


## DEMOCRATIC AND PARTICIPATORY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF INTEGRAL EDUCATION IN CITIZEN SCHOOLS IN PARAÍBA: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY

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### ABSTRACT

This work aims to investigate the management model of the Integral Citizen Schools (ECI) of Paraíba. The methodology was the study of multiple cases because it allows to deepen the social phenomena, allowing a detailed and contextualized analysis of the functioning of the school management of citizen schools in Paraíba, providing a comprehensive view of this model of school administration. Data collection was carried out through semi-structured questionnaires, using Content Analysis to analyze them. The results reveal that school management in the Integral Citizen Schools of Paraíba demonstrates the importance of an inclusive and participatory model, but faces structural and cultural challenges that hinder its full implementation. We conclude that there is a need for leadership training and the use of management technologies to strengthen the participation of the school community, as well as there is a need for public policies that ensure the applicability of democratic management and promote collaboration among all those involved.

**Keywords:** Citizen Schools. Integral Education. Democratic Management. Participatory Management.

## INTRODUCTION

School management involves a series of actions and practices foreseen for the organization, coordination and management of an educational institution. The main attribution of the school manager is to ensure that the school provides effective learning to students through responsible conduct that organizes, administers and coordinates school institutions, manages educational goals and human and financial resources, elaborates and implements educational policies, among other activities. The concept of school management in its current form emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century, in the face of educational reform movements.

In Brazil, another important milestone in this process was the Manifesto of the Pioneers of the New School, of 1932, which defended the need for a more democratic and participatory school management. From this perspective,

the Manifesto expresses a modern vision of education, by valuing individuality and personality, seeking to naturalize a model of modern citizen, with an individual and free personality, reserving for the school a position of neutrality, in the face of social differences (Camurra; Teruya, 2008, p.3).

The so-called New School, inspired by thinkers such as John Dewey, proposed to change traditional teaching methods, offering an active education with and for the student, instead of a teaching-centered training, because "It does not refer to a single type of school, or a specific didactic system, but to a whole set of principles aimed at revising the traditional forms of teaching". (Lourenço Filho apud Martins, 2012, p. 7).

In this context, these changes were essential to update the education system, making it more open and democratic. Consequently, school management came to be seen as a link between the educational objectives and the daily practices of the school, introducing democracy and the participation of the actors involved in its concept.

However, progress in this direction has been slow and often interrupted by moments of political and economic instability. In the following decades, more precisely after the Second World War, the world entered a phase of withdrawal and rebirth with new pedagogical debates. Ideas of a more participatory and democratic school management, others discussed by the echoes of the New School at the beginning of the century, resurfaced with much more intensity in the 1960s and 1970s (Bittar; Bittar, 2012). Social and educational movements questioned the centralization of power, showing that different voices could be part of the teaching process. As a result, changes, together with the

implementation of laws such as the Federal Constitution of 1988 and the Law of Guidelines and Bases (LDB), Law 9.394/96, established a democratic and participatory administration as an essential principle in the educational field, involving all participants in the educational process.

Thus, administrators, parents, teachers, employees and the school community participate in decisions, ensuring that processes are continuous in a collegiate and transparent way, seeking solutions to the daily challenges of the school routine and reflecting the needs and expectations of all. In the face of so many changes in education, from the 2000s onwards, full-time schools emerged as part of external educational initiatives to increase the time students stay in the school environment. This initiative occurred from the implementation of the More Education Program, launched in 2007 by the Federal Government. This program aimed to extend the school day and promote complementary activities, such as arts, sports and culture, to contribute to the integral development of students. Full-time schools have become a growing reality in Brazilian education.

The National Education Plan (PNE) - Law No. 13,005/2014, established the goal of offering full-time education in at least 50% of public schools, serving a minimum of 25% of basic education students. This required not only the expansion of the school structure, but also an articulation between the agents involved, providing an expanded curriculum that includes both the National Common Curricular Base and the Diversified Base, not only the transmission of academic knowledge, but also the development of social, cultural and sports skills, promoting a comprehensive education that considers the various dimensions of the human being.

To achieve goal 6 of the PNE, when implementing comprehensive schools in 2016, Paraíba developed the pedagogical model of integral schools of the School of Choice, designed by the Institute of Co-responsibility for Education (ICE), created in the state of Pernambuco, with two structural models: the Pedagogical Model and the Management Model. The pedagogical model emphasizes the student's life project, while management is articulated by the Educational Management Technology (TGE), proposing a more democratic and participatory administration. This model seeks to offer academic excellence and citizenship training based on values and ideals, consolidating itself as Integral Citizen Schools of Paraíba (ECI). Full-time schools provide conditions for the emergence of a

management that rationalizes human and financial resources, seeking a school organization capable of offering quality and accessible education to all students.

In this sense, school administrations must ensure the availability of trained professionals, have the necessary infrastructure to welcome their students, know how to manage their financial resources and promote the performance of the school community engaged with their educational project. The state of Paraíba has been adopting the model based on the School of Choice, promoted by the Institute of Co-responsibility for Education (ICE), which calls its integral schools as "Integral Citizen School", referring to an educational model implemented in the state of Paraíba, with the objective of providing a quality and inclusive education, capable of the integral development of students.

This proposal is aligned with a concept of citizen education, which seeks to form students aware of their rights and duties in society. The Integral Citizen Schools of Paraíba aim to broaden the teaching perspective, going beyond the mere transmission of content, to include ethical, social and emotional training, with a strong focus on citizenship training. The integral schools in Paraíba have a partnership with ICE, a non-profit entity, whose mission is to contribute to the improvement of the quality of public basic education in Brazil. Founded with the objective of transforming the reality of education in the country, ICE aims to promote structural and qualitative changes in teaching through the implementation of comprehensive education in public schools and to dedicate itself to improving the quality of education in Brazil, with a special focus on comprehensive education, understood as an education that goes beyond the traditional curriculum.

From this, reflecting on the school administration model in the Integral Citizen Schools of Paraíba is fundamental, to assess whether the management of these educational institutions really offers democratic and participatory work. Therefore, the following research question was formulated: Do the managers of the Integral Citizen Schools of Paraíba promote a truly democratic and participatory school administration based on this school model? Thus, this research has the following general objective: To investigate the application and effects of democratic and participatory school management in the context of integral education in citizen schools in the State of Paraíba, identifying the main challenges and successful practices. And as specific objectives, we have: a) To understand the importance of democratic and participatory management in the light of its guiding documents of the initiative; b) To analyze how full-time education works in Paraíba based on its guidelines.

## **DEMOCRATIC AND PARTICIPATORY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT**

The school is an educational and social entity whose main objective is to provide formal education to citizens, playing a vital role in their lives by transmitting knowledge, skills, culture, and values throughout their academic trajectory. For this learning to materialize, it is essential to have a school environment that not only teaches the curriculum, but also fosters citizenship through participation in academic decision-making processes. As mentioned by Lück (2009, p. 21), "The quality of the school environment as a whole determines the quality of the pedagogical process in the classroom."

Currently, schools seek to implement democratic management, an administration model that involves members of the school community in institutional decisions, ensuring the implementation of national public policies and the execution of projects aimed at improving national results and goals. According to Lück (2009, p. 70), "Democratic management is based on the promotion of quality education for all students, so that each one of them has the opportunity for access, success and educational progress with quality." This approach decentralizes administrative power, allowing the school community to contribute to the institution's decisions.

Democratic and participatory management involves all members of the school environment in the decisions and administration of the school. This participation allows the school to operate in a collaborative manner, where everyone covers responsibilities and gets involved in educational challenges. According to Lück (2009, p. 71), "It involves the awareness of the construction of the social unit as a whole and its process as a whole, through collective action." This collaboration between the school community and the shared responsibility in the actions to reflect the essence of democratic management, confirming education as a universal right and highlighting the importance of collective participation to achieve positive results for the institution.

From this perspective, a school is considered democratic and participatory when it presents fundamental elements such as the decentralization of decisions, the transparency of actions, shared responsibility among its members and collaboration among all participants in the school community. These elements are implemented through tools such as school councils, student unions, parent-teacher conferences, and the collective drafting of guided documents.

## INSTRUMENTS OF DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT

By acting in schools, democratic management collaborates for the insertion of individuals who are part of the school community, such as School Councils, which are collegiate bodies that have the function of deliberating on issues relevant to the school space. The duties of the council are:

[...] represent the school and local communities, acting together and defining ways to make the decisions that are their responsibility. Thus, they represent a place of participation and decision, a space for discussion, negotiation and forwarding of educational demands, enabling social participation and promoting democratic management (Primers on School Councils, 2004).

This structure allows the participation of the community to be translated into collective decisions, promoting a more democratic education that recognizes local needs. In addition, the councils are responsible for strengthening democratic management through the elaboration of international standards that are related to the financial, administrative, and pedagogical areas. With its composition, which includes managers, teachers, parents and students, it enables a broader and more plural debate, covering various perspectives and ensuring the application of financial resources with transparency and effectiveness. Another important democratic instrument within the school is the student council, composed of students, with the right to represent them.

The council serves as a communication channel between managers and students, enabling dialogue and claims related to the improvement of the school environment. The importance of the unions is reinforced by the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education (LDB), which guarantees the creation of these entities, indicating that the school board must promote the conditions for students to organize themselves and participate as participants in the management of the school (LDB, 1996). Parent-teacher meetings serve as a bridge for dialogue between school members and families, strengthening communication about student development and pedagogical issues.

These meetings allow parents to get to know their children's school routine and be open to the alignment of expectations and any difficulties that occur during the school year. The Political-Pedagogical Project (PPP) is another instrument used by democratic management, which must be prepared collaboratively, and must be constantly reviewed by the school community. It works as an instrument that guides the school's pedagogical actions, defining its goals, guidelines and objectives for the school year, which:

From this perspective, the political-pedagogical project goes beyond a simple grouping of teaching plans and various activities. The project is not something that is built and then filed or forwarded to the educational authorities as proof of the fulfillment of bureaucratic tasks. It is constructed and experienced at all times by all those involved with the school's educational process (Veiga, 1995, p. 12)

In this way, the PPP is consolidated in the institution as a living and dynamic instrument of the school reality, reflecting the needs, difficulties and desires of the academic and social community. From its participatory construction, the PPP implements pedagogical decisions that stand out in tune with the social, cultural, economic and academic reality of the school. Through it, the commitment to student learning is ensured, through quality education, based on democratic principles. This document also provides a long-term vision, enabling a change in strategy arising from social and educational changes, being an indispensable tool for school management.

#### FULL-TIME SCHOOLS AND INTEGRAL CITIZEN SCHOOL

Full-time schools emerge as a response to social demands for a broader and more inclusive education, as they offer more time for the student to stay in the institution, also expanding the curriculum with disciplines that aim at the complete formation of the student. Thus, as highlighted by Lourenço Filho (1978, p. 160), "The school is an instrument of social adaptation; it is not about teaching, but about life. Therefore, by offering a school environment with more time for socializing, studying, and extracurricular activities, this education model aims to combat school dropout, improve students' educational rates, and reduce inequalities between them.

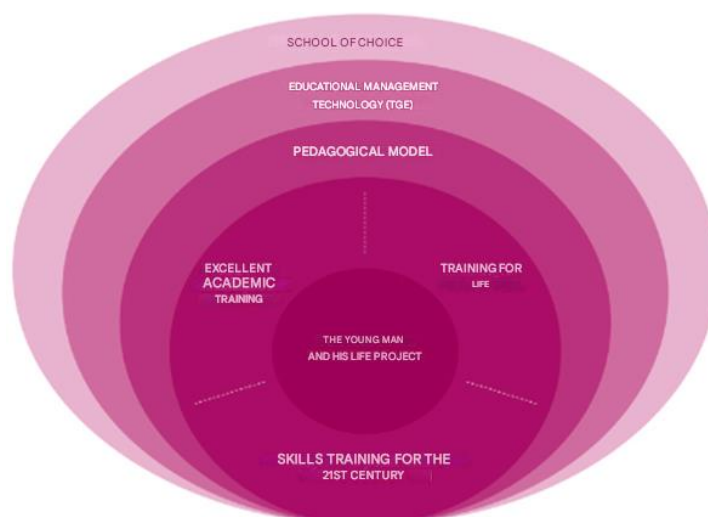
In view of this, comprehensive schools are in line with the provisions of Law No. 9,394/1996, which establishes guidelines for national education and provides for the extension of the educational journey, reinforcing that basic education should be offered, preferably, through integral education, and providing conditions for a comprehensive education of the student, which enables them to face the challenges of the contemporary world that has a more just and equitable society. The study carried out by Julia Dietrich, a doctoral student at the School of Education of the University of São Paulo (USP), indicates that an increase in the workload at school from 4 to 5 hours provides significant changes in student learning.

Corroborating the National PNE based on Goal 6, the government of Paraíba implemented the Integral Schools model in its education system in 2016, based on the

School of Choice model, developed by the Institute of Co-responsibility for Education (ICE), in the state of Pernambuco. This model of school in the state of Paraíba was called Integral Citizen School, as it offers a comprehensive education that seeks, in addition to increasing the daily teaching workload, aims at an approach that develops socio-emotional skills and a citizenship formation of students, through disciplines such as Life Project.

The Integral Citizen Schools of Paraíba have as a pedagogical strategy to prepare students not only for the job market, but also to exercise citizenship throughout life, as recommended not only by Law No. 9,394/1996 and the National Education Plan (PNE).

**Figure 1.** Model centrality



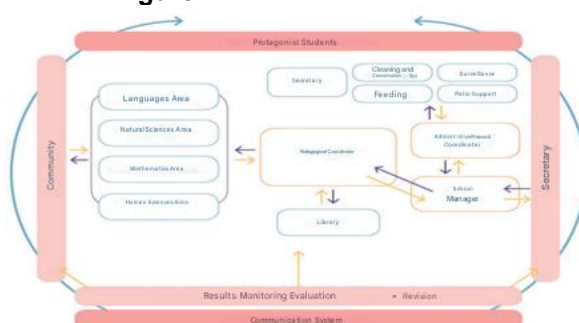
**Source:** Pernambuco (2024).

The Integral Citizen Schools of Paraíba have a management model inspired by the principles and concepts of Educational Management Technology (TGE), with the main conception of the commitment to the integration of educational action. The TGE is based on two inseparable pillars: the Pedagogical Model and the Management Model. Together, they operate their structures through a dynamic relationship between pedagogy and management.

The Pedagogical Model adopts an approach that goes beyond the curriculum, as its centrality is in the students' life project. The Management Model, on the other hand, is guided by Educational Management Technology (TGE), which prioritizes efficiency in the administration of school resources and processes, enabling the implementation of clear goals and the constant monitoring of results, both for students and the school team. A striking characteristic of this school model is a democratic and participatory management,

as it has mechanisms that encourage the participation of all those involved in the teaching and learning processes developed in the school. Figure 2 illustrates the centrality of the model and the macrostructure of the school.

**Figure 2. Model macrostructure**



**Source:** Pernambuco (2024).

School management, based on the Educational Management Technology Model, has instruments that collaborate with democratic and participatory management, as they direct the manager's work through servant leadership, decentralizing functions through a management triad composed of Manager, Financial Administrative Coordinator (CAF) and Pedagogical Coordinator.

It is also composed of Area Coordinators who participate in decision-making with management. The ECITS also have school councils formed by a representative from each segment of the school. School management uses TGE instruments to measure and monitor educational goals, namely:

- ✓ **Action plan:** strategic instrument of the school that guides the school team in the monitoring and search for school results. This plan is based on the Action Plan of the Department of Education, from which the goals that will be worked on by the school are taken.
- ✓ **Action program:** the teacher's individual instrument, which triggers the means, culminates in the strategies outlined by the Action Plan and is transformed into actions in the school space.
- ✓ **Agenda:** instrument that organizes the data of the actions that will take place at the school. These agendas are organized by bimonthly actions or quarters.
- ✓ **PDCA:** an instrument that revisits the actions carried out in the two months, seeking to understand the actions that need to be improved and how they can be replicated in good practices.

- ✓ Learning guide: instrument that guides the curriculum to be developed by the teacher, being exposed in the visible areas of the school for the monitoring of students and parents.

School managers use these tools to ensure democratic, participatory and efficient management based on the decentralization of the functions performed by each member of the school, based on the leadership of the server. The Educational Management Technology Model (TGE) favors the creation of a collaborative network between managers, coordinators, teachers and school councils, enabling an alignment between educational goals and pedagogical practices in the school's day-to-day life. In addition to these instruments, the school also develops the Pedagogical Political Project (PPP), the Internal Regulations and the Pedagogical Intervention Plan (PIP).

## METHODOLOGY

The research is qualitative in nature, based on the search for understanding social phenomena from the perspective of the participants. In the case of this research, the approach allows a deep analysis of democratic and participatory school management practices. In addition, it can be seen that this type of approach allows us "Observing people in their own territory implies, therefore, observing, joining them (participant observation), talking to them (interviews, focus groups and informal conversations) and reading what they have written" (Pope; Mays, 2005, p.14).

The multiple case study method is used to explore situations in natural contexts, such as schools, communities, or organizations. By comparing several cases, the researcher can identify patterns, similarities and differences between them, triangulating the results obtained and enriching the research analysis. In this research method, data are found through field observation, interviews with managers and pedagogical coordinators, and analysis of institutional documents, which provides a comparison and enables the identification of common practices or challenges in the researched context.

Data collection was carried out in three Integral Citizen Schools in Paraíba, specifically the 9th Regional Education Management (GRE). These school environments are characterized by their proposals for integral education, which provide participatory management due to the management model implemented in citizen schools. The participants of the research were the following managers: Directors and Pedagogical

Coordinators of the Integral Citizen Schools of the State Education Network of Paraíba (9th GRE).

The profile of the participants included professionals who work directly in school management, enabling a comprehensive view of the implementation of democratic management guidelines. The data were collected through semi-structured questionnaires, which allowed obtaining updated information on the management practices and the perception of the managers in relation to the implementation of the democratic management guidelines of the Integral Citizen Schools of Paraíba, which make up the 9th GRE of education. The technique used for data analysis will be Content Analysis, based on the methods proposed by Bardin (1977). Through this approach, it was possible to reach a categorization and interpretation of indirect information, aimed at answering the research questions, as well as understanding the challenges and practices of school management in the scenario of full-time education in Paraíba.

Bardin's (1977) method allows the researcher to delve even deeper into the collected data and demonstrates the implicit relationships, deeper and more dynamic meanings that exist in the school management of a Full-Time Citizen School, understanding the complexity and need to systematize information about the interactions between managers, teachers, students and the community, evidencing which solutions and challenges can be developed to improve the quality of education and meet the needs of the demands of students and the school community. To safeguard the identity of the managers, we used the code with the letter G, followed by a number in the sequence of the interviews: G1, G2, G3.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this topic, we will bring the results and discussions carried out from the content analysis of the answers to the questionnaires, which originated the following categories:

**Figure 3.** Analysis Categories

<b>PRINCIPLES DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT IN THE CITIZEN SCHOOL PROPOSAL</b>	<b>STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL DECISIONS</b>	<b>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</b>
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PARTICIPATION OF EDUCATORS	CHALLENGES FACED TO IMPLEMENT DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT	CONTRIBUTION OF THE INSTRUMENTS USED BY THE TGE
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Source: The Authors, 2025.

## CATEGORY 1. PRINCIPLES DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT IN THE CITIZEN SCHOOL PROPOSAL

In relation to this category, we found the following subcategories: i) *manifestations of democratic management*, ii) *the student as the center of the teaching-learning process and* iii) *full development of the student*. In the first subcategory, *manifestations of democratic management*, G1 and G3 reported that:

Integral citizen schools are based on valuing an education that goes beyond academic content, seeking to form critical, participatory and ethical citizens. This proposal is deeply linked to democratic management, which is one of the fundamental pillars to achieve the objectives of this teaching modality: below I detail how this integration manifests itself: participation of all actors, leadership training and student protagonism, integrative curriculum and participatory management, environment of cooperation and conflict resolution, participatory evaluation and integral education as a collective goal. (G1)

The proposal of integral citizen schools influences our approach to democratic management by emphasizing the formation of critical and participatory citizens. This leads us to adopt practices that ensure the inclusion of all actors in the school community in decisions, promoting an environment where collaboration and co-responsibility are fundamental for educational success. (G3)

The statements of G1 and G3 demonstrate the need to understand the process of democratic management in the citizen school and the importance of an education that goes beyond the transmission of contents. By highlighting the participation, collaboration and formation of critical citizens, both statements reveal the emphasis given to the construction of a more just, democratic and humanizing school. G1 highlights the participation of all principals, leadership training, the integrative curriculum and participatory evaluation, demonstrating an understanding of the complexity and importance of shared management. On the other hand, G3 highlights the importance of building an engaged and cohesive school community.

For Saviani (1994), democracy and education have a relationship of interdependence, being descriptions of the mutual relationship between them, in which democracy depends on education to be founded and education depends on democracy for its integral development.

Regarding the subcategory *the student as the center of the teaching-learning process*, we have the explanation of G2:

Presenting a proposal in which students are the center of the teaching-learning process. The school has contributed to the realization of a democratic management where each member has the feeling of belonging, of being part of a team aware of their attributions and co-responsible with the institution's goals. (G2)

The centrality of the student in the teaching-learning process is characterized in G2's statement by signaling a paradigm shift in which the student, previously seen as the object of teaching, becomes the active subject of his own learning. By emphasizing the sense of belonging and co-responsibility of each member of the school community, G2 demonstrates that it understands that the construction of a democratic school requires the active participation of all those involved. This participation, in turn, contributes to the creation of a collaborative and meaningful learning environment.

Thus, democratic management, as it is representative of the school's interest and commitment to the school community and its surroundings, can contribute significantly to the success of education. Thus, decentralizing decisions, involving the actors that are part of the school community, including them in the actions that will be promoted by the school, proves to be a fundamental action to ensure the quality of education (Cabral Neto; Castro, 2011).

In this subcategory, *full development of the student*, G1, G2 and G3 reported that:

In integral education we have 04 fundamental principles that support the development of the educational process that focuses on the full development of our young people. Within these principles we have protagonism, the four pillars of education, the pedagogy of presence is interdimensional education, these principles are constantly moved from the planning of actions to the evaluation process, providing moments of reflection, reevaluation and adjustments. (G1).

Integrating the principles of integral education into the democratic management of a school requires actions that align the school organization with the objectives of promoting the full development of students. This means considering all dimensions of human formation – cognitive, emotional, social, cultural and physical – while promoting participatory and inclusive management. Some effective strategies include: Student protagonism: Encourage students to actively participate in school decisions, developing autonomy and leadership, through the creation of spaces for participation, such as student unions, protagonism clubs and interdisciplinary projects, with the involvement and participation of students. Continuing Education of Teachers: Ensure that educators are prepared to act in an integrated and humanized way through continuing education on active methodologies, classroom management, interdisciplinary teaching and conflict mediation (G2).

The integral education of Citizen schools has principles in democratic management that are integrated to ensure that the curriculum is not limited to academic content, but also includes activities that develop social, emotional and ethical skills. We promote projects that involve the active participation of students and their full development to act in the school's decisions and actions, ensuring that they feel part of the educational process (G3).

The reports of G1, G2 and G3 highlight the importance of an integral development of the student, going beyond the mere transmission of knowledge. As Paulo Freire (1997, p. 25) argues, "Teaching is not transferring knowledge, but creating the possibilities for its own production or construction". By emphasizing protagonism, participation and comprehensive training as fundamental pillars, managers demonstrate a deep understanding of the needs of students and the importance of an education that prepares students for life.

## CATEGORY 2: STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL DECISIONS

Regarding this category, we found the following subcategory: *Student leadership in school. G1, G2 and G3 highlighted:*

The practices that translate a democratic management within our school with students are the pre-class councils held bimonthly, where leaders, through protagonism, carry out a PDCA with their classes focusing on the items teacher X student relationship, methodology used, evaluation procedures and self-evaluation of the class, evaluating positive, negative and improvement points. We can also mention the meetings of leaders held every two weeks, among other practices such as the Tutoring offered weekly (G1).

To ensure that the voice of students is heard and considered in the decisions of a comprehensive citizen school, it is necessary to implement practices that promote student protagonism, constant dialogue, and the active participation of students through protagonism clubs, such as reading, sports, and dance groups. These clubs have autonomy to develop activities, and the school supports their initiatives. Also by the class councils, which establish bimonthly moments for students to evaluate classes, projects and school management. And finally, the Student Council, which acts as a space for the representation and participation of students in school life. It is an instrument of democracy and student protagonism, allowing students to express their opinions, defend their interests and actively participate in school management (G2).

We implement practices such as regular meetings with class leaders, where students can express their opinions and suggestions. In addition, we hold class council meetings where students bring their demands and needs for improvement to ensure that their voices are heard and considered in decisions that affect the school (G3).

The practices described by the three managers demonstrate the importance of student leadership as a fundamental pillar of democratic management in citizen schools. By describing practices such as pre-class councils<sup>1</sup>, protagonism clubs, class councils and student unions, it is evident how the active participation of students in school decisions can promote a more democratic, participatory and meaningful environment. In view of this, Paro (2008, p.126) reinforces this thought by arguing that:

The student is not only the beneficiary of the services it provides, but also a participant in its elaboration. It is evident that this peculiar raw material, which is the student, must receive a very special treatment, quite different from that received by the material elements that participate in the production process, within any industrial company.

The inclusion of students as protagonists shows the importance of a truly democratic management as mentioned by the author, since it promotes the development of fundamental skills such as autonomy, critical thinking and social responsibility. By actively participating in school decisions, students not only become co-responsible for the processes, but also learn to deal with real situations that involve negotiation, decision-making, teamwork, empathy, and conflict resolution.

### CATEGORY 3: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In relation to this category, we found the following subcategory: *regular meetings and participation in school events*. And G1, G2 and G3 highlighted that:

Bi-monthly meetings are held at the school, in which the invitation to parents is made in advance and during the meetings, in addition to informing the students' school performance, we show points that deserve attention and involve parents in decision-making, because feeling belonging and co-responsible for the teaching and learning process of their children is very important. The revisiting of documents such as the Internal Regulations ensures a greater understanding of school standards (G1).

Involving parents and guardians in the activities and decisions of a comprehensive citizen school is essential to strengthen the bond between the family and the school, in addition to contributing to the integral formation of students. To this end, democratic management uses a series of mechanisms that promote the active and effective participation of families, through regular meetings: Periodic meetings between the school and those responsible for them to align expectations, share

<sup>1</sup> The pre-council is the moment when class leaders meet in the classrooms and discuss with the other students issues related to the two-month period, in order to identify difficulties and outline improvement strategies that will be discussed in the school council. In this pre-council, PDCA is used, *an* acronym that comes from English, meaning, to do, check and act (*Plan, Do, Check and Act*), aiming at continuous improvement planning.

information and discuss student development, through the holding of general meetings every two months, called Pedagogical Shift, in addition to individual meetings to address pedagogical issues, or related to the well-being of students. Festivities and celebrations: Invite families to participate in commemorative and cultural events organized by the school, in addition to promoting meetings to deliver awards and medals for outstanding students in the two months and in internal Olympiads (G2).

We use several mechanisms, such as meetings at the end of each bimester with parents and guardians, community events and the formation of committees of parents active in school management. In addition, we keep communication channels open, such as WhatsApp groups, to ensure that everyone is informed and can contribute (G3).

The importance of bimonthly meetings as a communication channel is emphasized as an effective instrument between the school and the families for a clear understanding of the role of the family in the education of children, says G1. Reviewing documents such as the Bylaws would also be a plus point, as it ensures that everyone involved understands the school's rules and expectations. In addition to regular meetings, G2 highlights the value of parties and festivals to strengthen the bonds already developed between the school and the community. By mentioning the pedagogical shifts, a concern is shown to offer different channels of communication and service to families. G3, on the other hand, brings the creation of parent committees demonstrating a commitment to involve families in decisions that affect the school.

As Paro (2016) states, "The participation of families in the school environment should not be restricted only to monitoring the performance of their children, but should be expanded to co-responsibility in educational processes, strengthening the democratic and participatory character of the public school." This statement emphasizes and reinforces the fact that school-community relations are not only useful, but indispensable to make the educational process truly transformative and democratic, as highlighted by Paro. A school culture that values the sense of "belonging" of families to schools is one of the central elements within democratic processes: having a voice and giving voice to an education for all.

#### CATEGORY 4: EDUCATOR PARTICIPATION

In relation to this category, we found the following subcategory: *continuing education of educators*. Regarding this subcategory, G1, G2 and G3 mention that:

Within the model of the citizen school, continuous training is one of the premises that constitutes the school's Action Plan, unfolding in the programs, with actions, strategies and dates that are constantly monitored, because continuing education is fundamental, and is necessary for the good development of the educational process and improvement of the work team, these moments happen intentionally, through moments of study of the guiding materials such as the guidelines and replication of formative moments offered by the secretariat, which are replicated following the flow of weekly meetings and planning (G1).

Promoting the continuous training of educators so that they act as facilitators of participatory management in integral citizen schools is essential to consolidate the principles of democracy, inclusion and integral education. This training must be planned strategically, contemplating pedagogical, social and cultural aspects that enable teachers to be agents of change. Extension programs that offer courses and events focused on teacher training. Promote the understanding of the principles of integral education and their application in everyday school life, through training that integrates topics such as socio-emotional development, active learning and interdisciplinary projects (G2).

I promote the continuing education of educators through training courses and collaborative training meetings. These initiatives aim to develop skills that enable them to act as facilitators of participatory management, encouraging the exchange of experiences and the collective construction of knowledge (G3).

By mentioning a strategic plan for continuing education, G1 demonstrates that the school carries out management practices through defined actions and goals. The emphasis on the replication of formative moments offered by the Department of Education demonstrates a commitment to updating and aligning with educational policies. Manager 2 highlights the need for training that enables teachers to act as facilitators of participatory management, mentioning extension programs and topics that deal with socio-emotional development and active learning, bringing a comprehensive view of continuing education. G3 values the importance of collaboration and the exchange of experiences among teachers, emphasizing training courses and collaborative training meetings to develop specific skills for working in the citizen school.

Based on the explanation of G1, G2 and G3, the continuing education evidenced in the Integral Citizen school is worked according to what Gatti (2008, p. 57) defines:

[...] structured and formalized courses offered after graduation, or after entering the teaching profession, sometimes it is taken in a broad and generic way, as comprising any type of activity that contributes to professional performance - hours of collective work at school, pedagogical meetings, daily exchanges with peers, participation in school management, congresses, seminars, courses of various natures and formats, offered by the Departments of Education or other institutions for personnel working in the education systems, virtual professional relations, various processes at a distance (video or teleconferences, courses, via the internet, etc.), professional awareness groups, in short, everything that can offer an

opportunity for information, reflection, discussion and exchanges that favor professional improvement, in any of its angles, in any situation. A vastness of possibilities within the label of continuing education.

As a result, these initiatives not only promote technical improvement, but also foster reflection, the exchange of experiences and alignment with educational policies, strengthening teaching performance in different contexts and contributing to the quality of teaching.

#### CATEGORY 5: CHALLENGES FACED TO IMPLEMENT DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT

In relation to this category, we found the following subcategory: *resistance to change*. Regarding this subcategory, the subjects highlighted that:

One of the most significant challenges in the implementation of democratic management is the resistance to change in the different management models, as it is still notorious that individuals within the school community, including managers, staff and teachers, accustomed to the traditional management model, in which decisions are made by a few, continue with the mentality that they are not part of the teaching process (G1).

Participatory management in Integral Citizen schools presents many challenges for managers, considering that the active inclusion of several individuals in the decision-making process and in the construction of a democratic school environment are not simple, and need to take into account cultural, structural and practical issues, as some members of the school community (managers, teachers, students or families) still have difficulty in the new and resist adapting to a more participatory model, especially if they are not used to democratic processes and limited resources, taking into account that the implementation of participatory practices may require financial, human and technological resources that are not always available (G2).

One of the main challenges is to believe that everyone is part of the teaching process and remains resistant to new approaches by some members of the school community. To address this, we conduct awareness-raising and training campaigns that highlight the benefits of participatory management, as well as promote spaces for dialogue where everyone can express their concerns and suggestions (G3).

When asked about the challenges of implementing democratic management in the integral citizen schools of Paraíba, G1 mentions the conventional power structure that is directly responsible for the resistance to the adoption of democratic management. The outdated thinking still exists, with few people making the decisions, which makes it difficult to adopt the democratic model effectively. For G2, the challenges are more complex, including cultural, structural and practical factors, citing limited resources as an obstacle to

the implementation of participatory management. For G3, a strategy to face resistance to change is to work through awareness campaigns and spaces for dialogue.

From this perspective, Luck (2012) highlights the need for participatory leadership, representing an essential strategy to improve the quality of education. It reinforces shared leadership models, which represent a strategy through which resistance to change can be lessened. Human potential is mobilized in the decentralized structures of schools when democratic management is accompanied by participatory practices that ensure that all components of the school are aligned.

#### CATEGORY 6: CONTRIBUTION OF THE INSTRUMENTS USED BY THE TGE

In relation to this category, we found the following subcategory: *collective participation*. When discussing the subcategory, G1, G2 and G3 reflect that:

Educational Management Technology (ETG) promotes democratic and participatory management, by introducing digital tools and integrated methodologies that favor transparency by providing clear information on student performance, financial investments and educational goals, allowing the school community to be well-informed (G1).

The instruments used by the TGE aim to strengthen democratic and participatory management in integral citizen schools, creating a space for planning, organization and collective reflection that involves everyone in the school community, and from this, these instruments can, in fact, contribute to the promotion of democratic management (G2).

The instruments used by the TGE, such as the School Action Plan, the Teachers' Action Programmes and the Learning Guides guarantee democratic and participatory management. They provide structured spaces for the participation of all those involved, allowing decisions to be made collectively and transparently, reflecting the needs and aspirations of the school community (G3).

According to Manager 1, by providing data on student performance, financial investments and educational goals, TGE fosters the participation of the school community, allowing a closer and more critical monitoring of the school's actions. In relation to Manager 2, the focus is on creating spaces for collective participation through TGE by involving all members of the school community in the planning and reflection process, and with this, TGE strengthens democratic management. Manager 3 has as a conception the management instruments for its strengthening, which facilitate collective and transparent decision-making.

In view of this, such instruments contribute to democratic management in which:

Participatory leadership is a strategy employed to improve educational quality. It is the key to unleashing the richness of the human being that is tied to bureaucratic and limited aspects within the education system and from practices guided by common sense or unevaluated habits. Based on common sense, the delegation of authority to those who are involved in the delivery of educational services is built on shared leadership models, which are the standards of operation of effective and high-performing organizations around the world. (Lück, 2012, p.35).

With this in mind, such instruments strengthen the school's ability not only to achieve its educational goals, but also to adapt more efficiently to the needs of the school community, promoting more transparent management, building a promising path to quality education, organized with the contemporary needs and challenges of society.

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

By analyzing the work of school management in the Integral Citizen Schools of Paraíba, the relevance of this model for the construction of an inclusive, equitable and quality education is evident. The research carried out in the Integral Citizen schools demonstrates that the management of these schools, guided by democratic participation, seeks to articulate the various subjects that make up the school community in the planning and execution of educational actions. However, despite the legal guidelines that guarantee this participation, structural and cultural challenges still persist that hinder the full consolidation of democratic management.

Among these challenges, the resistance to change by some segments, the maintenance of traditional practices rooted in the institutional culture, and the limitation of financial and human resources stand out. The instruments developed by the Educational Management Technology (TGE) are used strategically in the promotion of participatory leadership, capable of guiding and directing the work of managers to include all members of the school community. It is essential to invest in the training of leaders aligned with the principles of democratic management is essential to foster co-responsibility, the strengthening of institutional ties and the promotion of a collaborative environment in which teachers, students, families and managers feel valued and heard.

In addition, the incorporation of educational management technologies offers an opportunity to increase transparency, improve communication processes, and stimulate interest in decision-making processes, reducing barriers that historically hindered the full participation of those involved in the school environment. The transformation of Integral

Citizen Schools into effectively democratic spaces requires continuous and integrated efforts, as well as training of managers in the model offered.

It is essential that public policies not only formalize democratic management as a guideline, but also ensure its applicability by strengthening structural conditions, expanding specific training for managers and educators, and encouraging permanent dialogue between the various members of the school. In view of the above, it is evident that the implementation of the construction of a culture of participation and collaboration should be prioritized as a basis for the formation of critical, ethical, and socially responsible citizens. Only through robust and inclusive democratic management will it be possible to transform the school into a meaningful learning space, committed to equity and the integral education of its students, thus contributing to a more just, participatory society that is aware of its role in the contemporary world.

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