

EDUCATIONAL INDICATORS AND PUBLIC POLICIES: RESULTS OF RESEARCH ON BASIC EDUCATION IN MUNICIPALITIES WITH UP TO 10 THOUSAND INHABITANTS IN THE STATE OF SANTA CATARINA¹



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ABSTRACT

This article presents the results of a research on basic education carried out in Santa Catarina (Brazil). The object of the research was delimited to the public policies implemented to meet the National Education Plan and the use of educational indicators as guiding instruments to improve the State's response to the demands of basic education with regard to the goals of the PNE and the SDGs, especially SDG 4 – Quality education. The general objective was to demonstrate the importance of using educational indicators in the implementation of public policies for basic education. The survey used municipalities with less than 10 thousand inhabitants (192 municipalities in Santa Catarina out of a total of 295). It was motivated by the need to improve public policies in basic education in smaller municipalities. Research question/problem: Can public policies for basic education be implemented in the same way in all municipalities of Santa Catarina? The hypothesis raised was that it is not possible to implement the same public policies for basic education in all municipalities in a common way because each municipality has its peculiarities and, therefore, it is necessary to have educational indicators that detail and reflect the demands of students in each municipality. The problems must be solved at the municipal level because it is not possible to treat social problems - education in particular - at the national level. The general conditions, provided for in article 206 of the Federal Constitution, are respected, however, each municipality has peculiarities. The importance of constant analysis of educational indicators and the identification of demands and challenges for the definition of strategies for improving education, reducing inequalities, complying with the National Education Plan and achieving the SDGs in municipalities in the State of Santa Catarina with less than 10 thousand inhabitants is highlighted. The methodology used in the research was based on the qualitative and quantitative approach and the investigation method used was inductive. The research techniques adopted were documentary analysis, doctrinal analysis, official public data and field research.

Keywords: Right to Education. Public Policies. Educational Indicators.

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INTRODUCTION

The right to education is one of the pillars for the promotion of human dignity, as it enables the integral development of the individual, guaranteeing opportunities for personal, professional and social growth.

This right, guaranteed in several national and international normative instruments, such as the Federal Constitution of Brazil and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is essential for the construction of a more just and egalitarian society.

Education, by empowering the individual, allows him to fully exercise his citizenship, promoting autonomy and equal opportunities, essential elements for the realization of human dignity. In this way, the denial or precariousness of access to education represents a direct violation of the dignity of the person, perpetuating cycles of exclusion and social inequality.

The right to education includes not only access to school, but also the quality of education offered and equity in treatment and opportunities for all students.

In this sense, public policies for education are fundamental elements to guarantee this right and promote social inclusion, gender equality, diversity, respect for human rights, and the formation of critical and participatory citizens.

Brazil, although it has important educational policies, still needs to overcome many challenges with regard to the implementation of policies that effectively guarantee the access of boys and girls to quality, equitable and equal education.

Social inequality with a significant impact on education, the inclusion of new technologies effectively in the school curriculum, the low quality of teaching evidenced by several studies and indicators, such as the low performance of students in national and international assessments, such as the Basic Education Development Index - IDEB and the Program for International Student Assessment - PISA, and also, the lack of resources that affects the quality of education and the ability of schools to invest in infrastructure, equipment and teaching materials are just some of the various challenges imposed on Brazil in guaranteeing the right to education.

In this sense, when planning and implementing public education policies, the actors involved necessarily need to identify social demands and educational needs of different regions and population groups, so that public education policy can meet the specific needs of this public.

In this area, education indicators are positioned as quantitative or qualitative measures that can be defined as a set of specific guidelines with the objective of evaluating and monitoring different aspects of the educational system. They are based on data collected mainly through surveys, censuses, and academic evaluations.

These indicators can cover the context of various areas such as access to education, the quality of teaching, student performance, teacher training and qualification, school infrastructure, school dropout rates, among other relevant aspects (INEP, 2023).

Education indicators are essential elements for the formulation of educational policies, decision-making, and investments in education, in addition to being important tools for monitoring progress in relation to educational goals and objectives established both in the Brazilian legal system and in international agreements and treaties, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. and the Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 4 – Quality education, and SDG 10 – Reduction of inequalities. (IPEA, 2019)

In this context, the research "Social indicators as instruments for the implementation of public policies in basic education in municipalities with less than 10 thousand inhabitants in the State of Santa Catarina", carried out with the support of the Foundation for the Support of Research and Innovation of the State of Santa Catarina – FAPESC, through the FAPESC Public Call No. 12/2020 – Universal Research Program.

The survey, which lasted 24 months (2021-2023), demonstrates the importance of educational indicators in the implementation of public policies for basic education, and was motivated by the need to improve these policies in smaller municipalities, which often face specific challenges in relation to the provision of quality education and the guarantee of access to education for all. In this sense, the use of local educational indicators can be a valuable tool for making more efficient and effective decisions.

The general objective was to demonstrate and analyze the importance of social indicators in the implementation of public policies in basic education, aiming to reduce inequalities, ensure compliance with the National Education Plan and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in municipalities in the State of Santa Catarina with less than 10 thousand inhabitants.

Among the specific objectives, a) to verify how basic education indicators are currently created in the municipalities studied; b) to verify whether the basic education policies implemented in Santa Catarina are established based on educational indicators; c)

to identify the impacts and consequences of the lack of accurate diagnosis through local indicators in the basic education system and d) to demonstrate the importance of social indicators as tools for the elaboration and implementation of public policies in basic education.

The research was related to the following problem: Can public policies for basic education be implemented in the same way in all municipalities of Santa Catarina?

The hypothesis raised and confirmed at the end of the research was that it is not possible to implement the same public policies for basic education in all municipalities in a common way because each municipality has its peculiarities and, therefore, it is necessary to have educational indicators that detail and reflect the demands of students in each municipality.

The problems must be solved at the municipal level because it is not possible to treat social problems - education in particular - at the national level. The general conditions, provided for in article 206 of the Federal Constitution, are respected, however, each municipality has peculiarities.

The importance of constant analysis of educational indicators and the identification of demands and challenges for the definition of strategies for improving education, reducing inequalities, complying with the National Education Plan and achieving the SDGs in municipalities in the State of Santa Catarina with less than 10 thousand inhabitants is highlighted.

The research demonstrated that the use of indicators as a tool for the implementation of public policies in the area of education can contribute to the improvement of the quality of teaching and to the guarantee of access to education.

It is hoped that this article can contribute to the improvement of public policies in basic education, through the use of educational indicators as a tool for more efficient and effective decision-making.

In addition, it is expected that the results can be used as a basis for the development of new studies and projects in the area of basic education in smaller municipalities, contributing to the improvement of the quality of education and to ensuring access to education for all citizens.

EDUCATION AS A RIGHT

The right to education is intrinsically associated with the recognition of human dignity. In addition to being a constitutionally guaranteed right in Brazil, it is also provided for in legal documents of an international nature such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, which in its article XXVI⁴ establishes that everyone has the right to education aiming, among others, at the full expansion of the human personality and the reinforcement of fundamental rights and freedoms.

The UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in addition to recognizing the progressiveness of fundamental social rights, in its article 13⁵ guarantees the right of every person to education, aiming at the full development of the human personality and the sense of his dignity and strengthening respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In Brazil, education is considered a fundamental right of all citizens and is expressly provided for in the Federal Constitution of 1988, establishing that education must be offered equally and free of charge, with the objective of promoting the integral formation of the individual, the development of skills and competencies, and the construction of a fairer and less unequal society.

The guarantee of the right to quality education is a fundamental and basic principle for education policies and management, its organization and regulation processes. "The fundamental right to education, guaranteed to all Brazilians, is a requirement for the effectiveness of the Constitutional Rule of Law, which is based on 'citizenship' and 'the dignity of the human person'" (DEMARCHI; COELHO, 2018).

⁴ Article 26 - 1. Everyone has the right to education. Education must be free, at least that corresponding to elementary education. Elementary education is compulsory. Technical and vocational education must be generalized; Access to higher education should be open to all on an equal footing, on the basis of their merit. 2. Education shall aim at the full expansion of the human personality and the strengthening of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial or religious groups, as well as the development of United Nations peacekeeping activities. 3. The priority of the right to school belongs to parents the kind of education to be given to their children. (UN, 1948)

⁵ Article 13 §1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education should aim at the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity and at strengthening respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They further agree that education should enable all people to participate effectively in a free society, foster understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and among all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and promote the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. (BRAZIL, 1992).

As a Social Right, education appears in Chapter II, Article 6⁶, of the Federal Constitution of 1988, which expressly provides, among others, that education is a social right that must be guaranteed to every citizen, without discrimination of any kind.

In addition to Article 6, Article 205 of the⁷ Federal Constitution of 1988 establishes as the main objectives for Education the full development of the person; their preparation for the exercise of citizenship and their qualification for work in the State.

In turn, article 206⁸ of the Federal Constitution of 1988 states that education will be provided based on the following principles, among others: [...] equal conditions for access to and permanence in school; freedom to learn, teach, research and disseminate thought, art and knowledge; [...] guarantee of quality standards [...] guarantee of the right to education and lifelong learning.

Article 214, on the other hand⁹, establishes that the National Education Plan defines guidelines, objectives, goals and implementation strategies to ensure the maintenance and development of education at its various levels, stages and modalities through integrated actions of the public authorities of the different federative spheres that lead to objectives, among others, of eradication of illiteracy; universalization of school attendance;

⁶ Article 6 - Education, health, food, work, housing, transportation, leisure, security, social security, protection of maternity and childhood, assistance to the destitute, in accordance with this Constitution, are social rights. (BRAZIL, 1988).

⁷ Article 205. Education, a right of all and a duty of the State and of the family, will be promoted and encouraged with the collaboration of society, aiming at the full development of the person, his preparation for the exercise of citizenship and his qualification for work. BRAZIL. (BRAZIL, 1988).

⁸ Article 206. Education will be provided based on the following principles: I - equal conditions for access and permanence in school; II - freedom to learn, teach, research and disseminate thought, art and knowledge; III - pluralism of ideas and pedagogical conceptions, and coexistence of public and private educational institutions; IV - free public education in official establishments; V – valorization of school education professionals, guaranteed, in accordance with the law, career plans, with admission exclusively through public examination of tests and titles, to those of the public networks; VI – democratic management of public education, in accordance with the law; VII - guarantee of quality standards; VIII – national professional salary floor for public school education professionals, under the terms of federal law; IX – guarantee of the right to education and lifelong learning. Sole Paragraph. The law shall provide for the categories of workers considered to be basic education professionals and for the establishment of a deadline for the preparation or adaptation of their career plans, within the scope of the Union, the States, the Federal District and the Municipalities. (BRAZIL, 1988).

⁹ Article 214. The law shall establish the national education plan, of ten-year duration, with the objective of articulating the national education system in a collaborative regime and defining guidelines, objectives, goals and implementation strategies to ensure the maintenance and development of education at its various levels, stages and modalities through integrated actions of the public authorities of the different federative spheres that lead to: I - eradication of illiteracy; II - universalization of school attendance; III - improvement of the quality of education; IV - training for work; V – humanistic, scientific and technological promotion of the country; VI – establishment of a target for the application of public resources in education as a proportion of the gross domestic product. (BRAZIL, 1988).

improvement of the quality of education; training for work; humanistic, scientific and technological promotion of the country.

According to Saveli and Tenreiro (2012), education is a social right guaranteed by society and the State, and which aims to guarantee equal opportunities and social justice, and should be guaranteed to all citizens, regardless of their social, economic or cultural condition.

Santos (2019) defends education as a social right of compulsory provision and as a component element of a collective political project. The author argues that "education should be considered a right of a social nature, since it represents the search for the continuity of a way of life that one deliberately chooses to preserve"

For Demarchi (2014), education is envisioned from two realities. The first presents education as a formation, a romanticized version, based on the vision in which one thinks of man as a whole, glimpsing his relationships with the other, with himself and with the world, from his birth to his death. In this context, man educates himself at all times, in a continuous and permanent process.

The second reality, according to the author, understands education as a formal rite, that is, one that implies teaching activities, and where teaching activities are presented intentionally, with the perspective of producing learning (DEMARCHI, 2014).

In this sense, the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education (LDB) (BRASIL, 1996), establishes, among others, that "education has the purpose of developing the student, ensuring him the common education indispensable for the exercise of citizenship, providing him with the means to progress in work and in further studies".

According to Demarchi (2014), education is an instrument of initiation to coexistence, shaping values and creating patterns of behavior, assuming a preponderant role in the formation of the human being.

It is observed, therefore, that education assumes a leading role in the formation of the conscious, emancipated citizen who is aware of his rights. Education develops skills and critical thinking, essential for citizenship formation and for the construction of a more just, democratic and egalitarian society.

In this way, the State and its provision function should not neglect the guarantee of the right to education. The State has a duty to create public policies for access, in addition to ensuring sufficient budget allocation to ensure that everyone has a quality, inclusive and egalitarian education.

It is appropriate to highlight the state's responsibility and the protagonism of public policies as the main tool in the realization of the rights affirmed in Brazilian laws, based on the Federal Constitution of 1988, which consolidated decades of evolution of social rights in Brazil, rights that only enter the life of the citizen, through public policies.

PUBLIC POLICIES FOR EDUCATION

The expression public policy encompasses several branches of human thought, being interdisciplinary, covering areas of knowledge such as Applied Social Sciences, Political Science, Economics and the Science of Public Administration, aiming at the study of the central problem and the governmental decision-making process, (BUCCI, 2008).

Jannuzzi (2017) understands that public policies present a pacified understanding that defines them as collective goals, formed by a set of practices and guidelines that aim to solve problems of public interest, and should be developed based on social indicators that identify the needs of social groups and point out the paths to be followed for their effectiveness.

Based on this narrative, Lucchese (2017) understands that public policies can be defined as all government actions, and may vary according to the degree of diversification of the economy and the nature of the social regime.

Demarchi and Maieski (2021) point out that the transformations brought about by public policies will only be possible if the agents involved demonstrate the ability not only to diagnose and analyze the social, economic, and political reality in which they live, but also to interact and negotiate democratically with the different actors involved in the process.

Public policies can be either a government policy – implemented only during a certain administration, or even a State policy, implemented to last regardless of the government that is presented, defining the direction of government action, being one of the most important exercises of power in modern societies (FONTE, 2021)

According to Boito Junior (2007), government policies are considered to be those that the Executive decides in an elementary process of formulation and implementation of certain measures and programs, aiming to respond to the demands of the internal political agenda, even if they involve complex choices. State policies, on the other hand, are those that involve more than one State agency, generally passing through Parliament or various discussion bodies, resulting in changes to other pre-existing norms or provisions, with an impact on broader sectors of society.

Unlike government policies, state public policies are not necessarily related to the mandate of a government and can continue to exist for several terms of different governments.

As a consequence, for Dias and Matos (2012), intervention, via public policy, in a given area should not be a solitary decision and limited only to those who hold political power momentarily, and the participation of society should be considered fundamentally important for the implementation of policies that permeate governments, meeting the real needs of the population, establishing their limits and scope.

With regard to educational policies, they can be classified as both government policies and state policies, depending on their nature and duration. In the Brazilian context, it is observed that many educational policies have been treated as government policies, resulting in discontinuity and lack of commitment to a long-term educational agenda (OLIVEIRA, 2011). This practice compromises the effectiveness of educational actions and hinders the consolidation of a cohesive and efficient educational system.

Public policies for education are fundamental elements to guarantee this right and promote social inclusion, gender equality, diversity, respect for human rights, and the formation of critical and participatory citizens.

Currently, there are several public education policies implemented by the Brazilian State, among which it is worth highlighting:

The National School Feeding Program (PNAE), guaranteed by Law No. 11,947, of 6/16/2009 (BRASIL, 2009), aims to ensure quality school meals for all students in public education, contributing to the improvement of school performance and encouraging students to stay in school.

The National Textbook Program (PNLD), regulated by Decree No. 9,099/2017 (BRASIL, 2017), is intended to evaluate and make available didactic, pedagogical and literary works, among other materials to support educational practice, in a systematic, regular and free way, to public schools of basic education, seeking to provide students with access to quality teaching materials, expanding access to culture, knowledge and information.

The National Youth Inclusion Program (PROJOVEM) was established by Law No. 11,129/2005 (BRASIL, 2005a) and offers basic education, vocational education and citizenship for young people between 18 and 29 years of age who have not completed elementary school, contributing to the social inclusion and employability of this population.

The University for All Program (ProUni), created by Law No. 11,096/2005 (BRASIL, 2005b), offers full and partial scholarships (50% of the monthly fee of the course), in undergraduate and sequential courses of specific training, in private higher education institutions. The program's target audience is students without a higher education degree. This public policy is one of the main ones in terms of democratizing access to higher education.

The Student Financing Fund (Fies), regulated by Law 10.260/2001 (BRASIL, 2001), is intended to finance the graduation of low-income students, enabling financing in private institutions of higher education, contributing to the democratization of access to higher education.

The National Program for Access to Technical Education and Employment (Pronatec) was created in 2011 by Law No. 12,513 (BRASIL, 2011), with the purpose of expanding the offer of Professional and Technological Education (EPT) courses, through programs, projects and technical and financial assistance actions, aiming to expand access to professional and technological education, offering initial and continuing training courses, technical courses and professional learning.

The Institutional Program for Teaching Initiation Scholarships (PIBID), established by Decree No. 7,219/2010 (BRASIL, 2010), is an initiative that is part of the National Policy for Teacher Training of the Ministry of Education and aims to promote teaching initiation, contributing to the improvement of teacher training at higher education and to the improvement of the quality of Brazilian public basic education.

These are some of the main public education policies implemented and currently in force in Brazil. There are several other educational policies that aim to promote educational equity and guarantee the right to education for all citizens.

However, Brazil still needs to overcome many challenges in terms of implementing public policies that effectively guarantee the access of boys and girls to quality, equitable and equal education.

In this sense, when planning and implementing public education policies, the actors involved necessarily need to identify social demands and educational needs of different regions and population groups, so that public education policy can meet the specific needs of this public; evaluate the budget availability to invest in public education policies, in order to ensure that the established goals can be achieved; invest in research to update itself on

best practices in education so that it can develop evidence-based educational policies, among others.

CONTEXTUALIZATION OF SOCIAL INDICATORS

The initial principle of the origin of the indicator is centered on serving as an instrument for government planning. Social indicators are essential subsidies in the field of elaboration and evaluation of public policies.

For Jannuzzi (2017), a social indicator is considered a generally quantitative measure, capable of replacing or qualifying an abstract social concept. It is, therefore, an empirical methodological resource, as it informs something about social reality or about the changes that are in process.

Since their origin, social indicators have been part of a broad socioeconomic context and should provide answers to concerns regarding social dynamics. Therefore, it is up to the indicators to elucidate issues that go beyond quantitative information, getting as close as possible to social reality. (JANNUZZI, 2016).

In Brazil, social indicators began to be used as a government planning instrument in the 1970s. However, only in recent decades has the use of indicators gained momentum in the Brazilian public administration. For Jannuzzi (2017), this increase is related to the improvement of the State's social control. The new information and communication technologies also play an important role in enabling access to statistical and administrative information.

In the process of building a Social Indicators System, the number of indicators will depend on the focus of the stipulated objective, as well as the availability of data and statistics that meet the programmatic demand.

In this context, Jannuzzi (2017) draws attention to an important difference between social indicators and public statistics. Public statistics correspond to social data in its raw form, partially prepared for the empirical interpretation of reality. However, public statistics are not entirely contextualized in a social theory. They constitute the raw material for the construction of social indicators.

A relevant point is to highlight that today in Brazil, there is the majority construction of public statistics, with the formation of specific social indicators, especially on groups in socioeconomic vulnerability, on a much smaller or almost non-existent scale (DEMARCHI; MAIESKI, 2020).

Data collection in Brazil, a subsidy for the creation of public statistics and social indicators, is directly linked to statistical surveys carried out by the IBGE, with emphasis on the Demographic Census, which by law must be carried out every ten years. It is relevant to note that the country should have its demographic data updated in 2020, however, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the population count that would be done through the 2020 Census only took place in 2022.

With regard specifically to education indicators, it is worth remembering that these indicators are quantitative or qualitative measures, and are defined as a set of specific guidelines with the objective of evaluating and monitoring different aspects of the educational system. They are based on data collected mainly through surveys, censuses, and academic evaluations.

These indicators can cover the context of various areas such as access to education, the quality of teaching, student performance, teacher training and qualification, school infrastructure, school dropout rates, among other relevant aspects (INPEP, 2023).

Education indicators are elements for the formulation of public policies, decision-making, and investments in education, in addition to being important tools for monitoring progress in relation to educational goals and objectives established both in the Brazilian legal system and in international agreements and treaties, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Sustainable Development Goals. especially SDG 4 – Quality education, and SDG 10 – Reduction of inequalities.

Education indicators are regularly monitored and published by organizations such as the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), the National Institute of Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira (INEP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Among the methods and systems used by the Ministry of Education to construct education indicators in Brazil is the Basic Education Development Index – IDEB.

Created in 2007 by INEP in partnership with the Ministry of Education, the IDEB aims to evaluate and monitor the quality of basic education in the country, both in public and private networks. The index is calculated based on two main components: the school performance rate (approval) and the average performance in the Portuguese and mathematics exams applied by INEP.

The approval rates are obtained from the School Census, carried out annually. The performance averages used are those of the Prova Brasil, for schools and municipalities, and the Basic Education Evaluation System (Saeb), for the states and the country, carried out every two years and which measure the students' knowledge in Portuguese language and mathematics. These results are used to calculate a weighted average, which is incorporated into the IDEB (MEC, 2023).

The index is published biennially by the MEC and allows comparing the performance of schools, municipalities, states and regions of the country, in addition to providing information for the planning and implementation of public educational policies.

In the field of basic education, the most important instrument for collecting information and the most important educational statistical research is the School Census¹⁰, carried out by Inep in collaboration between the state and municipal departments of education and with the participation of all public and private schools in the country.

The School Census is carried out annually and has specific legislation. It covers regular education, including early childhood education, elementary and secondary education; special education; Youth and Adult Education (EJA), and professional education, including technical courses and courses of initial continuing education or professional qualification¹¹.

Data collection takes place with schools and is declaratory in nature. The census is divided into two stages, in the first stage, information on educational establishments, managers, classes, students and school professionals in the classroom is collected, and in the second stage, information on students is collected, considering data on the movement and school performance of students, at the end of the school year (INEP, 2022).

The information collected in the School Census is processed by the Educacenso system, which uses web tools to collect, organize, transmit and disseminate census data, by crossing information from five forms: School, Manager, Class, Student and School Professional (INEP, 2022).

At the international level, with regard specifically to the quality of education, Ação Educativa, with the support of UNICEF and MEC, has been developing since 2003, the

¹⁰ The School Census is coordinated by Inep and carried out in collaboration between the state and municipal departments of education and with the participation of all public and private schools in the country.

¹¹ School Census. The statistical survey covers regular education (early childhood education, elementary and high school); special education – special schools and classes; Youth and Adult Education (EJA) and professional education (technical courses and courses of initial continuing education or professional qualification).

Indicators of Quality in Education, an instrument of institutional self-assessment that aims to involve the entire school community in processes of improving the quality of education. (UN, 2013).

This instrument consists of a methodological proposal for participatory evaluation in a set of indicators through which various organizations operating in the educational field analyze the situation of different aspects of their reality, identify priorities, establish action plans, implement educational policies and monitor their results. (UN, 2013).

Since the first edition, the collection Indicators of Quality in Education - Indicaque, has already presented four volumes: Indicators of Quality in Early Childhood Education, Indicators of Quality in Elementary Education, Indicators of Quality in High School and Indicators of Quality in Education – Race Relations in School.

It is worth noting that the main objective of education indicators is to contribute to an in-depth analysis of the education panorama in Brazil, allowing managers and researchers to use this information as a subsidy for the formulation of more effective and evidence-based educational policies, seeking to promote improvements in the country's educational system and the reduction of inequalities.

Education indicators also make it possible to monitor the fulfillment of the goals established both in the National Education Policy and in the Sustainable Development Goals, especially in SDG-4 and SDG-10.

BASIC EDUCATION IN SANTA CATARINA

As established by the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education – LDB, (BRASIL, 1996), school education is composed of basic education, formed by early childhood education, elementary school and high school, and higher education, with¹² the objectives of basic education being full literacy and the formation of readers, with the purpose of developing the student, ensuring him the common education indispensable for the exercise of citizenship, providing him with the means to progress in work and further studies¹³.

¹² Article 21. School education is composed of: I - basic education, consisting of early childhood education, elementary school and high school; II - higher education. (BRASIL, 1996).

¹³ Article 22. Basic education aims to develop the student, to ensure that he or she receives the common education indispensable for the exercise of citizenship and to provide him or her with the means to progress in work and in further studies. Sole Paragraph. The main objectives of basic education are full literacy and the formation of readers, as essential requirements for the fulfillment of the purposes contained in the caput of this article. (BRASIL, 1996).

According to Cury (2002), the concept of basic education is an original and broad concept in educational legislation, "the result of a lot of struggle and effort on the part of educators who took pains to formalize certain desires into law".

According to the author, the ideas of student development form an "organic and sequential set of recognition of the importance of school education for the different moments of these phases of life and of its greater intentionality already set out in article 205 of the Federal Constitution". (CURY, 2002)

In Santa Catarina, basic education is regulated and supervised by the State Department of Education, and the Santa Catarina educational system follows the national guidelines and policies established by the Ministry of Education, in addition to developing specific initiatives to meet the needs of the region.

Basic education in Brazil, according to LDB, article 21 (BRASIL, 1996) is composed of three levels: early childhood education, elementary school and high school, with early childhood education aimed at children from 0 to 5 years old, compulsory elementary education, divided into two stages: initial years (1st to 5th grade) and final years (6th to 9th grade) and aimed at school-age children from 6 to 14 years old, and high school, aimed at students aged between 15 and 17 years. (SANTA CATARINA, 2022).

According to data from the School Census, in 2022 there were about 1 million, 354 thousand students enrolled in Santa Catarina between kindergarten, elementary school and high school, with pass rates of 98.2% in the initial years, 92.7% in the final years and 80.6% in high school. (QEDU, 2022). The school dropout rates in the period were 0.2% in the initial years (893 dropouts), 0.8% in the final years (3,224 dropouts) and 7.3% in high school (19,237 dropouts). (QEDU, 2022).

In 2023, 1.7 million students were enrolled in some educational unit, whether municipal, state, federal or private. The state had a 2% increase in the number of enrollments compared to the previous year, and, according to data from the 2023 School Census, the high school dropout rate in the year was 6.8%. (QEDU, 2023)

Considering the context of the last three years, the State of Santa Catarina is considered one of the states with the best quality indexes of elementary education in the early years in Brazil. Compared to other states, Santa Catarina has managed to remain among the top 6 places in the top 10 evaluations, showing improvement in Elementary Education and a considerable worsening in the evaluation of High School. (QEDU, 2023).

In 2023, according to the Basic Education Development Index (IDEB), Santa Catarina reached 6.4 points in the early years of elementary school (1st to 5th), a result that was 0.1 point below the goal established for the state in the first cycle of the IDEB (2007-2021). In the final years (6th to 9th) of elementary school, Santa Catarina reached 5.2 points and high school registered 4.2 points, below the IDEB target projected for the state in all stages of education. (QEDU, 2023).

DATA COLLECTION – METHODOLOGY

Santa Catarina has a total of 295 municipalities. The survey focused on the 192 municipalities of Santa Catarina with up to 10 thousand inhabitants, which corresponds to almost two-thirds of the municipalities of Santa Catarina, and had 145 municipalities responding through the Departments of Education or Educational Units, which corresponds to 75.5% of the municipalities.

The response of the municipalities to the survey was through 124 participations of Municipal Secretariats and 206 Education Units. The 124 Departments of Education represent 64.5% of the responding municipalities and the 206 educational units represent 59.5% of the 346 Educational Units that received the survey.

The first stage of the research sought the involvement of nineteen¹⁴ (19) of the twenty-one (21) Associations of Municipalities, since AMFRI - Association of Municipalities of the Region of the Mouth of the Itajaí River and AMUNESC - Association of Municipalities of the Northeast of Santa Catarina were not contacted because they do not have municipalities with less than 10 thousand inhabitants.

In the second stage of the research, two questionnaires/forms were applied, which were directed online to the target audience, one for the Municipal Departments of Education and the other for the Educational Units (schools) of basic education, and all

¹⁴ AMURES - Association of Municipalities of the Mountain Region; AMAI - Association of Municipalities of Alto Irani; AMARP - Association of Municipalities of the Alto Vale do Rio do Peixe; AMAUC - Association of Municipalities of Alto Uruguai Catarinense; AMAVI - Association of Municipalities of Alto Vale do Itajaí; AMEOSC - Association of Municipalities of the Far West of Santa Catarina; AMERIOS - Association of Municipalities of Entre Rios; AMESC - Association of Municipalities of the Extreme South of Santa Catarina; AMMOC - Association of Municipalities of the Midwest of Santa Catarina; AMNOROESTE - Association of Municipalities of Northwest Santa Catarina; AMOSC - Association of Municipalities of Western Santa Catarina; AMPLA NORTE - Association of Municipalities of the Northern Plateau of Santa Catarina; AMPLASC - Association of Municipalities of the Southern Plateau of Santa Catarina; AMREC - Association of Municipalities of the Coal Region; AMURC - Association of Municipalities of the Contestado Region; AMUREL - Association of Municipalities of the Laguna Region; AMVALI - Association of Municipalities of the Itapocú Valley; AMVE - Association of Municipalities of the European Valley; GRANFPOLIS - Association of Municipalities of the Greater Florianópolis Region.

respondents agreed to participate in the study, signing the Informed Consent Form (ICF). It should be noted that due to the profile of the present research, it was not necessary to approve the project/questionnaire by the Research Ethics Committee/REC of the University of Vale do Itajaí - UNIVALI, since it is a bibliographic and documentary research that uses available data of public and unrestricted access.

The data collection stage of this survey took place between November 2022 and June 2023. It was carried out through the online questionnaire platform Google Forms, and at the end generated graphs of answers that were presented in detail in the Technical-Scientific Report that is available in a public report. (DEMARCHI; MAIESKI, 2023).

In the third stage of the research, data was extracted through the Google Forms platform. The analysis of the data as well as its results were presented in the form of graphs and explained verbatim, being separated into categories for better understanding and scientific comparison.

It is worth noting that the research was developed within the legal standards that are followed by UNIVALI and FAPESC, guaranteeing the secrecy and confidentiality of the individual information provided, as established by the LGPD – General Data Protection Law (BRASIL, 2018), and therefore only the statistical values are disclosed.

SEARCH RESULTS

Santa Catarina has 295 municipalities, of which 192 have less than 10 thousand inhabitants and it is appropriate to point out that it is not possible to implement the same public policies for basic education in all municipalities in a common way because each municipality has its peculiarities, and therefore it is necessary to have local educational indicators that detail the needs of students in each municipality.

The lack of knowledge of the real demands of the local student population leads to the inadequate allocation of public resources in the area of education, aggravating inequality, increasing negative educational performance indices and, consequently, the goals of the National Education Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 04, are not met, compromising human development, of children in the learning phase.

The problems must be solved at the municipal level because it is not possible to deal with social problems (education in particular) at the national level. Each municipality

has its peculiarities, so general public policies that disregard local realities are doomed to ineffectiveness.

In this sense, with regard to educational indicators in Santa Catarina, it was observed that the State follows the national standard and uses general data created by the School Census, IDEB and SAEB indexes, in addition to the results of sample surveys carried out by IBGE and INEP. Among the municipalities surveyed, 35.5% say they do not have local education indicators. The use of educational indicators as a tool for decision-making in the area of education is a practice that has already been consolidated in several countries, and the research carried out in Santa Catarina showed that this approach can also be effective in smaller municipalities.

The analysis of the collected data also allowed the identification of the main demands and challenges faced by the municipalities in relation to the provision of quality education and the guarantee of access to education for all.

One of the main findings of the research was the importance of community participation in the definition of public policies in the area of education. Consultation with parents, students, teachers and other members of the community can contribute to the identification of local demands and to the definition of more effective strategies to improve the quality of education.

With regard to school transportation, the survey questioned both the Municipal Departments of Education and the Educational Units. As for the municipalities, 74.2% say that all students who wish to have access for free, while 25.8% of the municipalities say that not all have the right to access. With regard to school transportation, it is important to adapt to articles 10 and 11 of the LDB (BRASIL, 1996) and the guidelines of law 10.709/2003 (BRASIL, 2003) that transfer the competence to states and municipalities regarding school transportation.

Regarding the existence of a laboratory with equipment available to students and teachers, the survey points out that 51.5% of the Educational Units have an equipped laboratory available for both students and teachers. 48.5% say they do not have a laboratory.

The survey also asked the Educational Units about the existence of a physical library on their premises. In 67.6% of the EU respondents there is a physical library. On the other hand, in 32.4% of the Educational Units participating in the survey there is no library.

Another relevant aspect identified by the research was the importance of continuing education of teachers. In 51.5% of the participating schools, the training takes place more than twice a year, while 35.3% say that the training takes place only twice a year. It is important to emphasize that the training of teachers can contribute to the improvement of the quality of teaching and to the adoption of more effective pedagogical practices, which meet the specific demands of each community.

The survey also made it possible to identify the need for investments in infrastructure and technology in the area of education. The cut made with the data during the Covid-19 pandemic, but which still persists to a large extent, points out the main problems: 87.1% had difficulty accessing the internet; 45.2% did not have specific platforms for online activities; 35.5% had a lack of equipment to access the internet. In this context, 96.8% of municipal managers realized that there was less learning during the pandemic. The provision of technological resources and adequate infrastructure can contribute to improving the quality of education and ensuring access to education for all citizens.

The survey also sought to verify the perception of municipal managers about public policies for education in their respective municipalities. In this sense, the survey asked each public manager to mention the two main public policies in the area of education in their municipality, whether such public policies are aligned with SDG 4 and also, what type of information is considered by the municipality in the formulation of public policies for education.

The survey also asked the municipal manager to assign a score, considering a scale of 1 to 10, on the degree of effectiveness of public educational policies in his municipality, questioned whether such public policies meet the needs of the educational community, and also, what would be the best way for his municipality to meet the SDG 4 Targets.

In the first item, when listing the two main public policies in the area of education in their municipality, the most cited by managers were the provision of school transportation; school reinforcement; teacher training; after-school programs; school feeding; distribution of didactic material.

When asked about the alignment of these public policies with SDG 4, which aims at education that aims to provide access to quality education for all people, regardless of gender, age, race, ethnicity or socioeconomic status, 80.6% of municipal managers believe

that there is total alignment between public policies and SDG 4, while 19.4% believe that public educational policies in their municipality satisfactorily meet the SDG 4 Targets.

Finally, the survey questioned whether these public policies effectively meet the needs of the educational community and 74.2% of the respondents believe that the collective demands are satisfactorily met, while 25.8% of the managers believe that the public educational policies in their municipalities fully meet the needs of the educational community,

The analysis of the collected data allowed the identification of the main demands and challenges faced by the smaller municipalities and contributes to the definition of more effective strategies to improve the quality of education.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The direct research with the school community of the municipalities of Santa Catarina with up to 10 thousand inhabitants, sought to broaden the academic perception, as well as to extend to society the study on the importance of educational indicators, and also, the consequences and impacts caused by the absence of specific indicators, especially in the elaboration of public policies and application of the public budget, especially in basic education.

Issues related to education are recognized by all as a serious challenge to be faced in Brazil and, especially in Santa Catarina, where much progress has been made in the coverage of children and young people, but which still needs to increase its quality indices in high school.

Thus, the application of a direct survey to municipalities and Educational Units makes it possible to broaden the understanding of the growing demands involving basic education which, perceptibly, even with broad legal support, still faces barriers imposed mainly by the lack of public policies that effectively respond to the demands of the student population.

It is understood that the results of the research may contribute to the fulfillment of the National Education Plan and the SDG 04 Targets, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, reducing social and educational inequalities.

Finally, the research carried out in Santa Catarina demonstrated that the use of social indicators as a tool for the implementation of public policies in the area of education

can contribute to improving the quality of education and ensuring access to education for all citizens. The analysis of the collected data allowed the identification of the main demands and challenges faced by the smaller municipalities and contributes to the definition of more effective strategies to improve the quality of education.

The results of the research "Social indicators as instruments for the implementation of public policies in basic education in municipalities with less than 10 thousand inhabitants in the state of Santa Catarina", carried out between the years 2021 and 2023, with the support of the Foundation for the Support of Research and Innovation of the State of Santa Catarina – FAPESC , and with the support of the University of Vale do Itajaí – UNIVALI, show how important it is to broaden the understanding of the importance of educational indicators in the implementation of public policies for education.

In view of the results presented, it is important to highlight the importance of continuing studies and research in the area of education and the constant analysis of social indicators can contribute to the identification of new demands and challenges and to the definition of more effective strategies to improve the quality of education.

The subject is not exhausted with the findings presented. On the contrary, new discussions and possibilities for research are opened, in addition to sowing a certain concern about what is intended for the future, about the responsibility of the State, academia and society in the context of basic education, since the results of the research do not reflect the data and statistics presented by the State of Santa Catarina and the Brazilian State in relation to the situation of education in the local context.

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