

Experiências da AEPPA na formação do educador social: o lugar da Educação Popular Freiriana

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Resumo

Este artigo aborda a Associação de Educadores Populares de Porto Alegre (AEPPA) e suas lutas pela formação profissional na perspectiva da Educação Popular. Foca-se na luta do educador social pela regulamentação da profissão e formação específica. A metodologia adotada é bibliográfica documental, complementada pela experiência da autora, com base em Jara (2006) e Cendales e Torres (2006). Conclui-se que o primeiro curso superior que atendeu à demanda dos educadores sociais foi na Universidade Estadual do Rio Grande do Sul, seguido pela Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul (PUC/RS), ambos com currículos baseados na Educação Popular freiriana.

Palavras-chave: Educadores Sociais. Educadores Populares. Pedagogia da Educação Popular.

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AEPPA experiences in the training of social educators: the place of Freirean Popular Education

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Abstract

This article addresses the Association of Popular Educators of Porto Alegre (AEPPA) and their struggles for professional training from the perspective of Popular Education. It focuses on the social educator's fight for the regulation of the profession and specific training. The adopted methodology is bibliographic and documentary, complemented by the author's experience, based on Jara (2006) and Cendales and Torres (2006). It concludes that the first higher education course that met the demand of social educators was at the State University of Rio Grande do Sul, followed by the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (PUC/RS), both with curricula based on Freirean Popular Education.

Keywords: Social Educators. Popular Educators. Pedagogy of Popular Education.

Experiências AEPPA en la formación de educadores sociales: el lugar de la Educación Popular freiriana

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Resumen

Este artículo aborda la Asociación de Educadores Populares de Porto Alegre (AEPPA) y sus luchas por la formación profesional en la perspectiva de la Educación Popular. Se centra en la lucha del educador social por la regulación de la profesión y la formación específica. La metodología adoptada es bibliográfica documental, complementada por la experiencia de la autora, basada en Jara (2006) y Cendales y Torres (2006). Se concluye que el primer curso superior que atendió la demanda de los educadores sociales fue en la Universidade Estadual do Rio Grande do Sul (UERGS), seguido por la Pontificia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul (PUC/RS), ambos con currículos basados en la Educación Popular freiriana.

Palabras clave: Educadores Sociales. Educadores Populares. Pedagogía de la Educación Popular.

Introduction

The text has two objectives: the first is to introduce the Association of Popular Educators of Porto Alegre (AEPPA) and the relevance of the theme of social educators in the struggle for training within the perspective of Popular Education. The second objective is to discuss the regulation of the profession of social educators based on National Bill 2941/2019 and AEPPA's position on the matter.

Regarding training, AEPPA advocates that this is a necessary movement, one that should emerge from social educators professionals in Non-Institutionalized Non-Formal Education and from society itself, in order to understand the complexity and importance of this profession. Since the 1990s, AEPPA has observed that this occupation, which was only included in the Brazilian Classification of Occupations (CBO: 5153-05) in 2009, should require specific professional training, given the complexity of its activities and its connection with social policies. In recent years, the need for specific training to become a social educator has been evident in public service examination content or simplified selection processes, as well as in the practical development of work activities. However, this requirement is still absent from the Brazilian Classification of Occupations. Proper training should be a prerequisite for entering the profession of social educator, which involves working with intersectoral social policies and fostering citizenship education for children, adolescents, youth, adults, and the elderly. But what would constitute proper training?

The Field of Social Education and Popular Education as a Theoretical-Methodological Perspective

Brazilian Social Education, as a field of practice, is relatively recent compared to the history of Popular Education or other forms of education. Its social policies began to consolidate in the 1990s, following the enactment of the 1988 Federal Constitution. Social Education is recognized as a significant reality in the country, particularly through the work of social educators.

Before the 1988 Federal Constitution, it is important to highlight the National Movement of Street Boys and Girls, a pioneer in addressing educational work with people living on the streets.

Founded in 1982, this movement became a civil society organization in 1985 and remains active today, with a presence in several Brazilian capitals. While the movement does not provide direct services to street children, its goal is to mobilize various sectors of society that work with this population, including technicians, street educators, institutional directors, and others.

In recent years, efforts to formalize the field of Social Education have intensified, particularly in connection with the regulation of the social educator profession. The field of Social Education in Brazil has its roots in caring for and educating children and adolescents at risk or in social vulnerability, especially those living on the streets and other individuals using Social Assistance Services (BRASIL, 1993).

The first formal recognition of social educators as an occupation (CBO: 5153-05) dates back to 2009. However, some groups trace its origins to earlier years, particularly to work associated with the Child Pastoral initiatives, while others argue that such activities were more community- and humanitarian-based rather than professional. Since the formal recognition of the occupation, social educators have been assigned a specific role within social assistance policies, particularly within Social Assistance Services.

In 2009, social educators achieved socio-professional recognition when they were included in the CBO by the Ministry of Labor and Employment. This milestone initiated a process for the specific hiring of social educators, replacing other titles previously used in social assistance contexts. According to the CBO, the description for “5153-05 – Social Educator” involves ensuring care, advocacy, and protection for individuals in situations of personal and social risk by approaching them, raising awareness, identifying needs, and developing activities and interventions.

Additionally, the Ministry of Social Development and Hunger Alleviation (BRASIL, 2016) recommends that the minimum staff composition in Specialized Social Assistance Reference Centers (CREAS) include social educators alongside other professionals. In the Social Assistance Reference Centers (CRAS), for example, social educators are hired to support the Service for Strengthening Bonds (SCFV).

The National Plan for the Promotion, Protection, and Defense of the Right of Children and Adolescents to Family and Community Living (BRASIL, 2006) also emphasizes the importance of regulating the social educator occupation and establishing basic training parameters. The document underscores the necessity of engaging Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to ensure the quality and effectiveness of social assistance policies. Public service examinations have already started including positions for social educators, reflecting the growing recognition and formalization of this occupation.

The Importance of Higher Education for Social Educators and Popular Education

This section explores the importance of higher education for social educators through the lens of Popular Education. Since the 1990s, AEPPA has championed the professional training of social educators, a group historically known by various titles, including street educators, educators of SASE (Open Environment Socio-Educational Support Service), extracurricular educators, workshop facilitators, monitors, and more.

AEPPA, within the context of the Statute of the Child and Adolescent (BRASIL, 1990), the Organic Law of Social Assistance (BRASIL, 1993), and the Law of Guidelines and Bases for National Education (BRASIL, 1996), initiated a movement advocating for the training of these workers. At AEPPA, these educators were referred to as "popular educators" due to their work in community-based institutions and their connection to popular movements, as well as the influence of Paulo Freire, a key figure in the Municipal Government of Porto Alegre. The institutions where these educators worked, such as the then-called community daycare centers, the Socio-Educational Support Program², the Street Action Project, and the Literacy Movement, were all under agreements with the Municipal Government of Porto Alegre. Until 2009, the occupation of "social educator" had not yet been officially recognized. Consequently, in Porto Alegre, workers in community-recognized partner institutions were customarily referred to as popular educators, likely due to the close relationship between marginalized communities and the institutions they served.

It was in 2009 that the process of recognizing educators working within the context of social policies, particularly in social assistance, began. This recognition allowed their employment records to be officially registered under the title of social educators. In the same year, Federal Deputy Chico Lopes introduced Bill 534/2009 in the Chamber of Deputies to formally recognize the profession. Subsequently, a group of social educators approached Senator Telmário Motta to propose a new bill to regulate the profession, resulting in Bill 328/2015, which was later replaced by Bill 2941/2019 (PAULO, TREVISAN, 2022). In 2009, this debate reached AEPPA, and since then, the association has gradually begun to organize a plan for specific courses tailored to social educators, as documented in the historical records of Paulo and Sperotto (2018).

² It was a nomenclature of the Unified Social Assistance System (SUAS) that is still informally used in Porto Alegre, RS. With the introduction of new regulations, the National Typology of Social Assistance Services organized services according to the levels of complexity within SUAS: Basic Social Protection and Special Social Protection of Medium and High Complexity. The Service for Strengthening Bonds (SCFV) is part of Basic Social Protection services.

Paulo (2019) contextualizes the legislative proposals aimed at regulating the occupational activity of social educators in Brazil and highlights AEPPA's advocacy in this context, as presented in Table I:

Table 1 - Regulation of the Social Educator Profession and AEPPA's Position

CONTEXT OF ACTION OF THE SOCIAL EDUCATOR	Defense of the Role of Non-School Spaces in Dialogue with Other Areas of Knowledge.	Area: Multidisciplinary Field: Non-Institutionalized Non-School Work: Intersectoral and Interdisciplinary
REGULATION PROPOSAL	Requirement for Specific Training At the technologist higher education level, with a 10-year adaptation period to the new law. AEPPA suggests Popular Education as the theoretical foundation for the courses.	
TRAINING	Social Pedagogy from the Perspective of Popular Education Social pedagogy is understood as the science of education, not limited to teaching.	Course Coordinated by Two Areas Education and Social Work, in dialogue with other social policies.

Source: Paulo (2019) and Paulo and Trevisan (2022).

AEPPA's initial efforts for the training of educators in the 1990s were sparked by the enactment of the Statute of the Child and Adolescent (1990) and the Law of Guidelines and Bases for National Education (1996). AEPPA's proposal included middle-level courses and pedagogy programs grounded in the principles of Popular Education, with curricula designed to align with the work contexts of educators, both in school and non-school settings (PAULO, 2013). During this historical moment, AEPPA emerged as a new political actor in Porto Alegre, advocating for the appreciation, recognition, and training of popular educators.

The history of struggles for the training, appreciation, and professional recognition of social educators can be explored in the works of Paulo (2010, 2013, 2019, 2021), Ferreira (2010), Paulo, Conte, and Bierhals (2023), Fuhrmann and Paulo (2014), Paulo and Sperotto (2018), Silva and Paulo (2021), and Paulo and Trevisan (2022). These studies provide valuable insights, as outlined in the table below:

Table 2. AEPPA in Bibliographic Research: Popular Education, Non-School Education, and Social Educators

Aspect	Description
Context of Action of the Social Educator	Defense of the Role of Non-School Spaces in Dialogue with Other Areas of Knowledge Area: Multidisciplinary ;Field: Institutionalized Non-School Education ;Work: Intersectoral and Interdisciplinary
Regulation Proposal	Requirement for Specific Training. At the technological higher education level, with a 10-year adaptation period to comply with the new law. AEPPA suggests Popular Education as the theoretical foundation for these courses
Training	Social Pedagogy from the Perspective of Popular Education Understanding pedagogy as the science of education, not limited to teaching. The course is coordinated by two areas: Education and Social Work, in dialogue with other social policies.
Importance of AEPPA	Social Movements Organized by Educators, Educators involved in community daycare centers, SASE programs, MOVA projects, and training initiatives with a Popular Education focus, in line with the LDBEN of 1996 (FERREIRA, 2010).
Critical Consciousness	Union and Organization for Training Projects. Contributions to training projects encompassing educators in daycare centers, SASE programs, MOVAs, and voluntary social work initiatives linked to Popular Education (PAULO, 2013).
Social Pedagogy in Brazil	Challenges of Representing a Critical and Counter-Hegemonic Perspective Without adhering to preconceived models (PAULO; CONTE; BIERHALS, 2013).
History and Integration	Integration of Social Assistance and Pedagogy. Resulting in SASE and the Service for Strengthening Bonds, with the participation of popular classes and class movements like AEPPA (FUHRMANN e PAULO, 2014).
Social Educators Training Course	The first course with a Freirean perspective and popular education started in 2009 by AEPPA and was run by the Brava Gente Social Institute from 2010 onwards (PAULO; SPEROTTO, 2018).
Popular Education and Society	Educação Popular na AEPPA ligada a projetos de sociedade não capitalista e debatida em contextos de educação não escolar e formação de educadores sociais (PAULO, 2019).
Study and Research Group	Activities and Training Demands Monitored in AEPPA locations and social educator training courses, focusing on education and social movement-related themes (PAULO; SILVA, 2021).
Extension Courses	Courses Organized by AEPPA In partnership with public institutions and popular organizations (PAULO, 2021).
Demand for University-Level Training	AEPPA's Struggle for University-Level Training. Dialogue with UFRGS for the creation of a Social Pedagogy course with an emphasis on Popular Education (PAULO, 2013; PAULO, TREVISAN, 2022).
Fonte: Pesquisa bibliográfica. FERREIRA, 2010; PAULO, 2013; PAULO; CONTE; BIERHALS, 2013; FUHRMANN e PAULO, 2014; PAULO; SPEROTTO, 2018; PAULO, 2019; PAULO; SILVA, 2021; PAULO, 2021; PAULO, TREVISAN, 2022.	

The struggle for the training, appreciation, and recognition of social educators within the context of Popular Education and Institutionalized Non-School Education, or Social Education, has been marked by resistance and collective organization. Studies (Table II) highlight that AEPPA promotes training projects grounded in Freirean pedagogy and Popular Education, fostering critical awareness among educators and strengthening their roles in formal and non-school educational spaces linked to social policies. AEPPA's demands focus on professional qualification tied to an intersectoral conception of Popular Education.

Since 2010, the provision of extension courses and collaboration with public institutions and popular organizations have intensified, solidifying academic training as essential for the recognition of these professionals (Paulo and Sperotto, 2018). The persistence of social movements in institutionalizing this training, such as the dialogue with UFRGS for the creation of a Social Pedagogy course with an emphasis on Popular Education, demonstrates their continuous efforts to legitimize and professionalize social educators, integrating their practices into the broader struggle for a more just and equitable society (Paulo, 2013; Paulo, Trevisan, 2022).

According to available records, the initial movements were focused on training at the secondary education level, as noted by Ferreira (2010, p.37):

After the first milestone, between 2001 and 2005, three hundred and twenty educators working in social and assistance programs, daycare centers, Socio-Educational Support Services (SASEs), the Youth and Adult Literacy Movement (MOVA), and as workshop instructors in Capoeira, Music, and Arts completed their training at the technical level/Normal Course. (*emphasis added*).

At the State University of Rio Grande do Sul (UERGS), AEPPA secured the creation of a Pedagogy program with a curriculum grounded in Popular Education. Luís Pedro Fraga, in an interview with Paulo (2013), explains that:

AEPPA plays a significant role in the training of in-service popular educators. Out of 150 educators, 117 graduated, while those who did not complete the program faced health issues or other problems. This course was designed for popular educators from community institutions, with classes held in the mornings and afternoons over a span of four and a half years. It is worth noting that UERGS was established during Olívio Dutra's administration. (*emphasis added*).

For the purposes of documentation and using the Systematization of Experiences framework proposed by Oscar Jara (2006) and Cendales and Torres (2006) as a guide, we share not only our personal records but also documents and publications resulting from research on our experiences, actions, and commitments to Popular Education. According to Jara (2006), the Systematization of Experiences allows for the creation of new knowledge through the reconstruction of the experiences we wish to recover, transforming the process into a formative space (CENDALES; TORRES, 2006). In this context, we present some of AEPPA's records on the training of professionals working in both school and non-school settings. The figures below, published in newspapers, illustrate AEPPA's struggle for training at both secondary and higher education levels, promoting Popular Education as praxis.

AEPPA experiences in the training of social educators: the place of Freirean Popular Education
Figure 1 - Training on AEPPA's Agenda of Struggles, Correio do Povo Newspaper.

ENSINO SEGUNDA-FEIRA, 2 de janeiro de 2006 — 3

Educador popular busca formação

Estudos no Ensino Médio/Magistério e na universidade qualificam profissionais de Porto Alegre

Maria José Vasconcelos

Com o Ensino formal e a rede de assistência em descompasso com o crescimento urbano e social, instituições comunitárias têm buscado alternativas para a superação de obstáculos diários. Em Porto Alegre, nos últimos anos, comunidades organizadas abriram espaço à atuação dos educadores populares, que hoje já superam o mero atendimento a uma necessidade comunitária específica, partindo para a conquista por capacitação profissional. Ensino Médio com formação em Magistério e estudos em nível Superior público e privado são vitórias que fecham o ano contabilizando sucesso e projetando avanços (tabela).

A presidente da Associação dos Educadores Populares de Porto Alegre (Aeppa), Tamar Gomes de Oliveira, lembra que a entidade, que completou 10 anos congregando cerca de 300 sócios, teve sua criação ligada às discussões nacionais da Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação (LDB/96), que, entre outras questões, deliberou sobre a importância da formação docente. Com ação voltada a garantir condição de trabalho e capacitação, especialmente a educadores de creches, a Aeppa tem obtido êxito também no apoio a trabalhadores de Educação de Jovens e Adultos (Mova e Seja), de reforço escolar, atendimento socioeducativo, oficinas ligados à rede de assistência e Educação comunitária. Convênios com a prefeitura da Capital permitiram o funcionamento e a ampliação de diversas entidades em comunidades.

Em 2001, após fases de organização, debates e tratativas, parceria com o poder público viabilizou o ingresso da 1ª turma de educadores populares no curso de Ensino Médio/Magistério da Escola Municipal Emílio Meyer. No ano seguinte, a oferta de vagas para a formação de professores foi estendida na Escola Municipal Liberato Salzano. Em 2004, Tamar integrou a primeira turma de educadores que se formaram no Magistério. Entre estudantes e formados nessa área, nas duas escolas, totalizam cerca de 600 educadores. No Ensino Superior, as vagas iniciais foram conquistadas em 2002, na Uergs. As perspectivas acadêmicas, pelos convênios já firmados e em negociação, giram em torno de 300 vagas.

No final de dezembro último, a Uergs renovou o convênio, assegurando os estudos em andamento, mas Tamar revela que não foram abertas mais turmas na Universidade Estadual. Com o IPA, as bolsas em filantropia deste ano devem ser ampliadas em 2006, com oportunidade de estudos em diversos cursos, não só de licenciatura. Na PUC, está em fase de negociação e ajuste a criação do curso de Pedagogia/Educação Infantil e em Anos Iniciais com referencial em Educação Popular. E o acerto mais recente foi estabelecido com o Instituto Superior de Educação do Sévigné (Ises), aberto em 2005, mas já oferecendo uma de suas 80 vagas para educador popular.

Ano	Instituição de Ensino	Vagas
2001	Escola Munic. Emílio Meyer	90 (anual)
2002	Escola Munic. Liberato Salzano	45 (anual)
2002	Uergs	150 (p/ 4 anos)
2005/2006	IPA	18 (2ª sem. 2005) 23 (1ª sem. 2006)
2006	Ises (Sévigné)	1 (1ª sem. 2006)
2006	*PUCRS	120 (anual)

* Convênio em estudo para possível oferta de vagas em 2006

Source: Acervo da autora.

Figure 2 - Course Achieved by AEPPA.

Universidade gaúcha terá curso de pedagogia com ênfase em educação popular

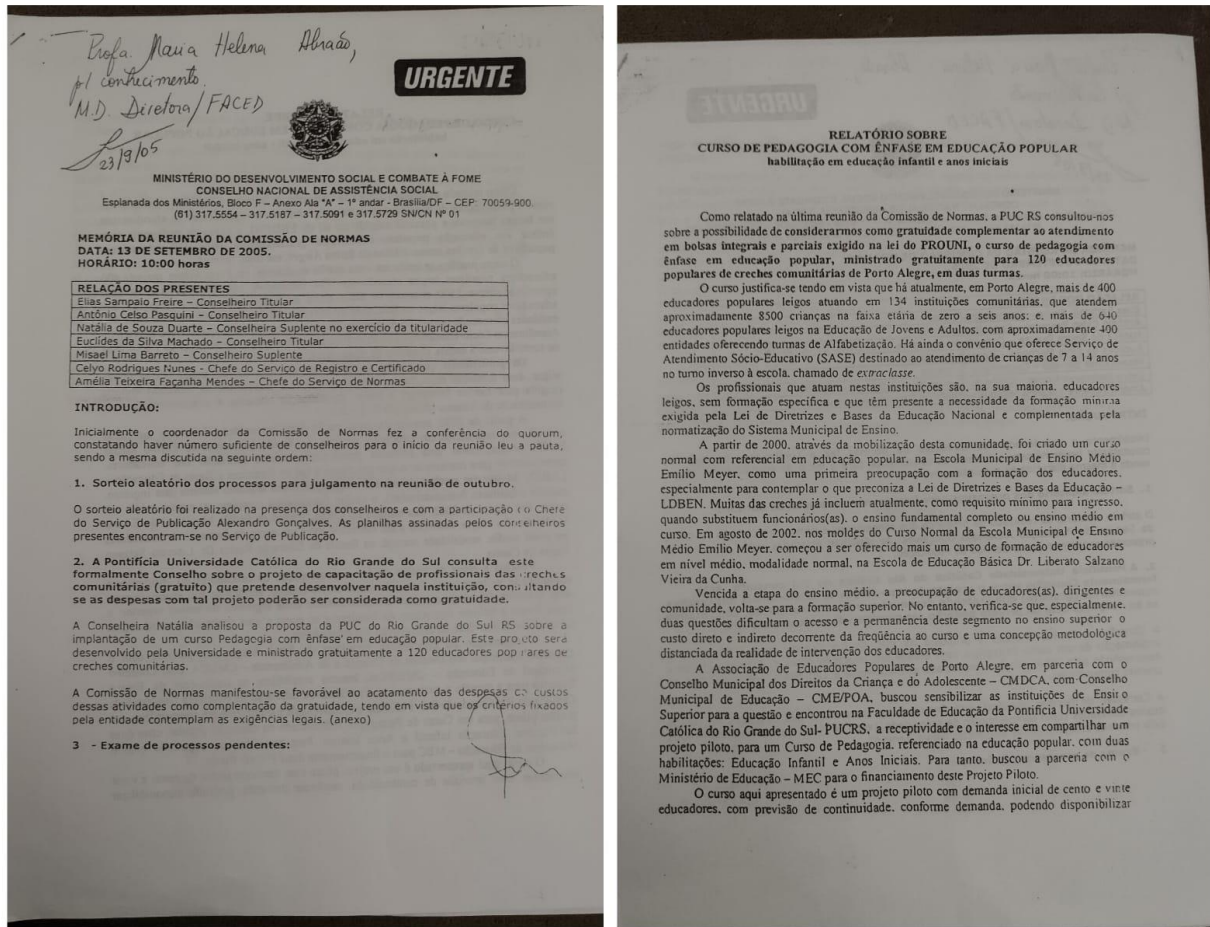
Brasília - O convênio para criação de um curso superior de pedagogia com ênfase em educação popular na Pontifícia Universidade do Rio Grande do Sul (Puc/RS) será assinado nesta segunda-feira (23) em Porto Alegre (RS). Com currículo diferenciado, o curso atenderá às necessidades dos movimentos sociais e oferecerá 120 bolsas para educadores populares.

A assinatura do convênio entre o Ministério da Educação, a Puc/RS e a Associação de Educadores Populares de Porto Alegre será às 9 horas, na sede da Puc no Bairro Paternon. Participará da solenidade o secretário executivo do MEC, Jairo Jorge da Silva.

Fonte: <http://gestaouniversitaria.com.br/artigos/universidade-gaucha-tera-curso-de-pedagogia-com-enfase-em-educacao-popular>

In newspapers, AEPPA stands out for its role in the training of popular educators, establishing partnerships with universities (Figure I), such as its collaboration with the Ministry of Education and PUC-RS (Figure II), to create a higher education Pedagogy program with an emphasis on Popular Education.

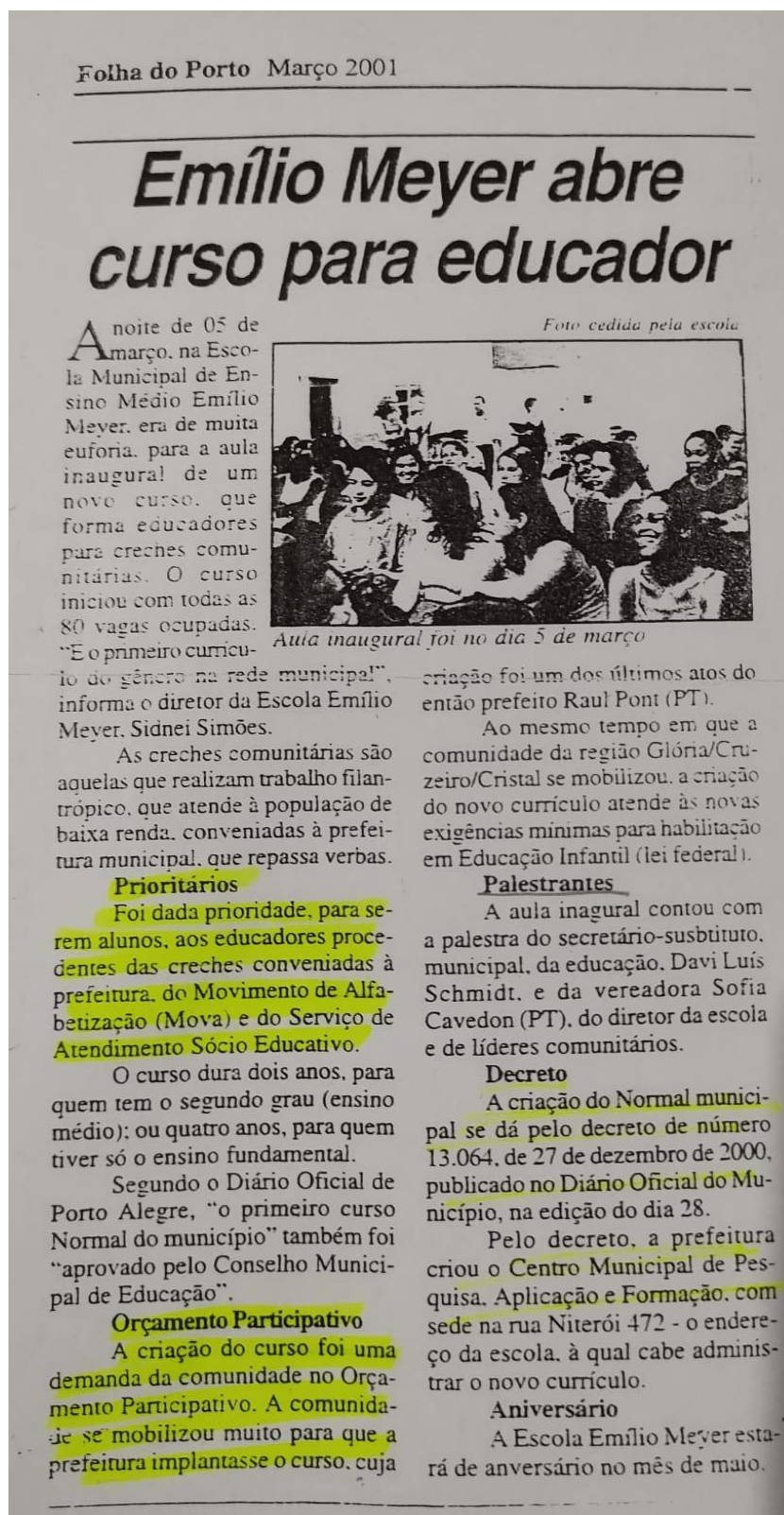
Figure 3 - AEPPA and PUCRS Document:, Pedagogy Program with an Emphasis on Popular Education.



Source: Author's Collection.

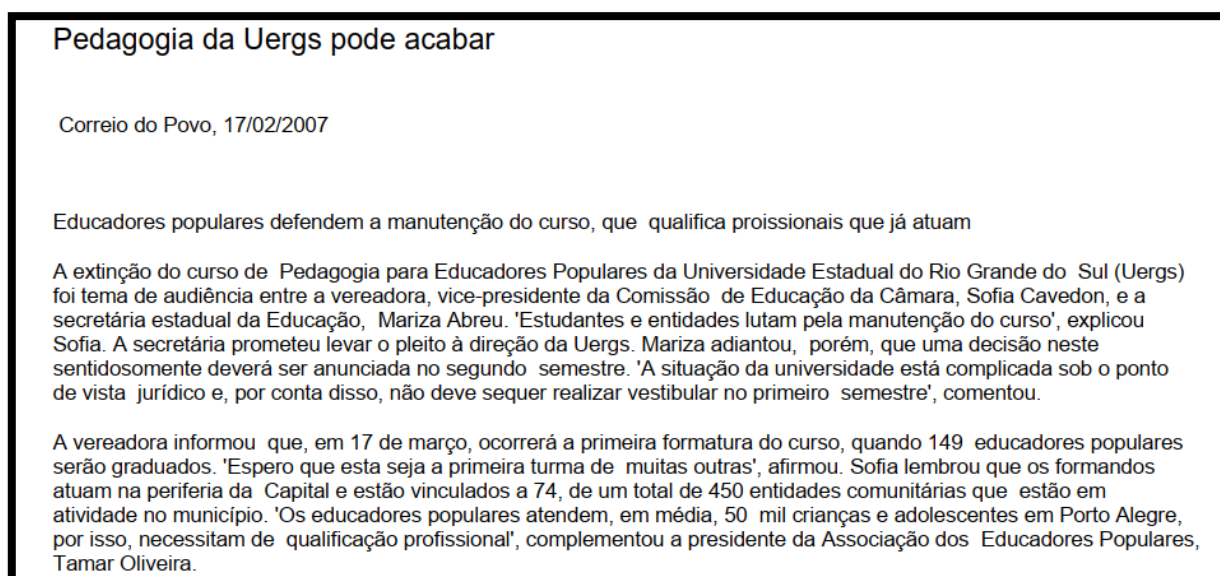
The image highlights the partnership between the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (PUC-RS) and the Association of Popular Educators of Porto Alegre (AEPPA). Together, they launched the Pedagogy program with an emphasis on Popular Education, focusing on training educators for early childhood education and the early years of elementary school. This course is offered free of charge to 120 popular educators, aiming to meet the needs of approximately 400 educators already working in 134 community institutions in Porto Alegre. The initiative sought to address the specific training requirements outlined by the Law of Guidelines and Bases for National Education (LDBEN) and was supported by organizations such as the Municipal Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents (CMDCA) and the Municipal Council of Education of Porto Alegre (CME/POA). The course targeted popular educators working with children and adolescents in various communities and institutions, including community early childhood education schools, social assistance programs, and youth and adult literacy programs.

AEPPA experiences in the training of social educators: the place of Freirean Popular Education
Figure 4. Struggle for Initial Training, Porto Alegre City Hall Newspaper.



Source: Author's Collection.

Figure 5. Struggle for the Continuity of UERGS, Correio do Povo Newspaper.



Source: Author's Collection.

The images above demonstrate the presence of social educators in AEPPA's efforts to advocate for training. Returning to the topic of regulating the profession of social educators, Senator Telmário Motta's proposal suggests a higher education degree in the field of education as the minimum educational requirement for practicing the profession. AEPPA agrees that a specific course is necessary but emphasizes that it must be intersectoral and should be offered by public institutions of higher education. AEPPA believes that the profession of social educator requires a comprehensive training process, encompassing social policies, sociology and political philosophy, anthropology, social psychology, Popular Education methodologies, recognition of the field of Institutionalized Non-School Education, and the construction of a professional identity, among other topics.

In Brazil, professions are legitimized by the groups that practice them, and this is evident in the case of social educators, who have been strongly mobilizing since 2016. This mobilization has included the formation of forums, collectives, and WhatsApp groups to discuss the regulation of the profession. In recent years, in addition to offering courses for social educators within the perspective of Popular Education, AEPPA has organized thematic meetings on this subject.

Popular Education and Social Educators

For 14 years, AEPPA, together with the Brava Gente Social Institute, other public institutions, and popular movements, has been offering free or extension courses for social educators within the perspective of Popular Education. In all these courses, Paulo Freire is a central author of study. This brief introduction invites reflection on the understanding of Popular Education. According to Torres (2008), Streck (2010, 2014), and Mejía (2013), Popular Education represents the construction of a liberatory Latin American pedagogical thought. At AEPPA, Popular Education is also grounded in the ideas of Paulo Freire and Carlos Rodrigues Brandão. That is, Popular Education is seen as “a movement of political work with the popular classes through education” (BRANDÃO, 2006, p. 75). Equally important is the relationship between Popular Education and the scientific competence of educators (FREIRE, 1993). Thus, Popular Education, as practiced by AEPPA, seeks not only pedagogical training but also political training through critical pedagogy.

In the training courses organized by AEPPA, the content covered includes the regulation of the social educator profession, Paulo Freire's pedagogy, the history of Popular Education, social policies, popular movements, the System for the Guarantee of Rights, Institutionalized Non-School Education, and the political-pedagogical role of social educators. Particularly regarding Paulo Freire, we draw upon several of his works, especially *“Educadores de Rua: uma abordagem crítica”* (FREIRE, 1989). In this book, Freire proposes a pedagogy rooted in the principles of Popular Education: welcoming, participation, inclusion, dialogue of knowledge, critical training, contextualization, transformative knowledge, and the pursuit of overcoming social inequalities. Other observations in this work highlight Freire's significant contributions to the development of higher education training programs for social educators. Interestingly, Paulo Freire does not use the terms “social educator” or “social education”; he uses the word “education,” without qualifiers, in this book.

Finally, at AEPPA, we do not use the term “social education” as a concept of education, as we align with Freirean Popular Education. However, regarding the scope of action of the social educator, we believe that their space is the institutionalized non-school setting, which, in the case of social educators, can be referred to as social education. This space involves formal structures and is tied to public policy, with established schedules, guiding documents, and educational activities outlined in guiding notebooks, such as in the Service for Strengthening Bonds (SCFV).

Many Social Educators (professionals in Non-School Education, particularly within the scope of social assistance policy) also consider themselves popular educators. By “popular educator,”

we mean a political and pedagogical commitment to activism in and for Popular Education. The profession of popular educator does not exist. Instead, we have teachers, social educators, researchers, community health agents, social workers, and community leaders who identify themselves as popular educators. A social educator (as a profession) can consider themselves a popular educator through their activism in Popular Education. This does not imply being a volunteer or engaging in charitable actions; it means having a political and pedagogical commitment to and through the conception of Popular Education.

By Freirean Popular Education, we understand it as a counter-hegemonic pedagogical and political movement, born from Paulo Freire's liberatory pedagogy. The popular educator is an activist for Popular Education, which, since the 1960s, has not only fought for a just world for all but has also defended social public policy, social justice, democracy, and participation. Activism in Popular Education requires political engagement and awareness of the societal project one supports. This is the group that constitutes AEPPA, which has existed for over 30 years. They are popular educators with diverse professional occupations, working in both school education contexts and Non-School Education settings

Table of Recovery of AEPPA's Experiences

The history of AEPPA is marked by a remarkable trajectory of struggles and achievements over the years, representing a significant movement in the training, appreciation, and recognition of social educators. Initially conceived as a Popular Education commission in Microregion 5 in 1991, AEPPA gained momentum with the implementation of the Statute of the Child and Adolescent and the growing need for training educators in community daycare centers and extracurricular programs. Since then, the association has expanded and transformed into a movement for Popular Education, contributing to the professional development of individuals across various social fields.

Over the years, AEPPA has established partnerships and agreements with higher education institutions (Figure I), such as the State University of Rio Grande do Sul (UERGS), the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS), the Federal Institute of Rio Grande do Sul (IFRS), among others. These collaborations aimed to offer courses and training programs from the perspective of Popular Education to meet the demands of popular educators from various educational contexts, including social educators.

AEPPA experiences in the training of social educators: the place of Freirean Popular Education

The AEPPA Popular Education Movement has also stood out in its collective struggle for the regulation of the social educator profession and its advocacy for undergraduate and specialization programs in this field. The year 2023 marks a significant milestone in AEPPA's journey with the inclusion of the Social Education undergraduate program from the Popular Education perspective in the Institutional Development Plan (PDI) of IFRS Campus Alvorada. AEPPA initiated the "Popular Education: Essential Knowledge for the Educational Practices of Social Educators" seminar, held in 2023 in collaboration with the Union of Municipal Public Servants of Alvorada (SIMA) and promoted by IFRS Campus Alvorada. According to Illa (2023), the seminar's objective was to map and recognize the essential knowledge for social educators' practices, aiming to collaboratively construct the curriculum matrix for the first free undergraduate program for social educators. The event presented the program's goals and expected outcomes, followed by a Dialogical Circle involving representatives from various institutions. Participants, divided into groups, discussed and proposed changes to the curriculum matrix, considering theoretical, practical, and ethical dimensions. They shared their conclusions and suggestions for curricular components, which were systematized to support the development of the program's pedagogical project. The event concluded with a Ciranda Circle and the reading and approval of the meeting minutes by participants. This success reflects the persistent efforts to value and recognize social educators, driven by the mobilization of AEPPA and SIMA. Their advocacy included public hearings, meetings with parliamentarians, and presenting demands to the Ministry of Education (MEC). To document these struggles for the training of Social Educators through AEPPA, the following table provides a recovery of memories. This process can be understood through key milestones and significant achievements over the decades.

Table 3 - A BRIEF RECOVERY OF THE LIVED PROCESS– AEPPA

Period and Demands	Training, Appreciation, and Recognition of Social Educators
Initial Training and Expansion (1991-1995)	AEPPA began informally as a Popular Education commission in Microregion 5, inspired by the Statute of the Child and Adolescent
1996 to 1998 – AEPPA as a Popular Education Movement	In 1996, AEPPA recognized itself as a Popular Education movement in Porto Alegre. Following the Law of Guidelines and Bases for National Education (LDBEN/96) , it brought together educators to advocate for teacher training, particularly for workers in community daycare centers. Subsequently, the struggle for training expanded beyond daycare educators to include extracurricular educators, youth and adult literacy instructors, and workshop facilitators. This period also marked the first engagements with the concept of Popular Education.
1998-2000: Popular Education as the Basis for Training	The organization and implementation of the Normal Course/Teaching Program based on Popular Education was approved by the Municipal Council of Education and the Municipal Secretariat of Education of Porto Alegre (SMED). This course was designed for educators working in social programs, daycare centers, and socio-educational services. During this period, the Popular Education Movement founded the Association of Popular Educators of Porto Alegre (AEPPA).
2002: Popular Educators Reach the University	The Pedagogy in Popular Education program was launched at the State University of Rio Grande do Sul (UERGS), enrolling 150 educators.
2005-2006: Dialogue and Partnerships Between the Popular Education Movement and Universities	Partnerships with the Methodist University Center (IPA) and the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS) were established to offer undergraduate scholarships and curricular components in Popular Education.
2007-2008: From Undergraduate to Specialization in Popular Education	Dialogues with various institutions were conducted to strengthen the training and recognition of social educators, resulting in agreements and specialization courses. A collective effort led to the creation of the Postgraduate Program in Popular Education and Management in Social Movements. An agreement was signed between AEPPA, the Brava Gente Social Development Institute, and ATEMPA (Association of Education Workers of Porto Alegre), enabling 40 educators to begin their training.
2011-2023: Recent Advances and Strategic Partnerships	AEPPA has actively participated in working groups (GTs) at UERGS and other municipal, state, and national forums, promoting the need for courses focused on Popular Education. Extension courses have been offered in partnership with institutions such as CEPOPEs, IFRS Alvorada, CEAA, and Brava Gente, expanding training opportunities for social educators. Proposals for undergraduate and specialization programs were submitted to IFRS Alvorada, consolidating partnerships and organizing seminars for the collective construction of curricula for these programs. AEPPA also presented national demands to the Ministry of Education (MEC) and participated in public hearings to expand the training of social educators. The association has been collaborating with IFRS Alvorada to develop specialization and undergraduate courses from the perspective of Popular Education
2010-2023: Academic Works on AEPPA	AEPPA has been the subject of various academic works over the years, reflecting its significance in the field of Popular Education. In 2011, Lucio Jose Dutra Lord defended his thesis at USP titled <i>“Political Education and the Periphery: A Study on the Popular Educators Movement in Porto Alegre”</i> , reinforcing AEPPA’s position. Tamar Ferreira, Fernanda Paulo, and Maria Elisabete Machado, all scholarship recipients in the undergraduate program through the Popular Education Movement, presented their graduation theses in 2010, addressing the context of social educators. In 2013, Fernanda dos Santos Paulo presented a dissertation through participatory research titled <i>“The Training of Popular Educators from Praxis: A Case Study of AEPPA”</i> , offering a comprehensive analysis of the association's educational practices. There are dozens of articles produced on AEPPA.
2019-2023: AEPPA Expands to National and International Contexts.	In 2019, AEPPA offered a remote extension course titled "Social Educators in the Perspective of Popular Education", responding to a national demand. Registrations were requested by several municipal governments, resulting in 1,000 registrations and 600 completions. In 2020, in partnership with IFRS Canoas, two remote extension courses on the same theme were offered, meeting the demand from the municipality of São Miguel do Tapuio-PI. Annually, AEPPA conducts several remote courses, serving all states in

AEPPA experiences in the training of social educators: the place of Freirean Popular Education

	Brazil and some countries in Latin America, including Colombia, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, and Ecuador,
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Fonte: Paulo (2010, 2013), Ferreira (2010) and Paulo; Trevisan (2022).

As we can see in the table above, AEPPA's trajectory is a narrative of struggles, achievements, and ongoing challenges, highlighting the importance of social education as a field of practice for social educators, within the typology of Institutionalized Non-School Education, and Popular Education as the theoretical-practical foundation for academic-professional training courses. Since its inception in 1991, the AEPPA movement has evolved from a Popular Education commission in a microregion to a broader Popular Education movement. This evolution is marked by a strong commitment to the training and appreciation of educators from marginalized areas, including social educators.

AEPPA has played a decisive role in the fight for specific training for social educators, and the year 2023 represents a significant milestone in this history, as it succeeded in securing the inclusion of the undergraduate course in Social Education from the perspective of Popular Education in the Institutional Development Plan of IFRS Campus Alvorada. This advancement is the result of tireless efforts and mobilization by the association, including public hearings, dialogues with politicians, and the presentation of demands to the Ministry of Education (MEC). This success not only highlights AEPPA's resilience and dedication in seeking institutional partnerships, such as with SIMA, but also underscores the national demand for the recognition of social educators as professionals within social policies.

The trajectory of the AEPPA Popular Education Movement reveals a robust and continuous process of training, appreciation, and recognition of educators from peripheral areas, marked by a series of initiatives and strategic partnerships. This movement is driven by collective and networked work. All of AEPPA's achievements are the result of mobilization efforts involving various stakeholders and partner institutions, sustaining a Pedagogy of Struggle alongside a pedagogy of collectivity and solidarity.

Final considerations

It is important to highlight what Souza, Paiva Natali, Müller, and Bauli (2014) point out regarding the theoretical framework for the work of social educators in Brazil, stating that the foundations of **Popular Education** constitute its primary reference. We agree with and defend the

importance of the legacy of Popular Education in the construction of professional training courses, at the higher education level, for social educators.

The methodology adopted, which was bibliographic and documentary in nature, complemented by the author's experience, proved effective for systematizing the experiences within AEPPA. Using the works of Jara (2006) and Cendales and Torres (2006) as a basis, it was possible to generate new knowledge through the reconstruction of lived experiences. The analysis of relevant documents and literature, along with the author's personal records and observations, provided an in-depth reflection on AEPPA's journey and the struggles for the regulation and specific training of social educators within the framework of Popular Education. This methodological process not only reinforced the importance of Freirean Popular Education, but also highlighted the ongoing need for the training and appreciation of social educators.

The recovery of documents, literature review, and collective memory recovery contributed to the affirmation that the first undergraduate course to meet the needs of social educators was at the **State University of Rio Grande do Sul (UERGS)**, followed by the **Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (PUC/RS)**. In both cases, the demand was for training educators from daycare centers, Youth and Adult Education (MOVA and SEJA) educators, extracurricular educators, street educators, socio-educational service providers, and workshop instructors connected to social assistance networks and community education.

In 2017, a group of social educators, affiliated with the **Forum of Social Educators of Paraná (FESP-PR)**, achieved the creation of the first undergraduate course specifically for social educators in Brazil: the **Technologist in Social Education** program at **Uninter**³. However, as of now, there are no specific undergraduate courses offered at public institutions. Despite this, AEPPA has consistently advocated for the creation of such programs in universities (FERREIRA, 2010; PAULO, 2013) and Federal Institutes (FERREIRA, 2010, PAULO, 2013) e **Institutos Federais** (PAULO; TREVISAN, 2022).

Since the beginning of 2022, AEPPA has maintained ongoing dialogue with the Federal Institute of Rio Grande do Sul, Canoas campus, regarding the undergraduate program in Social Education, as listed in the catalog of technologist courses. Several meetings have been held, resulting in the development of a course project by a working group composed of experienced educators in Non-School Education, Popular Education, and social policies—all with practical experience as social educators or in the training of these professionals. Additionally, AEPPA has a Study and

³ Saber mais ver matéria no site da Uninter: <https://www.uninter.com/noticias/brasil-agora-tem-curso-superior-de-educador-social>

AEPPA experiences in the training of social educators: the place of Freirean Popular Education Research Group called "Paulo Freire and Popular Education," which integrates the political training core and has been dedicated to the development of courses.

The need for the free offering of specific courses to ensure the requirement for higher education in the social educator profession is reaffirmed, thereby consolidating education as a right accessible to all. In 2023, the first public and free course for social educators was established at the Federal Institute of Rio Grande do Sul in Alvorada. The proposal aims to create a curriculum based on intersectoral Popular Education, inspired by the pedagogy of alternation, structured in three phases: time in the higher education institution, time in the community, and time at work.

The historical context of AEPPA, combined with advancements in social legislation and the implementation of specific courses, highlights the importance of intersectoral Popular Education in the training of social educators. It also underscores the urgency of continuous and collective work, mediated by the pedagogies of struggle, collectivity, solidarity, and reinvention. The AEPPA Popular Education Movement has been successful in influencing academic curricula for educator training based on Popular Education. This process promotes the recognition and appreciation of diverse and plural knowledge, in addition to emphasizing the importance of professional training for social educators. This approach strengthens the practice of Freirean Popular Education as an essential theoretical and methodological foundation for the training of professionals working in peripheral social contexts.

Finally, AEPPA believes that the collective construction (MEJIA, 2013) of courses for the training of educators is a fruitful dialogue between universities and popular movements. In Paulo Freire's pedagogy, this represents a break with traditional ways of building knowledge. Certainly, social educators participating in AEPPA's activities already understand that the perspective of Freirean Popular Education requires participation, commitment, choices, and boldness. Writing this article required assuming the systematization of experiences as part of documenting the journey of a collective that is still invisible in the history of education. Sharing collective experiences helps bring visibility to movements like AEPPA. Good training is that which is built collectively, based on the concrete reality of social educators' work. It is realized through committed and ethical dialogue, mediated by the pedagogical praxis of Freirean Popular Education.

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