

PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE MUNICIPAL CONFERENCES FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS



<https://doi.org/10.56238/arev7n4-211>

Submitted on: 03/18/2025

Publication date: 04/18/2025

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ABSTRACT

Through the democratization rebuilt after the promulgation of the Federal Constitution of 1988, Brazil develops public policies in society, through a representative model of participation, which incorporated the real needs of the communities. The objective is to study and analyze the Municipal Conferences on the Rights of Children and Adolescents as a space for the promotion of participatory democracy and the construction of the guarantee of rights. In methodological terms, the research is characterized as exploratory, descriptive and case study. As for the means, bibliographic, documentary and field research, with the use of interviews and participation in municipal conferences. Data analysis was objective-oriented, considering the collected data and complemented by participant observation. In the participatory processes, where the first experiences were the Public Policy Management Councils, advances and criticisms are recognized, because stimulating participation while respecting the plurality of representations is a challenge that persists in the trajectory of the exercise of citizenship. The research verifies the effectiveness of the instances of participation for the improvement of public policies, based on the Reports of the Municipal Conferences on the Rights of Children and Adolescents, in a municipality in the region of Corede Noroeste Colonial, in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. A qualitative, documentary, bibliographic, descriptive research that uses content analysis. The results demonstrate, at the municipal level, the development of the participatory process, and point to the need for constant improvement of this process.

Keywords: Public policy. Municipal conferences. Participating institutions.

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INTRODUCTION

By verifying the organizations that contemplate participation in their historical trajectory, especially in public policies in the Brazilian territory, we seek to keep in mind events that promote participatory democracy, but also movements that silenced and weakened spaces for the representation of collective interests. For Claudino (2007), at times the social right to property presents itself as a possibility of social transformation, through the conquest of public policies.

From 1970 onwards, social movements advanced in the recognition of the notion of citizenship, a moment in which social subjects began to perceive social needs as rights, and promoted the political reorganization of social movements, which until that moment had been guided by clientelist and subordination actions (Dagnino, 2002; Broocke, Pamplona, 2018). In the 80s, it was the democratization resulting from the appropriation of what Telles and Paolli (2000) called "awareness of the right to have rights" which led to the construction of more democratic spaces, a more balanced democracy and access to decision-making spaces from which some groups were excluded.

The relevance of participatory democracy, whether through local or regional representation councils and/or federative units, are fundamental as instruments of participation and social control over the management of the collectivity, public management (Büttenbender, Siedenberg and Allebrandt, 2011). The mechanisms for participation in local-regional strategic planning processes, and for defining references for public policies in certain sectors or priority areas, are mechanisms that strengthen social belonging, effectiveness in the management and implementation of these public development policies (Büttenbender, 2023). Experiences on holding Conferences aimed at preserving human rights and overcoming state bureaucracies based on the Argentine Experience are explored by Tiscornia (2024). On the other hand, experiences from Brazil and the United States, seeking to assess the impacts of Conferences in the areas of environmental education and public policies, are explored by Silva and Carneiro (2025).

In Brazil, in this period, the restructuring of government interventions in the social area brought innovative characteristics, directing the implementation of more effective, efficient and effective actions. In this way, the democratic reorganization of social policies provided the opportunity to respond to society's demands for greater social inclusion and equity (Fleury, 2014; Broocke, Pamplona, 2018, p.14).

The Federal Constitution of 1988, recognized as the Citizen Constitution, stimulated advances in social participation. A space for debate during the drafting of the constitutional text, it was also a milestone in the process of Brazilian redemocratization, as the congressional arena was the stage for the coexistence of divergent groups, which provided a new participatory space, including the prerogative of popular participation as a right in the exercise of citizenship (Couto, 2004).

With the advent of the constitutional guarantee of participation, a new format for the formulation, monitoring and inspection of public policies emerges through the Councils of Law and the Conferences in each administrative sphere of management. These participation devices contribute to overcoming the paradigm that only the State was responsible for identifying the local demands of society (Broocke, Pamplona, 2018).

In this context, civil society places itself as an ally of politics, democratizing the State and its apparatuses, which is now recognized as participatory democracy, contributing to the formulation of public policies. This participation in political decisions and monitoring of the actions developed configures what has been called social control (Stedile, Ferri, Oliveira, 2018, p.62). The constitutional contribution strengthened the understanding that the councils are important channels of collective participation between governments and citizens, building a process of permanent public dialogue and deliberation" (Raichelis, 2015, p. 176).

In this trajectory, the main experience of participation is the institution of Public Policy Management Councils, established from the 1988 Constitution and which must be present in the Municipalities, States and at the Federal level, created through Laws compatible with each sphere of government. They are social resources that strategically guarantee democracy, as they have a parity and deliberative composition with power sharing between the State and organized civil society (Oliveira, 2022). These Councils cover areas such as education, health, social assistance, economic development, housing, sports, culture, among others.

Since then, the development of regions, whether in countries, states, or subnational fractions, also identified as territories, has happened through the political-administrative decentralization of territorial planning and management processes (BÜTTENBENDER, SIEDENBERG, ALLEBRANDT, 2011). Brazilian municipalities have been pioneers in the implementation of public policies, assuming the local role in the political, administrative and

financial management of their territories through social development and quality of life, increasing structural changes.

Despite the fact that more than three decades have passed since the promulgation of the Federal Constitution of 1988, participation through the Public Policy Management Councils is still a challenge. The participatory model has faced difficulties in its effectiveness and has been the target of criticism that evaluates some inconsistencies in the deliberative processes for democratization and low capacity for innovations in public policies in which they develop politics as a make-believe.

Although permeated by contradictions and uncertainties, there are advances in the democratization of public policies and make it possible, according to Claudino (2007, p.24) "to pay off the immense debt that the dominant classes and the State had, and still have, to the Brazilian population".

In the configuration and performance of the Councils, some weaknesses such as the low capacity for action are due to the training of the members of the Councils, the lack of information, the maintenance of the clientelist relationship with the State and the resistance of the State to share power (Claudino, 2007, p.24). Reinforcing, IPEA (2013) highlights that public policy councils at the national level were created or reformulated during government administrations of right-wing and left-wing political parties in a field of disputes in each national political conjuncture.

Regarding the Conferences, they are expressed as a place that enables the exercise of social participation in the institutional dimension at the national, state and municipal levels. They are characterized by the meeting of different governmental and non-governmental actors, forming a political community. From this meeting and from the debate, demands are structured, however, they do not always have repercussions in other spaces (Silva; Araújo, 2020, p.112)

According to data from IPEA (2011, 2013), the implementation of participatory institutions in Brazil raises questions about their effectiveness: are the institutions capable of producing improvements in the implementation and execution of public policies and in the results for improving the quality of life of Brazilian citizens? Thus, from the inquiry about the effectiveness of spaces for participation in promoting improvements in public policies, we seek to investigate the Municipal Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents of Panambi/RS (COMDICAP), with regard to participatory democracy and its effectiveness.

The objective is to study and analyze the Municipal Conferences on the Rights of Children and Adolescents as a space for the promotion of participatory democracy and the construction of the guarantee of rights. In methodological terms, the research is characterized as exploratory, descriptive and case study. As for the means, bibliographic, documentary and field research, with the use of interviews and participation in municipal conferences. Data analysis was objective-oriented, considering the collected data and complemented by participant observation.

The article is structured by this introduction, followed by chapter two, with the report of the experience of the Municipal Conferences on the Rights of Adolescent Children. In chapter two, the methodological paths. In chapter four with the presentation of the results and the trajectory of the Municipality of Panambi/RS. In Chapter five, the analysis and discussion of the results. Followed by chapter six with the final considerations, followed by the bibliographic references.

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE MUNICIPAL CONFERENCES ON THE RIGHTS OF THE ADOLESCENT CHILD

From the Federal Constitution of 1988, Brazilian society began to experience and exercise its citizenship through spaces of participation, in a representative model, through the Management Councils of public policies and from these the expansion of participation in the Conferences, which are held at the Municipal, State and Federal levels.

Also for the authors, with regard to the holding of conference processes at the federal level, the first National Conference took place in 1937, instituted by the Minister of Education and Health, by Decree 378, which establishes the holding of National Conferences on Education and Health, with the objective of providing the federal government with information on the necessary actions in a favorable space for negotiation between the federal government and the state governments.

The implementation of participatory spaces was developed in accordance with article 227 of the Federal Constitution of 1988, which deals with the duty of the State, the family and society to ensure the human rights of children and adolescents. In 1990, with the advent of the Statute of the Child and Adolescent, the creation of Municipal, State and Federal Councils emerged, with a deliberative character (Silva; Araújo, 2020).

In 1995, the First National Conference on the Rights of Children and Adolescents was held, with the theme "The absolute priority for children and adolescents" and since then

12 deliberative forums have been held that bring together the priorities established by the Municipal and State Conferences, with the objective of debating and advancing the provision of public policies for child and youth care in our country (Silva; Araújo, 2020).

"Thus, we can see that the conferences came with the intention of helping the articulation of the Federal sphere with the States and, from this primary objective, we found elements that characterize them as a participatory institution, among the elements, we highlight the participation of different actors. (Silva; Araújo, 2020, p.113)".

The Municipal Conferences on the Rights of Children and Adolescents (CONANDA), for Silva and Araújo (2020), are spaces that enable the exercise of social participation, and are characterized by plurality and the meeting of different actors representing the State and civil society, who come together, debate local realities and collectively elect priorities to be met through public policies.

METHODOLOGICAL PATHS

By verifying Gaston Bachelard (2006, p. 165) "the knowledge of the real is a light that casts some shadows", especially in a reality that presents a culture, experiences, relationships articulated throughout history, that is, it contains institutional elements, concepts, documents, which can contribute and are necessary for an understanding of the democratic process in a Municipal Council.

Scientific research requires a set of intellectual and technical procedures in order to achieve its objectives. Thus, the procedures adopted have, in a first stage, the technique of documental, bibliographic research (Gil, 2008).

Bibliographic and documentary research contribute to practical purposes and seek solutions to concrete problems (Gil, 2008), that is, to the understanding of the democratic process, following a qualitative approach (Vergara, 2009), combined with a theoretical contribution to the organization of the research, which relies on Content Analysis (Bardin, 2016) to identify the categories to be studied with regard to the effectiveness of municipal conferences as a space for the exercise of participatory democracy.

Thus, through the lens of content analysis, it was sought to identify the effectiveness of the participatory process of the municipal conferences of Panambi/RS from the categories: (1) plurality and diversity, (2) guidelines/proposals, with the contributions of Dagnino (2004) who contemplates the need for plurality and diversity so that the Conferences are effectively public spaces.

RESULTS

THE TRAJECTORY OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF PANAMBI RS

In the municipality of Panambi/RS, four Municipal Conferences on the Rights of Children and Adolescents have been held based on the analysis of the four Reports of these conference processes, with a view to identifying the aspects that make this mechanism a plural space for participation.

The municipality under study is located in the Northwest region of Rio Grande do Sul and is part of the Regional Council for the Development of the Colonial Northwest, currently has 43,515 inhabitants according to the 2022 Demographic Census. The Municipal Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents of Panambi - COMDICAP, was created through Municipal Law 1.359/1994 and since then has been built as a plural space for participation, deliberation, monitoring of public policies aimed at children and youth and allocation of resources from returns made by civil society to the Municipal Fund for the Rights of Children and Adolescents.

According to the municipal law, among the attributions of COMDICAP is the organization of municipal conferences and this trajectory in Panambi began in 2009 when the VIII Conference on the Rights of Children and Adolescents took place at the national level. In this first experience, the collegiate had the support of the Municipality of Panambi, the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Guardianship Council and had the election of representatives (delegates) who participated in the VII State Conference (Report of the I Municipal Conference, 2009).

The report of the I Conference does not provide information on the number of participants representing each segment, it only describes which segments were present. The records include the participation of representatives from the areas of Social Assistance, Education, Public Prosecutor's Office, Guardianship Council, City Council, Adolescents, Health (community health agents).

The Municipal and State conferences follow the theme and axes established by the National Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents and in the I Conference the theme debated in the national territory was: Building Guidelines for the National Policy and the Decennial Plan.

In Chart I, we illustrate the result of the debates based on each axis and the proposals established and forwarded to the State stage.

Table I - Proposals established defined at the Municipal Conference and forwarded to the State stage.

AXIS	GUIDELINES
1. Promotion and universalization of rights in a context of inequalities	1. Training of education, childhood and youth professionals to be able to work with inequalities
2. Protection and defense in the fight against human rights violations of children and adolescents	1. Review (debureaucratization of the adoption law that makes it more agile and objective) 2. Change in the criteria for receiving and maintaining the Bolsa Família, subject to the family's commitment; 3. Municipalities could add conditionality criteria according to the local reality, linked to the Bolsa Família
3. Strengthening the system of guaranteeing rights	1. Interdisciplinary and comprehensive care system suitable for families in cases of vulnerability 2. Strengthening the role of the family in the formation of children and young people 3. Actions to strengthen the role of parents in relation to what the ECA establishes 4. Mandatory specialized vacancies for children and youth in all districts
4. Participation of children and adolescents in spaces for the construction of citizenship.	1. Strengthening of student unions by observing the proposals and questions of the young people who represent them 2. Creation of spaces where adolescents can express themselves, forming leaders
5. Policy Management	1. Amendment of income tax legislation to facilitate the transfer of funds to child and adolescent funds 2. Improvement of the Federative Pact with greater autonomy for municipalities 3. Articulation of the various sectors of specialized care in children and youth

Report I Municipal Conference on the Rights of Children and Adolescents (2009)

In the report of the First Municipal Conference, we observed the description of some reports demonstrating the existence of a collective space for debate on the themes proposed in the five axes, jointly elaborating the priorities of public policy at the national and local levels. According to Silva and Araújo (2020), the proposals listed in the Conferences do not always become laws, but the debates held for their construction are essential in this participatory process that "results in a final document containing guidelines for the formulation of public policies in the area object of the conference" (Progrebinschi, 2011. p. 262).

In 2011, at the II edition of the Municipal Conference of Panambi, the theme addressed in accordance with the national guidelines was: Mobilizing, implementing and monitoring the policy and the ten-year plan for the human rights of children and

adolescents. The report of the II Conference shows progress in the process of organizing and recording the results of the forum, and it is believed that a better result of participation was also obtained.

The report records the participation of 188 people, with the largest number of adolescents – 127 participants, followed by education professionals – 14, social assistance professionals – 12, representatives of Sectoral Councils – 8, Rights Councilors – 6, Guardianship Councilors, representatives of state or municipal agencies that serve children and adolescents and promotion entities, protection, defense and control of rights – 5 representatives of each, health professionals – 3, parliamentarians – 2, Public Prosecutor's Office – 1.

The plurality of participation in the Municipal Conferences is suggested by CONANDA, by the Guidelines Guide of each Forum. In this sense, the report demonstrates the areas indicated by CONANDA, which were not represented: Judiciary, Public Security, Universities, Forum for the Rights of Children and Adolescents – DCA.

It is interesting that the report brings a brief evaluative report where it refers to the articulation of COMDICAP with the schools, providing materials for the study of the theme and axes along the lines of pre-conferences and the availability of 20 vacancies per school for students to participate in the II Conference. The evaluation indicates that there was a positive mobilization of the adolescents, demonstrated by the large number of representatives, however they suggest that due to the lack of knowledge of the young people, the previous work was not carried out satisfactorily, with the conclusion that this action should be carried out by the collegiate.

The information demonstrates the diversity of social participation in the Conference and its progress compared to the First Edition within the municipality, which results in more in-depth debates and the elaboration of more consistent proposals, as can be seen in table II.

Chart II - Preparation of proposals to strengthen the ECA.

AXES	GUIDELINES
1. Promotion of the rights of children and adolescents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that the ECA is worked on in the municipality's schools, implementing it in the curriculum matrix from basic to higher education 2. Establish a deadline for all institutions to adapt with accessibility to people with disabilities through municipal law <p>- Expansion of the number of vacancies at higher education and implementation of multi-sport gymnasiums in the neighborhoods, especially near vulnerable communities</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of a health program aimed at children and adolescents via SUS
2. Protection and defense of rights	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Implementation of educational guidance in schools 1. Qualify the network's service for issues related to drug addiction, violence and mental health - Creation of leisure and cultural alternatives in partnership with the public and private <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community commitment to improve shelter conditions 2. Creation of criteria for the election of guardianship councilors that guarantee the election of more qualified and committed people 3. Programs to ensure support for victims of violence, separating them from the aggressor and structuring the family to prevent the occurrence of new cases
3. Protagonism and participation of children and adolescents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have quotas per school for the indication of adolescents to participate in the Pro Jovem Adolescente - Expand forms of articulation between state and municipal schools and the Basic Social Assistance Network - Occupy the spaces of the Community Centers to develop actions aimed at adolescents in the communities 2. Expand vacancies in music, dance, theater and sports projects 3. Hold ordinary COMDICAP meetings enabling the participation of adolescents indicated by the schools
4. Social control of the realization of rights	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To increase the number of guardianship counselors, as well as to publicize their role in society so that their work meets social demand 2. Hold pre-conferences in neighborhoods and/or schools to clarify the issues and involve the population 3. To stimulate and promote the participation of representatives of the Student Councils in the meetings of COMDICAP
5. Management of the National Policy on Human Rights for Children and Adolescents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementation of a Children's CAPS with psychological care for prevention and follow-up after hospitalization 2. Increase the rigor in the legislation on crimes against children and adolescents 3. Policies to encourage sports and leisure and spaces for discussions – forums in the communities.

Source: Report II Municipal Conference on the Rights of Children and Adolescents (2021)

The participatory space proposed by the conferences has its importance as a model for the exercise of citizenship and the exercise of a democratic management model. Although, historically, the Brazilian population has had a clientelist view of public policies, the debates promoted at the conferences provide opportunities for the evolution and transformation of this relational logic between citizen and State.

However, according to IPEA (2011), scholars on the subject of participation have over the years focused on the issue of the effectiveness of participatory democracy, because from the democratization of public policies, the capacity of deliberations to become effective began to be questioned, giving rise to a vast field of study on deliberative democracy.

In 2016, the X National Conference on the Rights of Children and Adolescents was held, however, when consulting the COMDICAP archives, no report of the municipal conference was located. However, when we took a closer look at the reports found, we identified that their title had the correct sequence of number, thus concluding that the municipal conference was not held that year, whose justifications were not located in the minutes recorded in the period.

The III Municipal Conference on the Rights of Children and Adolescents took place in November 2018, in preparation for the XI National Conference whose theme was: Integral Protection, Diversity and Confrontation of Violence. As in the report of the II Conference, this was also composed of an evaluation of the event, with the relevance of the theme and the plurality of the participating segments being recorded as positive factors. As negative aspects, the collegiate evaluated the low participation of the invited adolescents, the need for greater clarity and objectivity in the speech on the theme and the short time for debate on the axes.

As for the diversity of the participating public, the report presents a total of 94 people, members of the following segments: Adolescents – 5, Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents – 12, Tutelary Council – 5, Sectoral Council – 6, Council of Segments (PCD, Indigenous, Women, LGBT) – 4, Public Prosecutor's Office – 1, Public Security – 1, Education Policy – 15, Health Policy – 17, Social Assistance Policy – 7, Socio-education Policy – 3, Labor and Employment Policy – 2, Housing Policy – 2, Universities – 4, Forum for the Rights of Children and Adolescents – 2, Civil Society Organizations – 5, Government Organizations – 2.

Representatives of children, the legislature, the judiciary, the public defender's office, sports, leisure and culture policy and social movements linked to children and youth were not present.

With regard to the preparation of the proposals, it was observed that the report included state proposals as shown in table III:

Table III – Proposals contained in the state report

AXES	STATE PROPOSALS
1. Guarantee of rights and integrated policies and social inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthening, expansion and standardization of the flow of action (work) of the protection network; - Participation of all sectors responsible for promoting the support and implementation of public policies for social inclusion; - Continuous training of professionals in order to develop in them a sense of humanity, respect and awareness of diversity;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investment and incentive to carry out research and mapping in vulnerable groups, with a view to developing projects with intersectoral scope and articulation, considering short and long-term problem-solving capacity
2. Prevention and confrontation of violence against children and adolescents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthening of multidisciplinary programs such as the experiences of PIM and PSE; - Investment in the qualification of health, education, social assistance and public safety professionals - Incentive/investment in qualification of network professionals; - Priority of compliance with the legal provisions of the ECA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Priority in cases of institutional care at the state level - Implementation of multidisciplinary teams in schools; - Investment in multiprofessional teams, with training and expansion of institutional reception teams; - State investment for the implementation of CAPS AD in the municipalities - Investment in supporting families with adolescents in treatment for chemical dependency; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greater increase in public safety
3. Budget and financing of policies for children and adolescents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthening and commitment of the State Councils in the intervention with the LDO and LOA; - Reduce bureaucracy in CSOs' registration and access to resources;
4. Participation, social communication and protagonism of children and adolescents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expansion of spaces for the participation of children and adolescents in all spheres; - Creation of an institutional channel to recognize the perspectives of young people; - Study and creation of channels to better enable the means of communication with children and adolescents; - Incentive for rational and responsible use of technologies; - Continuous work of discussions of the needs of the different segments
5. Budget and financing of policies for children and adolescents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disclose and give transparency to the actions of the councils; - Strengthen the independence of the councils in relation to the public power; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create strategies for society to be participatory; - Supervise compliance with resolutions; - To give visibility and transparency to the deliberations of the councils; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hold regional meetings; - Expand relations so that there is more integration between municipal and state councils; - Seek community involvement for participation in forums; - Encourage the participation of society in the election of guardianship councilors; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain direct election of guardianship councilors; - Invest in maintenance and infrastructure of the headquarters of the guardianship councils; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offer continuing education to guardianship counselors; - Transparency in the actions developed by forums, networks, civil society organizations - Involve the community in actions about the rights of children and adolescents; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family participation.

Source: Report III Municipal Conference on the Rights of Children and Adolescents (2021).

The most recent Conference held in Panambi, the IV Municipal Conference on the Rights of Children and Adolescents, whose theme addressed the Situation of the human rights of children and adolescents in times of the Covid-19 pandemic: violations and vulnerabilities, necessary actions for reparation and guarantee of full protection policies, with respect for diversity.

The audience participating in the IV conference was 194 people representing the following segments: Children – 7, Adolescents – 45, Adolescents with Disabilities – 7, COMDICAP – 11, Guardianship Council – 5, Legislative Branch – 2, Judiciary Branch – 1, Public Prosecutor's Office – 1, Public Defender's Office – 1, Public Security – 3, Education Policy – 39, Health Policy – 35, Social Assistance Policy – 14, Socio-education Policy – 1, Sports, Leisure and Culture Policy – 1, Labor and Employment Policy – 2, Civil Society Organization – 19, Government Organizations – 1.

The areas suggested by CONANDA that were not represented at the IV conference were: Sectoral Councils, Segment Councils, Housing Policy, Universities and Rights Forums.

From the participating public, they were divided into groups defined by axis, and collectively prepared the following proposals, detailed in Table IV.

Table IV – Proposals defined by the Groups in Thematic Axes.

AXES	PROPOSALS
1. Promotion and guarantee of the human rights of children and adolescents in the pandemic and post-pandemic context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote at least 8 hours of training for professional teams; - Promote the access of children and adolescents to information and communication technologies and safe browsing on the internet, as a way of realizing their right to communication, observing their peculiar condition as people in development. - Implementation of a service along the lines of Criança Feliz aimed at serving children from 0-6 years of age; - Expand the professional staff of social assistance, education and health services in order to expand the capacity of care for children, adolescents and their families;
2. Addressing the violations and vulnerabilities of the Covid-19 pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resume the dissemination of the means of reporting violence; - Implement specialized listening; - Dissemination/knowledge among the network services, who is each actor in the network, especially the Guardianship Council; - Implement a unified system of information on children and adolescents to build constant diagnoses; - Guidance and follow-ups according to the demand presented; - Offer of specialized professionals, doctors, speech therapists, neuropsychiatrists, psychologists and social workers;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resumption of social groups, coexistence project, extended family with a focus on approaches that provide space to talk about feelings; - Protection network/SGD: turn your gaze to the right to family and community life of children and adolescents in institutional care; - Disseminate, inform, sensitize parents and guardians about the mandatory age for the enrollment of children in early childhood education and greater articulation with the health department, guardianship council and Public Prosecutor's Office in active search actions; - Creation and dissemination of affective sponsorship project; - Strengthening of child labor preventive actions with families in the different services – disseminate the theme; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognition of the need to implement the PETI or food security actions as an alternative to overcome child labor; - Institution of a reference professional for Socio-Educational Measure.
3. Expansion and consolidation of the participation of children and adolescents in spaces for discussion and deliberation of public policies for the promotion, protection and defense of their rights, during and after the pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthening the protagonism of the Student Councils and the participation of their representatives in COMDICAP, aiming at participation in public policies aimed at them; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of an online newspaper or through other information and communication technologies, made by young people and for young people, which circulates pertinent information, in a safe way, which promotes democracy, with the circulation of ideas mainly among student unions; - Creation of public policies aimed at citizenship in the projects of the school in the opposite shift, with activities and actions on the statute of the child and adolescent, campaigns referring to prejudice, the various forms of violence, life projects and others that concern this public, with partnerships between the Department of Education and Social Development and Housing, health, public defender's office, police station, among others; - Creation of the junior councilor project
4. Participation of society in the deliberation, execution, management and social control of public policies for the promotion, protection and defense of the rights of children and adolescents considering the pandemic scenario	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expand the dissemination of the actions carried out by the rights councils; - Create informative seminars on the role and importance of rights councils; - Continuous training of guardianship councils, rights councils and child and adolescent protection networks so that they can be multipliers; - Inform COMDICAP meetings to be held in a hybrid way to encourage civil society participation. - Amendment of Municipal Law 4. 076/2015 (COMDICAP law) for the inclusion of adolescents as members of the council.
5. Guarantee of resources for public policies aimed at children and adolescents during and after the Covid-19 pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guarantee resources for training in the area of mental health of children and adolescents; - Allocate resources for the training of professionals who serve children and adolescents, especially for specialized listening and guardianship council. Carry out specialized listening; - Create campaigns to raise awareness among entrepreneurs, public employees and society in general, as well as make partnerships between Forum and other entities for donation of resources from the FIA and Gaucho invoice - Organize an annual sample of entities that raise funds from the Municipal Fund for Children and Adolescents

Source: Report IV Municipal Conference on the Rights of Children and Adolescents (2022)

The Public Policy Management Councils and the Municipal Conferences are examples of participatory Institutions that act in a multidimensional way by enabling, according to IPEA (2011):

- i) acting in the formation of citizens more capable of political and collective action; ii) stimulating the training and activation of new actors in civil society; iii) contributing to greater transparency, rationality and efficiency of public administration; iv) directing public policies to the fulfillment of distributive and inclusive functions; and v) contributing to the formation of new political elites, among many other possibilities. (IPEA, 2011 p.30)

According to Lavallo (2011), participation has a multidimensional focus, because at the same time it presents a native dimension of the political practice of social actors, has a theoretical category arising from democratic theory and a procedure institutionalized by delimited practices.

This study seeks to evaluate the importance and effectiveness of participation through the description and observation of the reports of the municipal conferences on the rights of children and adolescents in Panambi/RS, and to lead us to reflect on how the right to citizenship has been exercised since the Federal Constitution of 1988 and the democratization of public policies in Brazil.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The main objective of the research is to analyze the effectiveness of the Municipal Conferences on the Rights of Children and Adolescents in Panambi, a process that relied on a theoretical-methodological framework, where its results were elaborated based on Content Analysis techniques (Bardin 2016). A method that, according to Carlomagno (2016), allows the classification and categorization of contents, as well as key elements comparable to a diversity of other elements.

Therefore, the analysis in its initial phase included the reading and analysis of the Reports resulting from the Conferences held in Panambi, to become aware of the content of these documents and from the reading the important points were selected according to the challenges of the research, that is, to verify the results of the Municipal Conferences on the Rights of Children and Adolescents in Panambi. Thus, the selection of four Reports, referring to the Forums held in four editions. Initially, the study proposal intended to analyze

the reports of the last five conferences, however, when gathering the documents, it was found that in 2016 no conference was held.

For the analysis of the effectiveness of the Municipal Conferences as a space for participation, the first category stands out - participation - because the experience of the Conferences symbolizes this important space for the exercise of citizenship. Another reason for the definition of the category is due to the social meaning of participatory action, as "it can be considered desirable as a value in itself or as a function of its effects, that is, for its ability to be useful for the production of consequences deemed valuable" (Carlomagno, 2016, p 38).

In this sense, with regard to the number of people who participated in the Conferences held in Panambi, as a participatory space, the following is as follows: In the First Conference held in 2009, there was no record of the number of participants, however from the reports contained in the Report it can be observed that the segments represented were 7. In the II Conference in 2011, there was the participation of 188 people representing a total of 11 segments.

After a break without holding a Municipal Conference, in 2018 the III Conference was held, and in this resumption the event was attended by 94 participants from 16 different segments. The IV Conference showed in its report the registration of 194 people representing 18 segments.

It was observed that in the Reports of the four Conferences there was no representation of the segments: Councils of segments (Traditional Peoples and Communities, Racial Diversity, LGBTQIA+...), Universities and Forum for the Rights of Children and Adolescents and Social Movements linked to children and youth. It is noteworthy that, with the exception of the University segment, the others do not have a group constituted in the Municipality of Panambi/RS.

Regarding the 20 axes debated during the Municipal Conferences, and a total of 92 proposals resulting from the participatory and deliberative process, some guidelines are repeated in the trajectory of the Conference processes, in which the following stand out: Training/Qualification of Network professionals and Guardianship Counselors, present in all Reports a total of 9 times. Participation of adolescents in participatory processes and representation in the Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents, was present in the Reports and was approved by the Assembly on five occasions.

By reflecting on these data with theory, it is observed that plurality and diversity, factors that indicate the effectiveness of the Conferences as a space for participation, which is affirmed in studies on the subject (Dagnino 2004), demonstrates that the conferences held in Panambi have valued plurality, as the increase in participation and the diversity of the segments represented indicate that COMDICAP has been stimulating social participation in the community. According to Lavalle (IPEA, 2011 p. 38) [...] of two fundamental values of democracy: self-determination and inclusion, both constitute the two core values that permeate the history of democracy and are shared by the different families of democratic theory".

Still, for Lavalle (IPEA. 2011), participation in this evaluative sense results in varied socialization and psychological effects in the life of the subject who exercises the participation and in society. It is a school of citizenship that increases the self-perception of the citizen's sense of effectiveness, engagement, self-confidence that stimulates more participation, which strengthens and legitimizes institutions.

With regard to the resulting proposals and identified here as the second category of analysis, it is pertinent to reflect beyond the plurality of participation effected through the conferences, but to look at the result of the participatory process, understanding that the conferences symbolize a channel of dialogue between Society and the State (Souza; Pires, 2012).

The deliberated proposals were analyzed in terms of wording and relevance to the theme of each Conference, standing out positively in this sense, relying on the studies of Silva and Araújo (2020), which point out that, even if the proposals do not become laws, the existing debate in the Conferences for the elaboration of the proposals favors the exercise of participatory democracy.

However, the repetition of some proposals, previously presented, indicating the need for greater power and recognition of this participatory institution for the improvement of public policies at the local level, drew attention in the reports. Claudino (2007, p. 30) presents the following reflection on this issue, stating that "there is an urgent need for spaces that make governments more attentive to the pressure of public demands; Democracy makes this demand in order to be able to better meet public demands. "

By organizing the themes present in the Reports, it can be seen that there is an effort by the Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents of Panambi to effectively enable citizen participation in the Municipal Conferences. From the studies carried out, it is

understood that there is a long way to go with regard to the development of a popular participatory process that breaks with the history of representative democracy in force in the Brazilian territory, which according to Büttenbender *et al.* (2011, p. 19), "participation and citizenship must be understood as a process of continuous construction, whose spaces need to be conquered and, above all, expanded by the population, unaccustomed to the activity due to a political centralism in force in Brazil for several decades".

Thus, it is important to note that participation cannot be understood only as a decision-making process, but its effectiveness is achieved by economic, social, environmental and institutional results, especially in relation to what was voted on in the participation process.

Participation processes are important, expressed through conferences, municipal, regional and state councils, popular participation processes and participatory budgets. Brose (2024) conducts a critical analysis of the limited capacity of current leaders to prospect broader, systemic visions and the interfaces of different public policy themes. It exercises this analysis, performing a critical reflection on the strategic planning processes of the Regional Development Councils (Coredes) in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, through the expression the invisibility of global warming in the regional planning of the Vale do Rio Pardo region/RS. These critical observations can be extended to other themes. The question and the open question are preserved here: in this context, the Municipal and State Conferences, related to the rights of children and adolescents, are able to produce their effectiveness and effectiveness over time? It is suggested that studies continue to respond to the importance, effectiveness and continued action of these participatory mechanisms in the context of societal transformations and new technologies.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The research carried out an exercise with scientific work, by verifying the participatory democracy and the experience of the Municipal Conference on the Rights of Children and Adolescents of Panambi/RS, bearing in mind the Conference Reports. The investigations relied on the research carried out in the Reports, a theoretical-methodological contribution that verified the effectiveness of participation in the Municipal Conferences. Several aspects could be addressed in this theme, however, it was decided to deepen the look at the democratic potential of the conference processes in the effectiveness of participation and its limitations in the face of a representative model.

Therefore, the investigations were deepened by Content Analysis (Bardin 2016), which enabled the interpretation of the thematic categories, demonstrating that the participatory potential in the Conferences has been evolving during the municipal editions, considering the notes evaluated in the Reports regarding the need to hold pre-conferences as an alternative to stimulate adherence and participation, the guarantee of representation of adolescents in the Management Council and the investment in continuous qualification of professionals and Guardianship Counselors, as expressions of advances that are still needed.

It is worth noting that in the 1980s, with the convocation of the Constituent Assembly and the process of redemocratization of Brazil, society promoted a movement with a strong appeal to greater participation of the population for the construction of the bases of civil society organizations, a process that over the years has achieved advances in the participation and deliberation of public policies.

In this sense, it is considered that this study, when looking at a period of the democratic trajectory of the Public Policy of children and adolescents in the Municipality of Panambi/RS, does not end here, because the forums of dialogue, debate and deliberation, are collective spaces that need constant stimulus and because they are held periodically, they allow the continuity of reflections and provide opportunities for advances in the educational process that stimulate participation and can promote the effectiveness of democracy and public policies.

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