

Youth and Adult Education within the municipal sphere in Minas Gerais*

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Abstract

The expansion of the subnational responsibilities towards basic education questions the protagonism of the local power since the 1990s. Youth and Adult Education (YAE) is part of the agenda of the municipal commitments and awakens attention as to the forms of care that have been carried out in order to fulfill everyone's right to education. The article presents data from a study that was concerned with mapping and understanding educational offers to youths and adults undertaken by ten municipalities in Minas Gerais. The quantitative-qualitative research produced data from meetings with YAE managers, research seminars, classroom monitoring, interviews with managers, teachers and students. These data dialogue with literature in the area of the post *1988 Federal Constitution*. The analysis of the data, in light of the convergences and singularities, highlights the recurring statement that "YAE will end" and resonances of the statement "I fell into YAE" coming from the research collaborators. Educational managers recognize that Youth and Adult Education has its own characteristics. It is evinced that this recognition alone has not been sufficient to support an YAE proposal, which attends to the provision of an educator's position through a public selection process and continuing education focused on the specificities of youths, adults and the elderly. At the end, it makes recommendations stemming from the implications to the teacher's profile as a professional who claims to be able to: "dive into YAE".

Keywords

Youth and Adult Education – Specificities – Local power – Education.

* Translator's note (TN): The citations, as in the Portuguese version of this text, will be presented in the footnotes as OT (Original Text).

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Introduction

The concern with the school education of youths, adults, and the elderly is not recent and has broadened its contours in the last three decades. During this period, it has been witnessed an increment of this theme in studies and research that enlarge the concept of youth and adult schooling as a right and throughout life, as opposed to supplementary education, which had been established since the 1970s.

In a not too distant, of national effervescence scenario, it is worth mentioning the importance of the emergence of Youth and Adult Education (YAE)³ forums in the states. Through the forums, there was mobilization of those who worked on the issue in different spaces and institutions; the socialization of lived experiences; the articulation of the different actors, and the intervention in the development of YAE public policies (SOARES, 2004). One of the results of the pressure exerted by the forums took place along with the Secretariat of Continuing Education, Literacy and Diversity (SECAD)⁴, which led to the inclusion of YAE in the Fund for Maintenance and Development of Basic Education and Valorization of Education Professionals (FUNDEB)⁵ in 2007.

Part of YAE's heyday can be seen in the national study (2003 to 2006) carried out by Sérgio Haddad entitled *New Paths in Youth and Adult Education*, which analyzed the schooling of youths and adults and the performance of local power. The study points to "the construction of own projects" (HADDAD, 2007, p. 9)⁶ in a context whose tendency was to decentralize the Fund for the Maintenance and Development of Basic Education and the Valorization of Teaching (FUNDEF) (BRASIL, 1996) "the stimulus to municipalization" (HADDAD, 2007, p. 10)⁷.

The struggles for YAE - the right to guaranteed funding - culminated in the VI International Conference on Adult Education (Confinteá), in Brasil (2009), which strengthened the growth and national projection in which YAE was then (IRELAND, 2013; HADDAD, 2009; SILVA; SOARES, 2008). This fact can be evaluated by the representative Brazilian delegation that participated in it, with expectations towards the advances that YAE could have from the *Belém Framework for Action (Marco da Ação de Belém)* (UNESCO, 2010).

Goal number 12 of the Confinteá VI's final document proposes that "Policies and legislative measures for adult learning need to be comprehensive, inclusive, and integrated into the lifelong learning perspective, based on sectoral and intersectoral approaches, covering and articulating all components of learning and education"

3- For more information on YAE forums, see Soares (2004); Silva (2008).

4- Secretariat of Continuing Education, Literacy and Diversity, created by Decree N. 5,159 dated as of July 28, 2004, marked "the definitive incorporation by the Brazilian State of a new agenda of inclusive educational policies and valorization of the ethnic-racial, regional and cultural diversity of the country" (SECAD Management Report 2004, 2005, p. 8).

5- FUNDEB replaced Constitutional Amendment no. 14/96, regulated by Law no. 9,424/96 and by Decree no. 2,264/97 - Fund for the Maintenance and Development of Elementary Education and the Valorization of Teaching (FUNDEF).

6- OT: "a construção de projetos próprios".

7- OT: "o estímulo à municipalização".

(UNESCO, 2010, p. 9)⁸. For Paul Bélanger (2010) it was “necessary to go from rhetoric to action”⁹, after all:

[...] we cannot wait 35 years for the adult population to be able to develop their basic education, if that is the time frame required to do so by the unique route for young people’s schooling. It is now the time to act towards the adult population. It is today, when 80 percent of the population that will be adult in 2021 has left and gone to school and completed their initial education. (BÉLANGER, 2010, p. 63)¹⁰.

The rhetoric solutions for action are still punctual in the Brazilian educational system. In Minas Gerais, for example, SEE Resolution No. 2,843 dated as of January 13, 2016 “provides for the organization and operation of Youth and Adult Education/YAE - in-person courses within schools of the Minas Gerais State public network” (Minas Gerais, 2016)¹¹ and within schools in municipalities that do not constitute their own education systems. Based on common education, the document proposes to reduce basic schooling to two years in Elementary School and to one and a half years in High School. The prescribed matrix leaves little room for flexibility of time and space, both for the teacher and the student. Flexibility “is a fundamental characteristic that should guide the definition, planning, and systematization of work projects” (SOARES; VENANCE, 2007, p.153)¹².

After decades of the promulgation of the right to education for all, in the 1988 *Federal Constitution and the Law of Guidelines and Bases* N. 9,394/1996 that grants youths, adults and the elderly to start or finish basic schooling in public schools, the subnational ordinances for the sector continue to be arenas of political dispute with low production of institutionality to YAE.

As YAE’s funding was guaranteed by FUNDEB, it was expected that the gradual increase in demand at school would continue. In a controversial manner, there is a decrease in enrollments in the country’s public education networks according to the 2009 Census Technical Summary (INEP) and the studies by Catelli Jr. and Serrão (2014) for the period from 2002 to 2010. The municipalities are given the role of guarantor of quality public school, guaranteeing the pedagogical, material, physical, and professional conditions. Thus, from the above, how and in what way has the YAE offer been given within the municipal sphere? The implementation of YAE by local power has been a subject of interest in studies and research (FÁVERO; RUMMERT; VARGAS, 1999; HADDAD, 2007; CUNHA; RODRIGUES; MACHADO, 2007; MOLL; VIVIAN, 2007; PAIVA, 2006; DI PIERRO, 2017) and

8- OT: “Políticas e medidas legislativas para a educação de adultos precisam ser abrangentes, inclusivas e integradas na perspectiva de aprendizagem ao longo da vida, com base em abordagens setoriais e intersetoriais, abrangendo e articulando todos os componentes da aprendizagem e da educação”.

9- OT: “preciso sair da retórica à ação”.

10- OT: “no podemos esperar 35 años para que la población adulta pueda incrementar sua formación básica, si ése es el lapso de tempo requerido para hacerlo por la vía única de la escolarización de los jóvenes. Es ahora cuando hay que actuar, al interior de la población adulta. Es hoy día, quando el 80 por ciento de la población que será adulta em 2021 há dejado y a la escuela y ha culminado su formación inicial”.

11- OT: “dispõe sobre a organização e o funcionamento da Educação de Jovens e Adultos/EJA – cursos presenciais, nas escolas da rede pública estadual de Minas Gerais”.

12- OT: “constitui-se como característica fundamental que deve orientar a definição, o planejamento e a sistematização dos projetos de trabalho”.

in consulting services¹³. Such literature points out that the participation of municipalities in the YAE service has been accomplished with tension despite the legislative gains. In order to verify this issue in Minas Gerais, a study was carried out on the service provided by municipal public schools.¹⁴

This article describes the path that led to the mapping of YAE in municipalities of Minas Gerais and dwells on the organizational aspects of ten municipal schools by analyzing the recurring statements among managers that “YAE will end” and the statement “I fell into YAE” among teachers. Finally, it forwards to the conclusion analyzed notes of the municipal service proposing some recommendations.

Methodological approaches between universities and municipalities

For the development of this research, a quantitative-qualitative approach was adopted. According to Minayo and Sanches (1993), both approaches are necessary and complementary. A meeting was held in 2015 in order to present the research to the managers of 29 municipalities from two regions in Minas Gerais, to hear from them how YAE's service had been conducted, and to choose the municipalities for the study. In this meeting, the theme of juvenilization stood out from the other concerns presented by the managers. According to Manager C, it is “youths from 15 years of age that the schools are no longer desiring, due to their age-grade discrepancy”¹⁵. The same participant comments that the entry of these youths has discouraged adults from attending YAE, which has been challenging, because they needed to find “a middle ground to try to find these youths, once it is Youth and Adult Education, but also for adults”¹⁶. In Belo Horizonte, in the face of the refusal of the youths by the school, the Juvenile YAE¹⁷ alternative was created, which separated the youths from the adults in the period from 2014 to 2018.¹⁸

Paralleled to the meetings, a quantitative survey on the enrollment rates was carried out; the number of YAE schools and teachers; exploratory visits to schools and municipal education secretariats; documental search through contact with YAE managers and coordinators in the municipalities; and meetings with acting municipal representatives.

The research expanded the forms of data production: it aggregated managers, made it possible to share actions, and raised the desire to maintain a space for the exchange of experiences. Manager D's request about the possibility “of having a greater number of meetings to study the subject - everyone is looking forward to it, in need of it!”¹⁹ led to four more meetings with managers, research teams and an ad hoc guest, aiming to deepen general aspiration themes.

13- In this regard, see the Youth and Adult Education journal of the Ecumenical Center for Documentation and Information (1990).

14- Joint research performed by two public universities in Minas Gerais funded by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq), from 2014 to 2018.

15- OT: “jovens a partir de 15 anos que as escolas não estão mais querendo, devido aos vários conflitos e pela defasagem idade-série deles”.

16- OT: “um meio termo para tentar buscar esses jovens, pois é Educação de Jovens e Adultos, mas também de adultos.”

17- The YAE Juvenile Project (Ordinance SME 317/2014) at the Belo Horizonte City Hall was in force until 2018.

18- The name of the representatives and their affiliations have been preserved. Managers and teachers will henceforth be called Manager and Teacher, respectively, followed by a letter that differentiates them.

19- OT: “de ter um número maior de encontros para estudar sobre o assunto - está todo mundo com sede, precisando!”

The interest of the managers focused on the youth audience in YAE. Professor Juarez Dayrell (Faculty of Education - FAE, UFMG) mediated the meeting in June 2015 and problematized the issue by asking “what brought these young people to YAE? To what extent is our school organization meeting the specificities of these youths? What do youths say about the reasons for their exclusion? Why don’t they stay?”²⁰. The group concluded that the type of school offered [at night] is a replica of the day school, which does not meet the specificities of the young public, because “if in YAE we reproduce the school form of regular education [it] does not solve, it does the same,”²¹ says Juarez Dayrell (verbal information)²².

The following year, in 2016, subsequent meetings were held in April, June, and July, aimed at dealing with the challenges encountered, at large, in the management of YAE in schools. In the second meeting, Manager B assessed that the meeting helped him to “strengthen himself. It goes beyond research. It’s like a fight to improve YAE”²³. Different themes were addressed in the following meetings and that of education stood out among the others.

In the managers’ evaluation, little visibility is given to YAE within the undergraduate courses and continuing education. Manager J started the session with the phrase: “we receive professionals who are totally unprepared to work with YAE”²⁴. Manager F added to his colleague’s speech the image of the YAE teacher, because “regular teachers always think that YAE teachers have a quieter life, they are at loose ends, but they don’t know about the problems these teachers face, for example, the diversity of YAE subjects.”²⁵

Besides the meetings with the managers, two exchange seminars took place. The first one in November 2017, with the invited professor Maria Clara Di Pierro (from the Faculty of Education of USP - FEUSP) to discuss the partial results of the research. The teacher expressed, after reading the report, that “school arrangements seem too rigid for adult students/workers”²⁶. According to her, “the demand for YAE is large and heterogeneous, therefore, the offer should be as diverse as possible for each group”²⁷. Thinking about the YAE’s role in school, the teacher affirms that “YAE is today the place to welcome all diversity in school, it is the ‘vocation of YAE’”²⁸. Di Pierro’s statements reinforce the findings of the research that YAE could also be offered in morning and afternoon shifts. With this, parts of the potential public such as housewives, teenagers, disabled students, and those with night work shifts would be assisted.

The second seminar took place in May 2018, when Professor Sérgio Haddad (Educational Action/UCS) assessed the final report. At first, the teacher highlighted the

20- OT: “o que levou esses jovens para a EJA? Em que medida a nossa organização escolar está atendendo às especificidades desses jovens? O que os jovens dizem sobre os motivos da sua exclusão? Por que não permanecem?”.

21- OT: “se na EJA a gente reproduz a forma escolar do ensino regular não resolve, dá no mesmo”

22- Speech given by Prof. Juarez Dayrell, research seminar with managers of municipal networks in the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte, at the Faculty of Education/UFMG, on June 18, 2015.

23- OT: “se fortalecer. Vai além da pesquisa. É como uma luta pela melhoria da EJA”.

24- OT: “recebemos profissionais que estão totalmente despreparados para trabalhar com EJA”.

25- OT: “os professores do ensino regular sempre acham que os professores da EJA têm uma vida mais tranquila, ficam à toa, mas eles não sabem dos problemas enfrentados, por exemplo, a diversidade dos sujeitos da EJA.”

26- OT: “os arranjos escolares parecem demasiadamente rígidos para estudantes adultos/trabalhadores”.

27- “a demanda de EJA é grande e heterogênea, portanto, a oferta deve ser o mais diversificada possível para cada grupo”.

28- OT: “a EJA é hoje o lugar do acolhimento de toda diversidade na atualidade escolar, é a ‘vocalização da EJA’”.

From the results of the methodological approach with the municipal representatives, two recurring lines have been highlighted. One, “YAE will end”³³, coming from the managers and another, the teachers’ statement, “I fell into YAE”³⁴. These lines are understood as significant criticisms that should, therefore, be deepened.

“Will YAE end” or do they want to end YAE?

What arguments support the statement coming from municipal managers that “YAE will end”? In all the municipalities of the two microregions investigated, the right to education of youths and adults is effective, that is, are there available classrooms? Some factors collaborate with the discursive construction that YAE under certain circumstances will end. It is a scattered set that focuses on YAE in a concentrated manner and with long-lasting effects, because they are public concepts and policies.

The idea of finitude of the population without schooling is a concept that coincides with the words of Darcy Ribeiro – “Let the old people die in peace! Let the old people die in peace!”³⁵ during the Brazilian Education Conference in São Paulo (1990), in commemoration of the International Year of Literacy, as if youth and adult education were synonymous with literacy. The then Minister of Education Paulo Renato Souza (1995-2002) said, in the same narrative line as of Darcy Ribeiro, that Brazil would close once and for all the “factory of illiteracy”³⁶ through the schooling of children. Minister José Goldemberg (1991-1992) reverberated that “the great problem of a country is the illiteracy of children and not of adults. The illiterate adult has already found his place in society. It may not be a good place, but it is their place. They can be a bricklayer, a building watchman, a garbage collector or follow other professions that do not require literacy”³⁷. In addition, he added: “Adult literacy will not change much their position in society and may even disturb it. Let us focus our resources on teaching the young population how to read and write. We do it now, in ten years illiteracy disappears”³⁸ (GOLDEMBERG, 1991, n.136, p.4).

It is widely known, and the words of the ministers reinforce it, that throughout Brazil’s history, schooling has not been for everyone. The obligation expressed by LDB 5,692/1971 established the right to education for the group from 7 to 14 years of age. This way, youth and adult portions of the population no longer benefit from this social good. Therefore, the affirmative, even if linked to the idea that “as soon as illiterate people learn to read and write”³⁹ YAE ends, is fragile in a scenario of juvenalization of YAE, or even, because the education of youths and adults is not only literacy.

33- OT: “a EJA vai acabar”.

34- OT: “Eu cáfi na EJA”.

35- OT: “Deixem os velhinhos morrerem em paz! Deixem os velhinhos morrerem em paz!”

36- OT: “fábrica do analfabetismo”.

37- OT: “o grande problema de um país é o analfabetismo das crianças e não o dos adultos. O adulto analfabeto já encontrou seu lugar na sociedade. Pode não ser um bom lugar, mas é seu lugar. Vai ser pedreiro, vigia de prédio, lixeiro ou seguir outras profissões que não exigem alfabetização”.

38- OT: “alfabetizar o adulto não vai mudar muito sua posição na sociedade e pode até perturbar. Vamos concentrar os nossos recursos em alfabetizar a população jovem. Fazemos isso agora, em dez anos desaparece o analfabetismo”.

39- OT: “assim que os analfabetos aprenderem a ler e a escrever”.

Another factor concerns the naturalization of the reality that in YAE “it is just like that”⁴⁰ (Manager F). According to the managers, there are few who look for it and many who abandon it during the year. At this point, managers consider that abandonment is a matter beyond their control. Since the data presented between demand versus offer in each location came to light, the argument of YAE’s imminent end has not been sustained. After all, the demand is neither derisory nor residual, as the behavior of YAE enrollments in the 2010 to 2016 period in microregions points out.

Table 1 - Overview of the Microregions inserted in the State and in Brazil

Locality	2016 Population Estimates (IBGE)	YAE Demand (15 and over) (Deepask/2010)	YAE ES** enrollments in the municipal network (QEdU/2016)	YAE ES enrollments in the state network (QEdU/2016)
Brazil	206,081,432	58,000,000	1,342,504	1,919,053
Minas Gerais	20,997,560	5,897,281*	74,141	252,807
Belo Horizonte Microregion				
Belo Horizonte	2,513,451	464,515	15,841	23,581
Contagem	653,800	140,403	3,248	2,992
Betim	422,354	90,219	2,002	2,210
Nova Lima	91,069	17,985	399	551
Lagoa Santa	60,787	11,906	406	308
Inconfidentes Microregion				
Ouro Preto	74,356	17,007	225	715
Mariana	59,343	13,709	644	131
Itabirito	50,305	12,548	248	847
Acaiaca	4,061	1,476	17	91
Diogo de Vasconcelos	3,918	2,012	47	00

Source: Research Report (SOARES; SILVA, 2018).

Note: *(<http://tabnet.datasus.gov.br/cgi/tabcgi.exe/ibge/censo/cnv/escamg.def/>) 2016.

** TN: Youth and Adult Education Elementary School.

If, on the one hand, we verified the effectiveness of the YAE offer in all the municipalities participating in the study, on the other hand, the data expressed above inform expressive performance of the municipalities and that, in each of them, the service is below the potential demand. YAE’s national public service covers less than 10% of the demand. In the first meeting with the managers these data were presented. The overall reaction was one of perplexity given the challenge of shortening the distance between offer and demand.

The organization of school time in the municipalities is a factor to be considered when it comes to reducing the offer of YAE, because they serviced primarily the night shift. There are, of course, those who offer morning and afternoon openings as well, but these initiatives are thoroughly exiguous. The predominance of the offer at night no longer contemplates the diversity of the YAE public, which now has only this moment to carry out their studies. The right to education ends up being a matter of dispute in the

40- OT: “é assim mesmo”.

local sphere: for financing, for the shift, for the space, for the school snack, for the books, and for the teachers.

Studies by Jane Paiva (2006, p. 538) concluded that “state and municipal education plans”⁴¹ were to be built “setting a new space of possibilities for the inclusion of youth and adult education in the field of rights.”⁴² The exception is the municipalities of Belo Horizonte and Contagem, which organize themselves as education systems and enjoy the prerogative of establishing autonomous municipal education in relation to the state. Both serve YAE audiences in a non-school space. In Belo Horizonte, the project is called External YAE⁴³. The same municipality created, in 1991, an exclusive YAE center working in three shifts. This means a headquarters of its own, with only YAE students and the possibility for teachers to work only in this school.

Opposite to the idea that “YAE will end”, what has become evident from the expression of managers is that local power can end YAE by not respecting a right (BEISIEGEL, 2006; HADDAD, 1987). The guarantee of YAE funding in basic education from FUNDEB should sustain the sub-national entities’ offer. However, Volpe (2010), in studies on funding for YAE in Minas Gerais, warned that the greater participation of municipalities in the management and funding of education would not be enough if they did not count on the complementation from the State and the Union. In some municipalities of the sample, the reduced financial capacity combined with political unwillingness diminishes the possibility of evolving YAE spending.

When checking the forms of service, another factor that appears is that some municipalities point to reorganization of offer with a tendency to reduce the number of classrooms using the nucleation of schools. This action, thought in the first instance for the schools in the countryside, ended up in YAE in the wake of economic logic. According to the managers, nucleation is justified by low student demand, which is partly not true. If we take the significant numbers of potential demand for YAE in each municipality, we can ask what are the reasons that prevent or hinder the public from seeking it. Another aspect to be considered is the fact that many municipalities have up to a dozen districts and villages under their jurisdiction in vast territory, while others are characterized as *dormitory cities*. Historically, YAE’s service near the student’s place of work or home has been a motivating factor, as it reduces risks and weariness when commuting to a distant school. Paschoal Lemme attests this fact in 1940, in a text presented for a selection process.

However, we noticed a relatively small percentage of candidates coming from the working classes, especially those from professions related to commercial activities. [...] These observations suggested measures to bring the benefits of culture to these classes, no doubt those most in need of it, such as the location of the courses in the working-class housing districts, the use of the headquarters of the class associations where attendance is already assured, and the installation of courses in the workplaces themselves. (LEMME, 2004, P. 77-78)⁴⁴.

41- OT: “planos estaduais e municipais de educação”.

42- OT: “configurando um espaço novo de possibilidades para a inclusão da educação de jovens e adultos no campo dos direitos.”

43- TN: EJA Externa.

44- OT: “Constatamos, porém, desde logo, uma porcentagem relativamente pequena de candidatos provenientes das classes operárias, em relação principalmente aos que provinham das profissões ligadas às atividades comerciais. [...] Essas observações, sugeriram-nos medidas

Keeping classrooms open in small locations or External YAE not only serve students, but also stresses the minimum number per room established by subnational laws. The organization of YAE, in some municipalities, is based on an economic bias when it comes to maintaining several classrooms with teachers in effective exercise. At this point, it is worth underlining the conception of the manager who sees YAE as an expense and not as a right.

Although YAE is a Basic Education modality, it does not benefit from the same prerogatives as does common teaching. The degree of commitment of the manager influences the treatment he receives within the Municipal Education Secretariats, starting with the public call. Few municipalities in the study made the public call, which left the population without the information that YAE was being offered. In the regions where there was an active search, the information was made available to the possible youth and adult candidates. Thus, instead of using the expression “YAE will end”, it is evident from the way it has been conducted in some municipalities that “they want to end YAE”.

In addition to the other aspects, there is the discussion about social reality. The socioeconomic conjuncture, which has led to the reduction of rights and the fight for survival makes the search for work more necessary than attending school. It is not uncommon for students to report difficulties or even disapproval from employers in supporting their return to school.

Various pedagogical proposals correspond to the third aspect. In most municipalities, the curricular design slightly differs from common education, because they are not education systems of their own. Beisiegel (2006) already announced YAE as a replica of the conventional school, being the semester basic model with a two-year duration for each Elementary School segment. The subjects, in general, follow the structure of common teaching: Portuguese language, mathematics, history, geography, and sciences. In some networks, there is a certain rigidity towards the compliance with the timetable and frequency.

Arroyo (2008) criticizes the way YAE is getting closer and closer to the school model and distancing itself from the formative dimensions of popular education. Arroyo (2017) discusses a conception of YAE centered on the subjects' lives, from their origins, their work, and their cultural manifestations. Since the model in course in the municipalities tends to that of the traditional school, the evaluation cannot be differentiated. They range from reproducing tests used with children and teenagers to exams. The matrices end up centered on generational relations, proper to the organization of common education and not on the intergenerational ones, proper to YAE.

In addition, it was observed in the schools visited the difficulty in moving the fixed arrangement of the desks in the classroom, which does not allow differentiated groupings. Belo Horizonte and Contagem, on the other hand, present pedagogical proposals that follow different curricular matrices from the other municipalities. They work by areas of knowledge in which teachers take up, in a shared way, the subjects within the same area.

tendentes a levar os benefícios da cultura até essas classes, sem dúvida as mais necessitadas dela, tais como a localização dos cursos nos bairros de moradia operária, aproveitamento das sedes das associações de classe onde já está assegurada uma certa frequência, e ainda a instalação de cursos nos próprios locais de trabalho.”

Regarding teaching resources, some managers claim not to identify materials suitable for YAE. There are schools that have even started using official YAE textbooks, but without continuity, whereas others make sources available for consultation of textbooks and paradidactics. More and more managers and educators recognize the diversity of YAE subjects, which becomes a key element of the pedagogical proposal. If the subjects are diverse, it makes sense to think about them and build the teaching material.

The issue has been debated in the municipalities and some adopt their own production and adequacy of activities. A certain ignorance of what has been produced in YAE is observed from its protagonists: Non-Governmental Organizations - NGO/Social Movements, Municipalities and State⁴⁵, such as *Almanaque Aluá* (since 1993) of the NGO Sapé; *Pedagogical Journal and Worker's Word*⁴⁶ (since 1993) of the Municipal Secretariat of Education of Porto Alegre; *Journal of Collective Productions*⁴⁷ of the Municipal Secretariat of Education of Maceió (since 1996); *Youth and Adult Education - Curricular Proposal for the 1st segment, of the Educational Action (Ação Educativa)* (1997), and *Cultural Album*⁴⁸ of Recife (1998) of the Secretariat of Education of the City of Recife, to name a few.

A final factor that refers to the policies that put an end to YAE is the frequent change in municipal management positions. As a result, the composition of the staff includes the coordination of YAE, which operates with instability in its maintenance. The constitution of the teams and the continuity of the work are at the mercy of the groups instituted in the Secretariat by the local power to each government management. Whereas there are teams in certain municipalities, we find others without at least one YAE coordinator, and municipalities with a single professional responsible for organizing and serving YAE to its full extent.

How I became an educator of Youth and Adult Education: "I fell into YAE"

The theme of teacher education emerged, under various aspects, in meetings with YAE managers and municipal coordinators. Either to question this education in the undergraduate degree courses or to cite initiatives of the municipalities, the YAE forums, and the universities in which they are engaged. In general, from a management point of view, teachers arrive in YAE with knowledge of their areas, but not of the subjects' characteristics or how they learn. Research coincides with reports from managers regarding the lack of studies on the singularities of schooling for youths and adults during initial education, both at practicum and at a mandatory subject (LAFFIN, 2012; PORCARO, 2011; CAMARGO, 2015; PEDROSO, 2015).

This reality is a criticism of the reduced space for YAE teacher education in the teaching undergraduate degree courses of Brazilian universities, according to Soares (2008) and Laffin (2012). The authors investigated the presence of youth and adult education

45 - TN: ONG/Movimentos Sociais, Municípios e Estado.

46 - TN: Cadernos Pedagógicos e Palavra do Trabalhador.

47 - TN: Cadernos de Produções Coletivas.

48 - TN: Álbum Cultural.

in teaching, research and extension of teacher education courses and found a higher percentage in the curriculum matrix of Pedagogy courses than in other degree courses.

Studies recognize that being a youth and adult educator requires training that addresses the particularities of students (ARROYO, 2006; SOARES, 2007; RIBEIRO, 1999; VÓVIO, 2010). Without the guarantee of the formative space in the teaching degree courses, the educator will find it difficult to deal with the specificities of the modality as a whole and this can become one of the biggest impasses experienced in the school if they arrive in YAE burdened with the same conceptions that they have of the teaching for children and teenagers.

The analysis of some managers is that “professionals are totally unprepared to work with YAE. They are teachers who take YAE for granted and it is a total unpreparedness”⁴⁹ (Manager C), so that in some cases the “type of school offered is a replica of the day one, which has not met the specificities of the public”⁵⁰ (Manager A).

In contrast, educators do not deny the lack of knowledge and the abrupt way they joined YAE. The expression “I fell into YAE” as for the way they get to the modality is an analogy to “parachuting” and both concerns joining some situation without knowledge of the cause of the object. This is how some educators feel as they confirm: “We have not been prepared! There is a lack of initial and continuing education!”⁵¹ (Teacher A).

The first contact with YAE, according to most of the interviewees, was by chance at some point in their professional performance. For others, YAE appears as an opportunity to supplement the workload. In both cases, after “falling into YAE” and facing the complexities and challenges, they seek continuing education. From this movement of arrival and recognition, different trajectories of education and professional performance resulted, that is, they understood what YAE would be like after accepting the position. A delicate condition for the school, for the student and, above all, for the own educators.

The teaching category faces outdated salaries, precarious working conditions, and devaluation of the profession. In the midst of the situation, finishing an undergraduate degree course and starting graduate school implies efforts of time and monetary investment. On the other hand, public, free, and quality education is a right for all and only the *good will* of educators is not enough to guarantee the exercise of the profession consequent to the characteristics of the young, adult, and elderly demandants. According to Freitas (2014) and Pedrosa (2015), there is a large number of teachers and managers with graduate degrees, however, they are beginners in the discussions on Youth and Adult Education.

In fact, when the speech of managers and the teaching condition in face of the multigenerational composition of classrooms are analyzed, it is evinced that the spaces of education are fundamental to the accompaniment of resistances. Recognizing the audience differences is not enough to manage discipline and learning of youths with adults and vice versa.

Literature calls the *phenomenon of juvenilization* the process of arrival of youths in YAE in the 1990s, tensioning the common school and the historical reason for adult education

49- OT: “profissionais estão totalmente despreparados para trabalhar com EJA. São professores que pegam a EJA por pegar e é um despreparo total”.

50- OT: “tipo de escola ofertada é uma réplica da do diurno que não tem atendido as especificidades do público”

51- OT: “Não fomos preparados! Falta formação inicial e continuada!”.

(ANDRADE, 2004; CARRANO, 2007; LEÃO, 2005). Even though the municipalities have adhered to different government programs aimed at youths and adults - from the Mobral to the Restart⁵²⁵³ and the Learning Acceleration⁵⁴ programs (Crossing the Step and Citizenship Path Projects⁵⁵) - they express difficulties in welcoming youth to YAE. It is noticed that the image of the YAE youth is stuck to their behavior and there is a risk of seeing them only in a negative manner. Being a youth at/of YAE is not just a stereotype, in this case, undisciplined when not violent (DAYRELL, 2005; CARRANO, 2007; ANDRADE, 2004).

On the other side are the adults/elderly with their needs and interests. Teachers recognize that “adults are harder to learn how to read and write because they have more difficulty due to day-to-day fatigue, even though they want to learn”⁵⁶ (Teacher C). Studies on youths and adults, and this research corroborate, emphasize an education on the real ways of being youth/adult/elderly as a path of possibilities to recognize demands, characteristics, and specific needs of these groups.

To the exiguous study on YAE presented by teachers and managers, it is added the need for them to complement the workload in another stage of basic education. In this way, teachers are trained to teach children and teenagers during the day and young people, adults, and the elderly at night. It is noteworthy that “due to the absence of policies that organically articulate youth and adult education to public networks of basic education, there is no specific career for educators of this educational modality”⁵⁷ (DI PIERRO; GRACIANO, 2003, P. 23). Many teachers end up not creating permanent links with the field in which they work, seeing themselves as passengers, being able to leave YAE at any time or at each distribution of working hours. Because of this professional instability, the YAE educator is at the mercy of not belonging to the area and reinforces the idea of being in YAE as a complement of their work journey.

Albeit the demand for basic education of youths and adults in Brazil is explicit, voluminous and sparse, there are few public education networks that hold a specific selection process to fill the YAE teacher position. This can be a stalemate for the quality of work with youths and adults. By recruiting teachers with little knowledge of YAE, the local power is responsible for providing moments of continuing education.

In the municipalities researched in Minas Gerais, it was found that the education takes place according to the each one’s reality. The figure of the YAE coordinator in the municipal education secretariats seems to be decisive. It is part of their function to seek, organize and foster the formative process, which varies from lectures, courses, weekly, fortnightly or monthly meetings, to meetings set by areas of knowledge. A fixed pattern of education begins to be outlined in the municipalities on Fridays. In Belo Horizonte,

52 - TN: Programa Recomeço.

53 - Supplementary Program, regulated by the National Education Development Fund (FNDE/MEC), Resolution CD/ FNDE nº 10, dated as of March 20, 2001. In 2003 it was renamed to Making School Program (Programa Fazendo Escola).

54 - TN: Programa Aceleração da Aprendizagem.

55 - TN: Projetos Travessia, Acertando o Passo e Caminho da Cidadania.

56 - OT: “adulto é mais difícil de alfabetizar porque eles têm mais dificuldade devido ao cansaço do dia a dia, apesar de terem vontade de aprender”.

57 - OT: “em virtude da ausência de políticas que articulem organicamente a educação de jovens e adultos às redes públicas de ensino básico, não há carreira específica para educadores desta modalidade educativa”.

for example, one of the Fridays is in charge of the activities proposed by the Municipal Secretariat of Education and on the others, the school itself organizes the education sessions according to demand. Another example of education strategy is the creation of study groups with educators, as taken place in the municipalities of Acaiaca, Diogo de Vasconcelos, and Itabirito.

About “diving into YAE” or how to build a YAE professional

In the YAE field, the cultural diversity related to the age present in the classroom and its pedagogical peculiarities are outlined to educators throughout their experiences. In their testimonies they talk about the knowledge that is being established by the relationship between them and the two sets of students with well-demarcated temporalities of life. Some teachers, after a certain time of work, develop identification with the students and seek to stay in the YAE. They even say that they prefer YAE and that if they could choose, they would dedicate themselves only to youths, adults, and the elderly, and they reinforce the comment expressing that by “falling into YAE” they become “diving into YAE”.

“The profile of youth and adult educators and their education are still under construction”,⁵⁸ said Miguel Arroyo on the occasion of the 1st National Seminar on the Education of Youth and Adult Educators, in 2006. After more than a decade, the actuality of the affirmative is confirmed by Di Pierro (2017), Laffin (2012), Vóvio (2010) among other recent studies.

In the CNE/CEB Report nº 11/2000, which establishes the *National Curricular Guidelines for Youth and Adult Education*, when referring to the education of the educator, it is stated “that the preparation of a teacher focused on YAE should include, besides the formative requirements for each and every teacher, those related to the differential complexity of this modality of teaching”⁵⁹ (BRASIL, 2000, p. 52). However, there is no mention in the norms that deal with YAE and what such “formative requirements” would be. The issue has been discussed by universities, emphatically, especially in the National Seminars on Education of Youth and Adult Educators⁶⁰ and the importance of education is registered in the final documents of the events.

Studies seek “the formative demands” starting by distinguishing the peculiar character of YAE before thinking about the teacher’s profile for it. To the set of “formative demands” we find in the literature the term “specificities”, which can contribute to the definition of formative matrices, which are: a) legacy of popular education strongly present in the curricular proposals; b) recognition of the cultural and age diversity of the subjects; c) times, spaces, and differentiated evaluations; d) teaching resources of their own; e) search for supplementary public policies, and f) proper teacher education for the YAE public (SOARES; SOARES, 2014). A proposal can make use of this note.

58- OT: “O perfil do educador de jovens e adultos e sua formação encontram-se ainda em construção”.

59- OT: “que o preparo de um docente voltado para a EJA deve incluir, além das exigências formativas para todo e qualquer professor, aquelas relativas à complexidade diferencial desta modalidade de ensino”.

60- The national seminars on the education of youth and adult educators (UFMG, 2006; UFG, 2007; UFRGS, 2010; Brasília, 2012; Campinas, SP, 2015).

Managers and teachers coincide with literature when they mention about the need to build a YAE educator's profile. They bring elements that help, such as "a teacher who has a greater affinity for working with youths"⁶¹ (Manager C); "the teacher who allows you to get closer - even in terms of vocabulary - to them, the youths"⁶² (Manager F) and "the teacher who chose to work with YAE, that is fundamental"⁶³ (Manager A).

Even having to face realities too far from his education, the teacher attests "I have never felt more important than with this kind of audience!"⁶⁴ (Teacher A). "We feel like an important person in that person's life, it pays off!"⁶⁵ (Teacher C). "The student sees YAE in a broader sense, which goes beyond schooling"⁶⁶ (Teacher D). "They have gratitude for the teacher, more than regular elementary school students"⁶⁷ (Teacher E).

In a preliminary way, the teacher has a certain identification with YAE as reception exchanges are established. It can be said that mutual recognition contributes to the construction of the image of the youth and adult teacher and to the bonds of belonging to the category. It is worth emphasizing the effort of the teacher to approach students, especially the young ones, through language. Side by side, the "knowledge of experiences made"⁶⁸ (FREIRE, 2002) of the student and the educator are welcomed. For Freire (2002, p. 53):

[...] it is this mysterious force, sometimes called vocation, that explains the almost devotion with which the great majority of the magisterium remains in it, despite the immorality of wages. And not only does it remain, but it fulfills, as it can, its duty.⁶⁹

It can be inferred that the affinity with the public ends up helping in the choice for the area. Although YAE educators from the municipal networks researched had little specific education towards the field, a significant number of them, with more than ten years of experience in YAE, was interviewed. In this case, one must consider the knowledge they have acquired in the classroom when they claim to "have dived into YAE". It is found in the educators' speeches and classroom observations, elements and practices consistent with the theoretical discussions in the field, which aim to meet the particularities of the students in the pedagogical and cognitive share.

Tardif, Lessard and Lahaye (1991) named that knowledge proper of a teacher's performance as *teaching knowledge*. This knowledge would be composed of others such as that of their professional education, the subjects taught, the curriculum from school programs, and their own experience. The knowledge of experience is recognized as different

61- OT: "um professor que tenha uma afinidade maior de trabalho com jovem".

62- OT: "o professor que mais permite se aproximar - inclusive em termos de vocabulário - a eles, os jovens".

63- OT: "o professor que escolheu trabalhar na EJA, isso é fundamental".

64- OT: "nunca me senti tão importante quanto com esse tipo de público!".

65- OT: "A gente se sente como uma pessoa importante na vida daquela pessoa, é compensador!"

66- OT: "O aluno vê a EJA com um sentido mais amplo, que vai além da escolarização".

67- OT: "Eles têm gratidão pelo professor, mais do que os alunos do ensino fundamental regular".

68- OT: "saberes de experiência feitos".

69- OT: "é esta força misteriosa, às vezes chamada vocação, que explica a quase devoção com que a grande maioria do magistério nele permanece, apesar da imoralidade dos salários. E não apenas permanece, mas cumpre, como pode, seu dever."

from the others, since it is formed by all the others, which, in this movement, are retranslated, redeveloped, and submitted to the certainties built in practice and in lived experiences.

According to Schön (2000), when educators reflect on their practice:

[...] sustaining a reflective conversation with the materials of their situations, they remake part of their practical world and thus reveal the normally tacit processes of building a worldview on which they base all their practice. (SCHÖN, 2000, p. 39).⁷⁰

The daily exercise of those who dive into YAE through studies, readings, and lesson plans ends up compromising them and identifying them with their work.

From a professional point of view, “falling into YAE” goes against the expectations of an educator. However, it demonstrates a Freirean “limit situation”⁷¹ (FREIRE, 1992) in which they, by their own choice or not, are unable to organize themselves within the context. At this point, the limits of several orders immobilize the action. For some, the limit is insurmountable. For others, it is not. When they see themselves in the limit situation, they look for ways to overcome the obstacles. That is when they “dive into YAE”. This movement of breaking with determinism is “unpublished feasible”⁷² (FREIRE, 1992). By diving into EJA, the educator reverses a critical framework of work and, in counterpoint, operates at the margin of possibilities, according to Pinto (1960) and endorsed by Paulo Freire (1992).

Notes

In view of the expected increase in YAE enrollments with the creation of FUNDEB and the realization of Confintea VI in Brazil, it is evinced, controversially, the decline in demand that had been occurring in YAE classes. The municipalities are expected to carry out quality public education. In this research we sought to understand how and in what way YAE has been offered in the municipal sphere in Minas Gerais.

The research along with the local power produced quantitative-qualitative data that helped us overcome vague impressions regarding YAE statistics concerning the potential offer and demand numbers for YAE and two main approaches that were deepened: “YAE will end” and “I fell into YAE”. Focus on these polysemics that were hereby understood by the critical bias of their resonances. “YAE will end” is a narrative that permeates managers and coordinators and is being produced through actions of public policies that restrict the law. Therefore, YAE may end not for lack of students, as aforementioned, but for lack of political will.

The way in which the municipal sphere has borne the municipalization of educational services, without due collaboration between state and federal entities, reduces YAE to insufficient offers in view of the impounded demand. To this end, it is recommended that

70- OT: [...] sustentando uma conversação reflexiva com os materiais de suas situações, eles refazem parte de seu mundo prático e revelam, assim, os processos normalmente tácitos de construção de uma visão de mundo em que baseiam toda a sua prática. (SCHÖN, 2000, p. 39).

71- OT: “situação limite”.

72- OT: “inedito viável”.

the collective spaces - state and regional forums - exercise their performance increasingly closer to the elaboration of public policies for YAE in the local sphere. To the managers and coordinators who do not immobilize themselves in the face of the data but, instead, act towards the active search of the YAE audience. Thus, according to Freire (2002), they are for the move and not for the accommodation.

The expression “I fell into YAE” reveals a certain carelessness from YAE managers and coordinators in the face of the challenges posed to a teacher who will take over YAE. Without the guarantee of the formative space in the teaching undergraduate degree courses, the educator will find it difficult to deal with the specificities of the modality as a whole and this can become one of the biggest impassés experienced in the school if they arrive in YAE burdened with the same conceptions that they have towards teaching children and teenagers.

In another direction, we find educators who identify with the subjects and their trajectories, seek to get involved in education activities, and say they do not want to leave YAE. This is the case of the educator who “dives into YAE”. It can be inferred that dedicating to work would be an attitude that differentiates an educator from others. In this case, it is of utmost importance that the municipalities foster policies of continuing education and that they think about the feasibility of holding a public selection process for the position of YAE teacher, which would avoid the “falling into YAE”.

While waiting for the selection process, it is recommended to establish some selection criteria that value, from those interested in the position, the studies, the experience, and the involvement in the YAE actions performed. Such notes ensure that YAE has specificities on offering as prescribed in the literature of the area. In addition, both Report No. 11/2000 and LDB No. 9,394/1996 reinforce the unique character of YAE by means of expressions such as *adequate, appropriate, characteristics, its own specificity, its own pedagogical model, aimed at and specific*. In a synthetic way, *specificity* is the convergence of aspects that enable to act in their own way, producing something peculiar, particular (Soares; Soares, 2014). Given the YAE's *specificities*, there is quality public education service. Specificities are established in the dialogue between reality and its critical analysis, so they carry with them the hope that “changing is difficult, but it is possible”⁷³ (FREIRE, 2002, p. 88).

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73- OT: “mudar é difícil, mas é possível”.

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