerging new educational proposals for YEA, proposals that may be in line with what was advocated here and, specially, by Freire (2005) who defended a “problematizing education” as opposed to “banking education”.

In short, an educational policy that is centered on YAE should be based on mutual understanding, considering the knowledge that the student brings with him, knowing the reality

of these young people and adults, seeking to develop pedagogical actions that meet their particularities, where cultures can be officially recognized, both in practice and in the school curriculum.

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