

200 anos de educação para os povos do campo no Brasil: entre conquistas e desafios

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Resumo

Este artigo tem como objetivo analisar a historicidade da educação destinada aos povos do campo no Brasil, nos últimos 200 anos (1822-2022). Para isso, investigamos o contexto rural brasileiro, como a escola fora pensada para povos camponeses, o surgimento da Field Education, as discrepâncias entre Educação Rural e Field Education e as políticas públicas educacionais destinadas a esses sujeitos. Assim, problematizamos as contradições históricas entre campesinato e agronegócio, a emergência dos movimentos sociais e as conquistas das políticas públicas, bem como os desafios ainda enfrentados em meio ao cenário atual. Desse modo, o estudo, além de problematizar a educação dos povos do campo, destacou a importância das legislações conquistadas.

Palavras-chave: Brasil; Field Education ; Políticas Públicas.

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200 years of education for rural people in Brazil: between achievements and challenges

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Abstract

This article aims to analyze the historicity of education aimed at field people in Brazil, in the last 200 years (1822-2022). For this, it will investigate the Brazilian rural context, how the school was designed for peasant people, the emergence of Rural Education, the discrepancies between Field Education and Rural Education and the public educational policies aimed at these subjects. Thus, it will discuss the historical contradictions between peasantry and, the emergence of social movements and the achievements of public policies, as well as the challenges still faced in the current scenario. In this way, the study, in addition to problematizing the education of field people, will highlight the importance of the conquered legislation.

Keywords: Brazil; Rural Education; Public policy.

200 años de educación para la población rural en Brasil: entre logros y desafíos

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Resumen

Este artículo tiene como objetivo analizar la historicidad de la educación dirigida a la población del campo en Brasil, en los últimos 200 años (1822-2022). Para ello, investigó el contexto rural brasileño, cómo la escuela fue diseñada para el pueblo campesino, el surgimiento de la Educación del Campo, las discrepancias entre Educación del Campo y Educación Rural y las políticas públicas educativas dirigidas a estos sujetos. Así, discutió las contradicciones históricas entre el campesinado y el agronegocio, el surgimiento de los movimientos sociales y las conquistas de las políticas públicas, así como los desafíos aún enfrentados en el escenario actual. De esta forma, el estudio, además de problematizar la educación de la población del campo, resaltó la importancia de la legislación conquistada.

Palabras clave: Brasil; Educación del Campo; Políticas públicas.

Introduction

To analyze the progress and challenges of Field Education in Brazil over the past 200 years, the first step is to reflect on the educational projects designed for rural populations, the history of education for these people, the construction of policies, and the challenges still faced today. Furthermore, it is necessary to make an effort to understand Field Education in its entirety, aiming to take stock of its historical journey, staying true to its objectives, and analyzing the antagonistic context of social classes within the current capitalist system.

Field Education stems from the class struggle between rural workers and the bourgeois class⁴, emerging from a context where the historically designed educational project has been aligned with the interests of the dominant class. This form of education proposes an educational model focused on the rural subject, created by and for them, which entails the protagonism of those demanding education (CALDART, 2009).

In this sense, this study aimed to analyze the historicity of education for rural peoples in Brazil over the last 200 years (1822-2022). To achieve this, a bibliographic research was conducted on Rural Education, using the contributions of authors who discuss the theme, such as Calazans (1993), Fernandes (1999), Caldart (2009), Leite (2002), Paulo Freire (1996), Mészáros (2008), Carvalho (2011), Moraes (2018), Souza (2020), Freitas (2018), and Santos (2017). Additionally, a documental analysis was carried out on public educational policies that encompass rural subjects, including decrees, resolutions, opinions, the Law of Guidelines and Bases (LDB 9394/96), and Brazilian constitutions.

To achieve the outlined objective, the text is divided into sections, starting with a brief analysis of social classes and the peoples who live in rural areas. Subsequently, the 200 years of education for rural peoples in Brazil are highlighted, analyzing how education was conceived for this space, what the national legislations said, and the contradictions between Field Education and Rural Studies. Then, public policies for Field Education in Brazil are highlighted, along with the achievements of the last decades, the challenges faced, and the setbacks.

⁴ Barros (2018) makes considerations about the class struggle in rural areas and highlights the existence of those who control the means of production (the agrarian bourgeoisie) and those who only have their labor power (rural worker).

A brief analysis of the peasantry and agribusiness in Brazil

Reflecting on the peasantry in Brazil refers to a very heterogeneous social class, composed of small farmers, river dwellers, rubber tappers, land claimants, descendants of quilombos, and settlers, among others. It is also a class with a dual character in the social process: it is both landowners and the holders of labor power (ALMEIDA, 2008). In this perspective, in capitalist society, the peasantry finds itself in contradiction with the dominant production model, characterized in rural areas by large-scale. The protagonist in the capitalist system is agribusiness, which consists of the combination of various productive activities directly related to the production and subproduction of agricultural and livestock products. This is a result of the Green Revolution⁵, after World War II, with the modernization of agriculture through machinery and agricultural inputs. Agribusiness is established as a global development model, dominated by financial capital oriented by the external market, and focused on production in large-scale exploitation units (TEUBAL, 2008).

Agribusiness has its roots in large estates, which in Brazil were directly linked to the colonial economic structure that aimed to produce on a large scale to generate profit for the Portuguese Crown through the export of spices found in Brazil (SILVA et al, 2014, p. 5). In the country's colonization history, the land has always been in the hands of the dominant class, initially taken by force from the indigenous people and, later, denied to the slaves. Thus, the accumulation of private property, a hallmark of capitalism, is responsible for the creation of the contradiction between large landowners and those who have no land.

Regarding land appropriation in the country, it is worth mentioning one of the first laws, after Brazil's independence (1822), that addressed agrarian rights, the Land Law (Law No. 601), enacted on September 18, 1850. Approved in the same year as the Eusébio de Queirós Law⁶, which aimed to end the slave trade, this legislation was a means by which large landowners and political elites

⁵ A expressão “Revolução Verde” é empregada para designar o processo de transformação na agricultura em escala global que se deu por meio do desenvolvimento e incorporação de novos meios tecnológicos na produção. Esse fenômeno teve início na segunda metade do século XX, entre as décadas de 1960 e 1970.

⁶ A Lei Eusébio de Queirós ou lei nº 581, de 4 de setembro de 1850, promulgada no Segundo Reinado, proibiu a entrada de africanos escravos no Brasil, criminalizando quem a infringisse.

200 years of education for rural people in Brazil: between achievements and challenges preemptively ensured that blacks would not become landowners. By establishing that land could only be acquired through purchase, sale, or donation from the church, the law ensured that only the dominant class would retain property, as workers lacked the resources to purchase land.

Therefore, land ownership in Brazil is linked to those who hold capital and is denied to the working class, whose labor is still exploited in exchange for their subsistence. Thus, the reality of the peasantry, composed of individuals who have historically been subjugated, becomes cheap labor for large landowners, as Marques affirms (2008, p. 56):

In Latin America, the social reproduction of the peasantry has never been in such a critical situation. Many peasants are kept in a permanent state of semi- or sub-proletarianization, facing extremely precarious working conditions, whether in the countryside or the city. Temporary work in sugarcane cutting in Brazil is an example of this situation. This occurs either because the use of wage labor allows the peasant to maintain land ownership or because it is the alternative found to obtain the income necessary for sustenance.

Furthermore, in the countryside, the struggle of peasants for land and other basic rights that are denied to them, such as education, materializes. When peasants do not sell their labor, they survive through family farming, fishing, and other sustainable forms of living with the land. However, agribusiness, which expands and requires a large amount of land for exploitation, pressures rural people to vacate the land and, due to mechanization, some are forced to sell their labor.

Latifundia is a necessary foundation for agribusiness, while at the same time, it gives rise to the peasants' struggle for land and a sustainable mode of production. Thus, the land struggle pits these two modes of production against each other: on one side, large-scale production using pesticides and genetically modified seeds; on the other, peasants who defend sustainability and agrarian reform. The latter is urgently needed in the country, as demonstrated in a 2019 study conducted by the non-governmental organization (NGO) Oxfam, which analyzed land distribution in Latin America. The study concluded that less than 1% of agricultural properties hold almost half of Brazil's rural area.

In short, the contradictions between the peasantry and agribusiness emerge from a history of exploitation, expropriation, and land accumulation in Brazil, which produce tensions and conflicts. Agribusiness, the protagonist in the capitalist system due to large-scale production and profit, is

characterized by latifundia and development driven by capital (SANTOS, 2017). In contrast, the peasantry fights for agrarian reform, for a sustainable way to live with the land, and for the quality of life of workers. However, as seen, the State perpetuates the interests of the ruling class and serves to maintain capital, so peasants, in defending their rights, must confront the system and demand action from the Stat.

200 Years of Education for Rural Peoples in Brazil: Between Achievements and Challenges

Education in rural areas in Brazil has historically been marked by exclusion, leaving lasting effects to this day. From 1500 until the early 20th century, the schooling process served mainly the agrarian elites, remaining inaccessible to a large part of the rural population. As pointed out by Calazans (1993), educational projects for rural areas were aligned with the economic interests of capitalism, revealing that the school system forms part of a broader whole that, under capitalism, must adapt to its modes of production..

Brazilian education, at all levels and in all modalities, has always had a dualistic character, favoring the dominant class and this is no different when it comes to rural Brazil. Given the country's agrarian history of concentrated land ownership in large estates, it is clear that, until the early decades of the 20th century, the State showed little concern for providing education to rural populations, under the justification that the labor force supporting the prevailing agro-export model especially coffee cultivation did not need schooling to perform its work (SANTOS; SOUZA; 2012, p.2).

Brazil's first Constitution, enacted in 1824, addressed education in Article 179, Section XXXII: "Primary education is free for all citizens." However, it excluded a significant portion of the population, as at that time, citizenship was linked to titles and property ownership, thereby excluding women, enslaved people, and dependents. Access to education thus continued to be marked by exclusion, disregarding the poorest rural populations namely, the peasantry.

As such, education in rural areas only began to take shape with the 1891 Constitution, which proposed a reorganization of the entire educational system. Nevertheless, it gained prominence in national debates only in the second decade of the 20th century, due to the country's industrialization and the significant migration of rural populations to urban centers (SILVA, 2000). This Constitution

200 years of education for rural people in Brazil: between achievements and challenges introduced the autonomy of states and municipalities, providing a legal basis for decentralized educational initiatives yet these were not fully implemented, owing to the absence of a national system capable of coordinating a comprehensive education policy. What emerged instead were a few local initiatives, mostly at the municipal level, offering evening literacy courses for adults in urban areas.

Rural education was formally incorporated into Brazilian legislation with the 1934 Constitution, amid intense debate aimed at curbing rural-to-urban migration and thereby increasing productivity in the countryside. During the 1910s and 1920s, as peasants left rural areas in search of better working and living conditions resulting in overcrowded cities rural schools began to be conceptualized and promoted (LEITE, 2002). It was within this context that the movement known as *Pedagogical Ruralism* emerged:

[...] *Pedagogical Ruralism* was a movement that discussed, formulated, and disseminated proposals for the schooling of rural populations. The Ruralist Movement was primarily focused on emphasizing education as a means of ensuring people remained in the countryside. [...] *Pedagogical Ruralism* thus became a foundational framework whose influence is still present in contemporary discussions and practices concerning rural schooling (ANTUNES-ROCHA, 2012, p. 56).

Pedagogical Ruralism was the strategy adopted at the time to use education as a means to reduce rural exodus and ensure that rural dwellers remained on the land. One of the central explanatory narratives used to justify the creation of schools in rural areas was the supposed “lack of love for the land,” which, according to the movement, stemmed from ignorance and led peasants either to abandon the countryside or to harm nature. The rural school was designed to valorize the “simple” way of life in the countryside while presenting the city as a kind of “mirage,” thus discouraging impoverished rural populations from migrating to urban centers.

However, with the expansion and mechanization of agribusiness and the increasing need for land for monoculture crops by agro-exporters the presence of peasants in rural areas was no longer deemed necessary, except for those capable of operating machinery. Moreover, the absence of public policies targeting rural education became one of the main reasons why once again, peasants were denied both access to education and their right to land. Over time, most of the few existing rural schools were closed, and the children of farmers were forced to travel to urban centers to attend school.

[...] the unilateral policies implemented by public administrators have led to the closure of rural schools, affecting thousands of communities without prior

discussions regarding the advantages and disadvantages of opening or closing schools in the countryside. These decisions have disregarded the principle of community participation in matters concerning education and public policies for education, directly impacting thousands of citizens especially children and adolescents. [...] Measures involving the closure or abandonment of schools in Brazil have taken place since the 1960s, sparking debates about the potential impacts such actions could have on the education system and society as a whole. However, there were no specific discussions on the quality of education or school transportation for rural populations. (FERREIRA; BRANDÃO, 2011, p.2).

Rural schools were closed without any discussion with the community, which resulted in major impacts on their lives. Students were forced to travel to schools in urban areas schools that were neither built nor designed for them. Moreover, there was no discussion about the quality of transportation that would take these students, leaving them at the mercy of political will. The numbers are alarming and highlight the seriousness of the lack of oversight regarding the continued existence of schools in rural areas. According to the Landless Workers' Movement (MST), ⁷a recent survey based on data from INEP on the number of basic education institutions reveals that nearly 80,000 rural schools were closed in Brazil between 1997 and 2018.

Thus, it becomes clear that the State's actions toward the peasant population have always been guided by the interests of capital. When it was necessary to keep rural people on the land, the creation of *Pedagogical Ruralism* served as a tool to reduce rural exodus through education and retain peasants in rural areas. Later, with the expansion and mechanization of agribusiness and the growing demand for land, the presence of these subjects in the countryside was no longer necessary for capital. As a result, public policies were neglected, and rural schools were closed. However, social movements rose up in defense of these communities, proposing a different educational model thus giving rise to Field Education in opposition to Rural Education, the latter being driven by the interests of capital.

Rural education, as it has historically prevailed in Brazil, according to authors such as Ferrari (1991) and Calazans (1993), has been conceived from an urban-centered, capitalist, and exclusionary perspective. From the very beginning, schooling in the Brazilian context was designed to serve the elites. In rural areas, agrarian elites excluded peasants, enslaved people, and Indigenous populations,

⁷ Available at: <https://mst.org.br/2019/11/28/80-mil-escolas-fechadas-no-campo-brasileiro-em-21-anos/>. Accessed on: December 12, 2020.

200 years of education for rural people in Brazil: between achievements and challenges who were regarded merely as labor and therefore deemed unworthy of formal education. Later on, as pointed out in the previous section, educational programs targeting rural areas continued to be aligned with the economic interests of capital, disregarding the needs of peasant communities and failing to respect their ways of being and living. The concept of Rural Education, as articulated in the State's historical discourse, reinforces this segregating logic and strips away the cultural and political meaning of any project aimed at rural territories and peasant peoples (BARBOSA, 2015).

The model of Rural Education implemented in Brazil gave rise to one of the counter-hegemonic movements advocating for an education that values rural populations: the Landless Workers' Movement (MST). This movement emerged in 1984, when rural workers engaged in struggles for land and social democracy gathered at the First National Meeting in Cascavel, Paraná. There, they decided to establish a national peasant movement with three main objectives: to fight for land, to advocate for agrarian reform, and to promote social change in the country. Since then, the movement has championed the rights of rural communities to education, land, healthcare, and more (SANTOS; SILVA; SOUZA, 2013).

In this context, the first debates on the quality of education took place during the "First National Meeting of Educators of Agrarian Reform" (ENERA), organized by the MST in 1997 with the support of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil (CNBB), and the University of Brasília (UnB). Later, at the "First National Conference for Basic Education in Rural Areas," held in Luziânia, Goiás, public policies for Field Education in Brazil were collectively developed and articulated (SANTOS; SOARES; SOUZA, 2020).

In this way, through the efforts and mobilization of social movements, Field Education has been conceived and constructed. According to Caldart,

Field Education takes a stand and acts from a particular standpoint, without abandoning the perspective of universality; rather, it seeks to assert its inclusion within it. [...] Field Education has focused on the school, while simultaneously struggling for an educational conception that is not confined to the school itself, nor bound by its constitutive logic—precisely so it can extend well beyond it as an educational project. [...] It fights for workers' access to the knowledge produced by society, while at the same time questioning and critically examining the dominant modes of knowledge [...] (CALDART, 2009, p.38).

The educational project of "Field" Education (Field Education), from its very inception, is

grounded in horizontal relationships, a sense of belonging, identity, and cultural appreciation. As Caldart (2009, p. 41) states: “At its origin, the ‘do’ in Field Education reflects this protagonism: it is not ‘for’ nor even ‘with’ it belongs to the workers, Field Education of the people, of the peasants, a pedagogy of the oppressed...”.

One of the essential differences between and traditional Rural Education lies not only in their origins but also in the societal models they promote. On one hand, there is an antagonistic reality that devalues rural people; on the other, a vision of a just and democratic society in which subjects not capital are the protagonists (SANTOS, 2020; SANTOS & BARBOSA, 2022). The defense of Field Education encompasses the struggle for community-based schools, founded on critical and emancipatory pedagogies (FREIRE, 1996). These are schools that uphold peasant life, its ways of being and living, and that recognize the importance of family farming and the countryside as a space for life.

In sum, two distinct educational models aimed at rural populations can be identified: Educação Rural and Field Education . The former, historically aligned with economic interests, adheres to capitalist principles and is conceived from an urban-centric perspective (SOUZA, 2020). The latter, in contrast, arises from the struggles of social movements, with rural people as its protagonists and valuing their culture. Thus, contradictions emerge distinct educational projects marked by fundamentally different characteristics, as outlined in the table below.

Box 1: Rural Education and Field Education of and from the Countryside: Characteristics and Convergences

Rural Education	Field Education
Defined according to the objectives of the labor market;	Built by social movements;
Portrays the countryside through a capitalist lens, viewing rural subjects as inferior	Appreciation of rural people and human development as a right;
Conceived from an urban perspective	Conceived from the subject’s reality, valuing their culture and relationship with the land.
Dominance of agribusiness	Protagonism of family farming

Source: prepared by Soares (2020).

In contrast to Rural Education, which views agricultural spaces as sites for capital production,

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Field Education advocates for diversity and the emancipation of rural subjects. When addressing Field Education, Rosa Lucas emphasizes:

Breaking away from the old paradigm of development one that is aggressive toward the environment and premised on profit at any cost, benefiting only a few must be a broad commitment involving many sectors. Overcoming the current model, which has significantly compromised natural resources, requires a new way of thinking, a new meaning for human actions and attitudes, and new values, customs, and traditions. These, in turn, must come into conflict with the pillars of the old idea of progress, which has been used as a synonym for development. (LUCAS, 2008. p. 124).

Moreover, rural social movements have, over the past decade, achieved numerous public policies encompassing Field Education. These policies represent a contested field, as they were not conceived by the State, but rather originated from the arduous struggles of social movements. Thus, the legal milestones gained are significant, as is their implementation, since they constitute rights that stand in opposition to the prevailing capitalist model of society.

Public Policies for Field Education in Brazil: Between Achievements and Challenges

According to Santos and Carvalho (2019, p. 4), public policies “can be defined as a characteristic set of actions promoted by governmental actors, aimed at producing specific outcomes in various areas of the social arena such as education, health, culture, and others.” In this sense, educational public policies are constituted as actions directed toward education. It is also important to note that such policies are not always voluntarily formulated by those in power; they are often the result of struggles led by counter-hegemonic social movements.

In the context of public policy development, the historical setting of the 1990s in Brazil stands out, a period during which the State underwent a series of “reforms” and established what came to be known as the welfare state, driven by the need to adapt to the new post-war capitalist order.

Between 1930 and 1970, while the neoliberal approach was being disseminated, the world witnessed the rise of the welfare state, grounded in a developmentalist

conception of capitalism. This was an attempt to overcome the crisis of the first cycle of classical liberalism, which had collapsed in the early twentieth century amid World War I and the 1929 crash. [...] In Latin America, the exhaustion of the first neoliberal wave in the 1990s, followed by the rise of progressive governments, created the illusion that neoliberalism had come to an end. It also produced a complementary effect: it drew our attention to the economic reforms and their impacts, diverting it from the darker side of neoliberalism (FREITAS, 2018, p.14).

Although some of the reforms of the 1990s represented advances in the field of the right to education such as the enactment of the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education (LDB 9394/96)—it was during the coalition government led by the Workers' Party (PT), which lasted from 2003 to 2016, that several public policies were developed to support education in rural areas. With regard to Field Education, especially during the presidential terms of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003–2006 and 2007–2011), there was greater openness to the demands of rural social movements, particularly the MST, which, over the past decade, succeeded in transforming many of their demands into legal and normative frameworks.

The following table highlights the public policies that support Field Education in Brazil, beginning in the 1990s and continuing to be developed through 2015.

box 2- Legal Frameworks of Education of and from the Field Education

Political and Legal Milestones	Year of Establishment	Description
Law No. 9,394/96, Articles 23 and 28	1996	Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB)
Law No. 9,424/96, Article 1	1996	Establishes the Fund for the Maintenance and Development of Basic Education and the Enhancement of Teaching (FUNDEF)
CNE/CEB Resolution No. 1	April 2002	Establishes the Operational Guidelines for Basic Education in Rural Schools
Law No. 10,880	June 2004	Establishes the National Program for School Transportation Support (PNATE)

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CNE/CEB Opinion No. 01/2006	2006	Recognizes the application of Alternating Pedagogy in Family Centers for Alternating Education (CEFFA)
Decree No. 6,040	February 7, 2007	Establishes the National Policy for the Sustainable Development of Traditional Peoples and Communities (PNPCT)
Procampo (Support Program for Higher Education Degrees in Field Education)	2007	Establishes the Support Program for Higher Education Degrees in Field Education – PROCAMPO
CNE/CEB Resolution No. 2	April 2008	Establishes complementary Operational Guidelines for Basic Education in Rural Schools
FNDE/CD Resolution No. 45	August 2009	Defines the criteria and procedures for the automatic transfer of financial resources from the ProJovem Campo – Saberes da Terra Program to the States
Decree No. 7,352/2010	November 2010	Field Education policy and PRONERA
FNDE/CD Resolution No. 26	September 2010	Establishes guidelines and procedures for the transfer of financial resources to Higher Education Institutions under the Escola Ativa Program
Law No. 12,695	July 2012	Provides FUNDEB resources to community institutions working in the field of Field Education
Resolution No. 36	August 2012	PDDE Campo – Direct Funding Program for Rural Schools
CNE/CEB Opinion No. 01/2006	February 7, 2007	PDDE Water at School Program
Resolution No 32	Agosto de 2012	Recognizes the application of Alternating Pedagogy in Family Centers for Alternating Education (CEFFA)

<input type="checkbox"/> Resolution No. 8, Article 1	<input type="checkbox"/> November 20, 2012	National Curriculum Guidelines for Quilombola School Education in Basic Education
<input type="checkbox"/> FNDE/CD Resolution No. 18	<input type="checkbox"/> May 2013	Regulates the allocation of financial resources, according to the operational and regulatory frameworks of the Direct Funding Program for Schools (PDDE), [...] in order to promote improved quality of education and the advancement of socio-environmental sustainability in school units
<input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance No. 86/2013	<input type="checkbox"/> 2013	Ordinance No. 86/2013, which establishes PRONACAMPO – National Program for Field Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance No. 674	<input type="checkbox"/> August 2013	Ordinance No. 674 – Establishes the National Commission on Field Education, a consultative collegial body tasked with advising the Ministry of Education on policies for Field Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Resolution No. 38, Article 1	<input type="checkbox"/> October 2013	Establishes guidelines and procedures for the payment of scholarships and research grants within the scope of the Escola da Terra Program
<input type="checkbox"/> Law No. 9,394/96, Article 28 amended by Law No. 12,960	<input type="checkbox"/> Amendment in March 2014	The closure of rural schools
<input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance No. 505	<input type="checkbox"/> May 2015	Establishes the National Commission for Rural Vocational and Technological Education in Public Networks – CNEPT

Source: prepared by Soares (2020).

A major normative milestone achieved in favor of education for rural populations at the federal level was CNE/CEB Resolution No. 1, dated April 3, 2002, which established the Operational Guidelines for Basic Education in Rural Schools. At the historical moment in which it was

200 years of education for rural people in Brazil: between achievements and challenges collectively developed, this resolution represented a legal instrument for dialogue between the State and civil society in the struggle for rights. It outlines the responsibilities of each level of government, all of which are constitutionally obligated to ensure quality education for all including rural populations. As such, this document became a powerful tool for rights advocacy and social struggle for rural communities (CARVALHO, 2011; SANTOS, 2020).

Another key legal milestone was approved by the National Congress in December 2006: Constitutional Amendment No. 53/2006, which created the Fund for the Maintenance and Development of Basic Education and the Enhancement of Education Professionals (Fundeb). It replaced the Fund for the Maintenance and Development of Primary Education and the Enhancement of Teaching (Fundef), which had been established by Constitutional Amendment No. 14/1996. With Fundeb, funding coverage was expanded to include educational stages and modalities that had previously been excluded from Fundef such as Field Education, Indigenous education, and Quilombola education.

Subsequently, for the first time in the country and within a piece of legislation, the term “Field Education” emerged signaling not merely an education *for* rural populations, but rather a distinct and intentional *Field Education*. This new designation carries specific meanings and values, as previously discussed. In this regard, CNE/CEB Resolution No. 2, dated April 28, 2008, states in Article 1,

Field Education encompasses Basic Education in its various stages Early Childhood Education, Primary Education, Secondary Education, and Vocational and Technical Education at the secondary level integrated with high school and is intended to serve rural populations in their diverse ways of life and means of livelihood: family farmers, extractivists, artisanal fishers, riverine communities, agrarian reform settlers and encampment dwellers, quilombolas, caícaras, Indigenous peoples, and others (BRASIL, 2008).

Still within the legal framework, it is essential to highlight Decree No. 7,352, dated November 4, 2010, which establishes

Article 1. The Field Education policy is aimed at expanding and improving the provision of basic and higher education for rural populations. It shall be implemented by the Federal Government in cooperation with the States, the Federal District, and the Municipalities, in accordance with the guidelines and goals set forth in the National Education Plan and the provisions of this Decree (BRASIL, 2010).

In this way, Field Education reaffirms itself as an educational public policy. Furthermore, this document formally establishes the National Education Program for Agrarian Reform (PRONERA), which until then had existed merely as a program, but through the aforementioned decree is transformed into a permanent State policy in favor of quality education for rural populations engaged in the struggle for equitable land redistribution in the country. Thus, it becomes highly relevant in the advancement of rights for peasants, particularly those leading the agrarian reform movement.

It is also important to highlight programs such as the National Field Education Program (PRONACAMPO), which aims to provide financial and technical support to states and municipalities for the development of their own Field Education policies through coordinated actions that serve rural and quilombola schools. PROCAMPO, in turn, supports the implementation of regular undergraduate teacher education programs in Field Education at public higher education institutions across the country. In addition to the programs listed above, there is also the National Textbook Program for Rural Schools (PNLD Campo), which is intended to provide public schools participating in the National Textbook Program with didactic materials specifically designed for the rural context.

Another important legislative achievement was Law No. 12,960, enacted on March 27, 2014, which added a sole paragraph to Article 28 of the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (Law No. 9,394/96), thereby amending the legislation (BRAZIL, 1996, Art. 28):

The closure of rural, Indigenous, and quilombola schools shall be preceded by a statement from the regulatory body of the respective education system, which shall consider the justification presented by the Department of Education, the analysis of the impact assessment, and the opinion of the school community.

This law makes it more difficult to close rural schools, as the school community has the right to be heard, and the Department of Education must justify the need to terminate the school's operations. It represents a powerful addition to the law, as it not only ensures community participation but also values schools located in rural areas.

We also highlight Ordinance No. 505, issued in May 2015, which created the National Commission for Rural Vocational and Technological Education in Public Networks – CNEPT. Its purpose is to monitor actions related to Rural Vocational and Technological Education within public networks; to propose reference frameworks and guidelines for the work of public systems in this field;

200 years of education for rural people in Brazil: between achievements and challenges to monitor the implementation of the Training Grant under Pronatec Campo; and to recommend improvements to the processes involved (BRASIL, 2015).

In addition to the legal frameworks highlighted here, it is important to recognize that, according to the principles of an egalitarian school, whether located in rural areas or not, it is essential to consider student diversity in both the construction of the Pedagogical Political Project (PPP) and in everyday pedagogical practices. As stated in the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (Law No. 9,394/96),

Article 26 – The curricula of early childhood education, elementary education, and secondary education must have a national common core, to be complemented, within each education system and in each school, by a diversified component, required by the regional and local characteristics of society, culture, the economy, and the students themselves. § 1 The curricula referred to in the main section must mandatorily include the study of the Portuguese language and mathematics, knowledge of the physical and natural world, and of social and political realities especially those of Brazil. (BRAZIL, 1996, p.19, emphasis added).

It is worth noting that, when analyzing public policies in Brazil from the 1990s onward, significant achievements can be observed in the years that followed, particularly during the period when the Workers' Party (PT) held office. From 2003 onward, during the PT administrations, Moraes (2018, p. 80) writes that the “ghetto structure suffered small cracks. Small for the costs of the big house, but of enormous significance for those downstairs.” However, from 2015 onward, no new public policies were enacted. This was due to the political and media-driven coup of 2016, which institutionally removed President Dilma Vana Rousseff, who had been democratically re-elected in 2014 (FREITAS, 2018).

In this context, the openness to policy creation that had characterized the final years of the PT governments was replaced by an agenda aimed not at reforming, but at dismantling the notion of “publicly managed public education.” Under the government of President Jair Messias Bolsonaro (2019), neoliberal ideologues advocate for a State that merely provides public funding, without acting as manager—thus exempting it from the obligation to offer free and high-quality public education, reducing education instead to a mere “service” within the free market.

Since the beginning of his administration, President Bolsonaro has signed decrees that directly affect Field Education. One example is the dissolution of the Secretariat for Continuing Education, Literacy, Diversity, and Inclusion (SECADI/MEC), through Decree No. 9,465 of January 2, 2019.

Taffarel and Carvalho (2019) emphasize the importance of SECADI in ensuring quality and equitable education through public policies aimed at social inclusion an initiative born from the struggle for education and agrarian reform. The authors also stress that this imposition represents unprecedented setbacks and the dismantling of rights for the working class.

Another setback under the current government is Decree No. 10,252 of February 20, 2020, which abolished the General Coordination for Field Education and Citizenship, the body responsible for managing PRONERA. Moreover, it altered the responsibilities of the National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform (INCRA), transferring and subordinating agrarian policy to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Food Supply (MAPA). In response, the National Forum on Field Education (FONEC) issued a public statement denouncing the dismantling of PRONERA, asserting that after 20 years of struggle, the government has eliminated the political space for the design and management of one of Brazil's most significant public policies in Field Education.

Thus, in light of these ongoing setbacks, it becomes evident that under the current capitalist system, reforms are repeatedly introduced to correct certain details, yet without altering the established order because, as Mészáros (2008, pp. 25–26) argues, in its totalizing logic, it is unreformable:

[...] changes under such limitations aprioristic and pre-judged are admissible only with the sole and legitimate purpose of correcting some defective detail of the established order, so that the fundamental structural determinations of society as a whole remain intact, in accordance with the unalterable requirements of the global logic of a given system of production. It is possible to adjust the forms through which a multiplicity of conflicting particular interests must conform to the pre-established general rule of social reproduction, but under no circumstances may the general rule itself be altered.

The changes that have taken place in recent years regarding the achievement of public policies have only been admissible to the extent that they remained within the boundaries of the pre-established order. When structural changes emerge, capital readjusts itself in order to return to its cycle of contradictions. Under no circumstances can the general rule the antagonistic structure of exploitation and the expropriation of rights be altered. Despite significant advances, it is important to emphasize that many challenges remain to be overcome challenges that continue to be the subject of struggle between antagonistic social classes. Santos and Barbosa (2022); Santos, Santos, and Santos

200 years of education for rural people in Brazil: between achievements and challenges (2021); and Santos and Nunes (2020) prompt us to reflect on the need to continue fighting within the context of Field Education in order to:

- Advance the consolidation of Field Education in rural territories, ensuring that students have the right to study within their communities of origin, as established by Resolution No. 1/2002;
- Mobilize in defense of schools in rural areas to prevent their closure, in accordance with Law No. 12,960/2014;
- Ensure democratic school management through the direct election of school administrators by the school community. This should be enacted through legal provisions established in municipal and state legislation, as well as through resolutions or recommendations issued by municipal and state education councils;
- Promote training initiatives so that the school community can understand how educational financing works, and recognize the importance of participating in decision-making spaces through community assemblies. These assemblies should address vital issues when constructing the Multi-Year Plan (PPA), the Budget Guidelines Law (LDO) prepared annually to set government priorities for the following year and the Annual Budget Law (LOA). It is important to clarify that demands cannot be made for items not foreseen in the budget. If they are included, persistent advocacy for the execution of the budgeted allocations becomes part of the pedagogical and political mission of the school and of education workers;
- Develop a deeper understanding of the realities, cultures, and ways of being, thinking, and acting of Indigenous and Quilombola peoples as well as of all rural subjects in order to anticipate strategies and actions within the schools' Pedagogical Political Project (PPP);
- Design the PPP in a democratic manner, ensuring the inclusion of agroecology in the school curriculum;
- Identify mechanisms to guarantee work as an educational principle, to strengthen the link between education and productive processes, and to promote discussion on the various dimensions and methods of worker education and vocational training—juxtaposing theoretical and practical knowledge with the specific experiences of peasant labor and education;

- The community's culture must be an integral part of the schools' educational framework;
- Self-management must be a key aspect to be implemented in the educational process, among other elements.

Overcoming these challenges is a *sine qua non* condition for achieving quality education in rural areas. And although important achievements have been made toward social inclusion in these territories, such inclusion will remain incomplete if it does not aim at the historical overcoming of social exclusion—an exclusion embodied in territorial expropriation, the denial of land rights, the failure to implement agrarian reform, and the absence of public policies conceived as State obligations rather than government initiatives. Without this, the goals of the rural working class cannot be realized (SANTOS; BARBOSA, 2022). The alternative is the consolidation of a political-ideological reconversion toward an ultra-neoliberal political and economic model, as has been observed in Brazil in recent years. For qualitative change to occur, a process of counter-internalization is necessary one that can only be achieved through the political and social praxis of collective subjects.

Final considerations

Educational praxis from a critical perspective must be situated within the context of self-management, both in formal and non-formal activities, as well as in all spaces of political advocacy and knowledge construction. In this way, workers become aware of their historical role in society, gaining the knowledge necessary to make collective decisions about productive activities, grounded in political emancipation and the construction of citizenship. In this sense, it becomes possible for them to understand the multiple determinations at play and to develop a comprehensive view of the presented phenomena phenomena that are socially expressed, for instance, through the lack of adequate investment in education thus moving beyond superficial appearances to grasp the underlying essence.

We observe that, through the reflective capacity of social movements and the principles of Field Education, it has been possible to develop strategies that shift the balance of power between social classes within the rural context.

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Therefore, it is important to highlight the role of rural social movements in the struggle to overcome the prevailing capitalist mode of production and to ensure rights enshrined in legal frameworks. One of the main goals to be pursued is the guarantee of democratic management in rural schools.

When analyzing the historical trajectory of education for peasant communities, as presented in this text, we do not perceive reality as linear as proposed by social Darwinism. On the contrary, we understand that history is constructed through the actions of subjects within specific social contexts, shaped by spatial and temporal relations, and reflected in the formation of human consciousness. Through this lens, it becomes clear that the struggle of the working class within the context investigated has advanced and resulted in the acquisition of rights expressed in the normative frameworks presented here rights that represent achievements in educational policy. This dialectical movement constitutes a qualitative leap, made possible by the unity and confrontation of opposites, which can be seen in the ongoing struggle between agribusiness as the dominant class and the peasantry as the rural working class.

This contradiction demonstrates that all phenomena of reality are interrelated and do not manifest in absolute or immutable forms, as posited by metaphysical materialism. Instead, the material conditions portrayed in this text through the confrontations led by social movements have led to historical changes in education for rural peoples. These changes are evident in the pursuit of overcoming Rural Education through its antithesis: Field Education. Thus, when analyzed through the lens of dialectical materialism, this phenomenon reveals itself as a progressive process that generates transformations, enabling the passage from one stage of development to another culminating in the qualitative leap represented by the achievements of educational policies for rural areas.

That said, we understand that all phenomena of reality exist in a state of interdependence, ranging from the universal to the particular and the singular. Therefore, they are not immutable; on the contrary, they are in constant motion, continuously transforming reality. For this reason, education as a tool for constructing critical knowledge is essential; only through it can we overcome social contradictions within the rural context. It is thus urgent to transcend the social and productive relations of capitalism as a hegemonic project, represented in rural areas by agribusiness. In this regard, Field

Education, as a historical project of the working class, plays a vital role in fostering critical consciousness and advancing the emancipation of rural peoples.

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