

## **Alternative Pedagogical Methodologies of Solidarity Economy in Youth and Adult Education**

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**Abstract:** Solidary economy has been playing a significant role in the organization of work as an alternative to unemployment and precarious work within the Brazilian capitalist system. This alternative of production that happens within capitalism can ally itself with programs of education of young people and adults in the sense of creating a new conscience towards the practices of solidary work. The purpose of this study was to use alternative pedagogical practices that aimed to sensitize people to environmental preservation through the reuse of plastic bottles, transforming them into furniture, correlating with the possibility of adding value to materials and developing solidarity economy among Youth and Adult Education students. This research was implemented in the Municipal School, in the 3rd and 4th series of the Youth and Adult Education, in the City of Picuí, Paraíba, Brazil. Despite the difficulties in obtaining a desired number of bottles and due to the other activities developed by the students of Youth and Adult Education, it was observed a great motivation on the part of these to participate in the pedagogical activity. With an innovative pedagogical practice it was possible to teach in an alternative way, presenting an environmentally correct solution for the final destination of the used plastic bottles and also a more profitable way for other people to raise money from the manufacture of these materials, and trying to implement among them a solidarity economy.

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### **I. Introduction**

The school as a social institution has before it as one of its main objectives the construction of the spirit of citizenship and the development of skills in the preparation of an individual for an active social life, especially when it is public, young people and adults who are inserted in society, often passively, excluded and considered as functional illiterates because they cannot act in a political way, without being able to draw coherent and effective objectives to meet their specificities<sup>1</sup>. The current public policies focused on the educational sphere in Brazil have suffered the increasingly perverse influence of the current economic model, neoliberalism. It is in this scenario that we experience an educational perspective that segregates the student, fragments the knowledge, translated into a plastered curriculum, and reduces the school to a mere formation process based only on the transmission of scientific contents where they are seldom seen as necessary to the students for their everyday life. The results of this marketing education policy can be seen in the high indexes of functional illiterates, consequently, the significant increase in dropout and repetition rates that are one of the great challenges of Brazilian education<sup>2</sup>.

The precariousness of regular education has its repercussions in the Education of Young People and Adults, a form of education, which expresses the achievement of the right to education for those who did not have access to school at the regular age and / or had the school course interrupted for different reasons, at primary and secondary school levels<sup>3</sup>. Youth and Adult Education emerges from the gaps of the regular educational system (schooling process) and comprises a very diverse set of formal and informal processes and practices related to the acquisition or expansion of basic knowledge, technical and vocational skills or sociocultural skills. Any attempt to historicize such a plurality of formative practices would imply a risk of failure, since Youth and Adult Education extends through almost every domain of social life. Thus, the following text addresses the systematic and organized processes of general training of young people and adults in Brazil, paying special attention to school education, that is, the schooling of young people and adults<sup>3</sup>.

Faced with this pedagogical scenario of rapid changes and goals that need to be attentive to the rescue of social values and democracy, the contribution of new practices in pedagogical action is essential. In this sense it is important to think and rethink the Education of Young and Adults under the perspective of the Solidarity Economy, of how the teacher may be acting in an inclusive education<sup>4,5</sup>. Many still perceive Youth and Adult

Education as simply literacy<sup>6</sup>, that is, the domain of reading and writing. The crucial importance of this stage is known, but education of young people and adults necessarily involves other areas of knowledge (technology, science, communication, politics, etc.) and other languages (body language, theater, computer science, television). The Young and Adults Education, although it seems to us to point only to the domain of the alphabet, the spelling and the reading, obligatorily takes us to another instance: one that goes beyond the activity linked to the language, but also to the relations of order social, economic, political and cultural sphere to which we belong<sup>7</sup>.

In seeking to link youth and adult education with solidarity economy, it can be observed that work is the educational principle of this process, but the education of young people and adults alone will not reintegrate the young person and the adult who does not have obtained a regular education in the labor market, then solidarity economy, which is a differentiated economy, with its principles of self-management, cooperativism, union, solidarity, focusing on the human being and not the profit, but the human being, can bring to the educational process broader meanings articulating with the relations of the social, economic, political and cultural order to which we are part<sup>8,9,10</sup>. According to Gutberlet<sup>2</sup>, solidarity economy is a mode of production whose basic principles are the collective or associated property of capital and the right to individual freedom. In general, Solidarity Economy is not only an alternative for the poor and the excluded, but it provides advances in diverse domains and contexts, and responsibly involves large segments of society.

This new economy proposes to recover socially what technological progress has provided and excluded in certain situations. Solidarity Economy is another mode of production, whose basic principles are the collective or associated property of capital and the right to individual freedom. The application of these principles unites all that produce in a single class of workers who are equal owners of capital in every cooperative or economic society. The natural result is solidarity and equality, whose reproduction, however, requires state mechanisms of income redistribution. Some pedagogical practices can relate the Solidarity Economy to Youth and Adult Education, among them the environmental issue<sup>9,11</sup>. The development of an environmental pedagogical project is a path of great importance for every citizen, where there can be a multiplication of knowledge and the triggering of actions together in search of a harmonious environment for all<sup>12</sup>. The Solidarity Economy involving Youth and Adult Education suggests work as an educational process; work not as an office, but rather as the capacity to act in a specific way or to produce something specific, differentiating one human being from the other, thus being able to develop in the communities simple solutions of conviviality and organization<sup>11,13,14</sup>.

Noting the social, economic and environmental problems in which many students of youth and adult education in Brazil are inserted<sup>5,15</sup>, in addition to the problem of garbage and the increase in the number of recyclable waste pickers with unfair remuneration for the effort, the present work will present an environmentally correct and socially fair way of recovering plastic bottles using them in the making of simple furniture, through an alternative pedagogical practice in the Education of Young and Adults, aiming at their perspective as Solidary Economy.

## **II. Material And Methods**

The research was divided into three stages. In the first moment, alternative materials (furniture) were made using plastic bottles with the purpose of contextualizing some subjects addressed in the classroom, such as geometry, numbers, and environment, among others. In the second moment, a lecture was given on the importance of recycling and its use as a source of income. In the third moment a semi structured questionnaire was applied aiming to characterize the students of the class, as well as to verify their conceptions about the methodology of teaching adopted, besides establishing relation between the production of the materials and the solidary economy.

At the present time, following the assumptions of the qualitative approach, this research used the field research as an instrument to collect data and adopted as a research technique the semi-structured questionnaire that is, with open and closed questions that were delivered personally to the Students who work in the Education of Young and Adults in the school research field.

According to Balomenou and Garrod<sup>16</sup>, the questionnaire is a data collection instrument consisting of an ordered series of questions, which must be answered in writing and without the presence of the interviewer. Therefore, at the moment of delivery of the questionnaires, the researcher made, in a verbal way, the clarifications regarding the purpose of the application of the same, besides emphasizing the relevance of the collaboration of the researched ones.

In order to finalize the work, that is, to consider the information obtained during the research, the data analyzes were carried out based on the theoretical reference, aiming to contribute to a reflection of the teaching-learning process.

### **III. Results And Discussion**

The 3rd and 4th grades of Elementary Education of Youth and Adult Education started the 2016 school year with 220 students and of these, only 200 concluded. Many students state that studying is important, but when enrolled in a Youth and Adult Education program, there is a significant rate of infrequency in addition to high dropout rates. However, it should be emphasized that infrequency is not related to the same concept of avoidance. For Wei<sup>17</sup> school dropout in Youth and Adult Education may be recorded as abandonment for a given time or not. Several reasons of a social and mainly economic nature contribute to school "evasion" within the Education of Young and Adults, transposing the classroom and going beyond the walls of the school. Wallerstein and Bernstein<sup>18</sup> list data on factors that cause dropout in youth and adult education: distance from school; The tiredness of the student who works all day; The inadequacy of the classroom for young and adult / elderly, who often lack adequate lighting; The absence of a snack to be distributed to the student who comes directly from work to school; And the unpreparedness of the faculty, because often the teacher does not value the life experience that this student already brings with him, as a worker, as an adult inserted in a production process.

Of the 200 students participating in the research, 75% are female and 25% male. Of these, 90 students are in the 40-50 age group, 40 students in the age range of 17 to 20, 40 students over 60 and 30 students in the age group of 30 to 39 years. Heterogeneity is a fact present in the classroom and this fact increases the responsibility of teachers to modify their conceptions in the teaching-learning process. Through the relevant indices it can be assumed that women are more interested in studies than men, or they cannot study. One of the probable reasons would be that, even in the society in which the school is inserted, it is patriarchal, so men would give more importance to work than education, and for them, work is still the way to go. As for the age group was found in a same room students with ages well differences. The age range of Youth and Adult Education students responds to a specific otherness and becomes a significant mediation for the re-signification of curricular guidelines<sup>10</sup>. Certainly, when establishing itself, when constructing the planning of education one must take into account the age of the students and their specificities, their socio-historical condition.

Some students (25%) had stopped studying on a regular basis for at least 5 years, 12.5% between 10 and 15 years, 25% stopped studying 20 years ago and the majority (37.5%) did not go to school For more than 30 years. The majority (75%) of the students had stopped studying because they had to work, 12.5% because they had diseases, and 12.5% because they lived in rural areas and had no school. As for the reasons that led these students to drop out of regular school, in most cases this was due to the lack of family income and, consequently, the need to work outside. There are several studies that report that one of the main factors leading to dropout refers to the need to work outside the home.

Even after so many years away from school, these individuals realized the need for studies, the acquisition of knowledge in their lives aimed at improving quality of life. Regardless of the motive that drove these people from school, everyone returned to the classroom to learn more. This fact is evidenced in the answers that demonstrate that in most cases this school return is due to the recognition of the study need. Among the various reasons listed, it is necessary to learn to read and write, work requirements and the provision of night teaching.

In addition to studying, 87.5% of the students interviewed developed another activity. Wei<sup>17</sup> developed his research on the work / education relationship in Youth and Adult Education. The author, in bringing a brief history of the public educational policies of Youth and Adult Education, noted that the little that was done does not allow young people and adults to enter and maintain themselves as worker-citizens in conditions of equality and competitiveness in the Labor market, in addition to not allowing the promotion of access and permanence to a basic, quality education. These results show us how heterogeneous the group is, and the need for specific public policies for this audience.

The positive feeling of having re-studied was observed in all students. Improving the mind, learning more, making new friends, being happy, feeling good in the community, learning something that did not have a chance, changing your life in the family and in school were some of the answers you got when asked about what they felt about coming back the school. Describes MeloNeto and Costa<sup>9</sup>, that a frequent characteristic of the student is his low self-esteem, often reinforced by situations of school failure. Their possible passage through school has often been marked by school exclusion and / or failure. With a previous pedagogical performance committed, this student returns to the classroom revealing a fragile self-image, expressing feelings of insecurity and personal devaluation in front of the new challenges that are imposed. Youth and Adult Education students are students who have lost some of their self-esteem through difficulties during their lifetime. Without self-esteem, the student creates a feeling of inferiority in relation to his / her classmates and with the teacher influencing the student's academic performance, then the teacher has the great challenge of finding ways to make all these students believe in themselves.

Working with Youth and Adult Education students requires that the teacher has a flexible profile, maintain a constant dialogue to facilitate the organization and the good understanding between everyone in the

classroom, being attentive to the difficulties of each student. This is evidenced by Wallerstein and Bernstein<sup>18</sup>, which emphasizes the importance of the teacher: the role of the teacher is the interpreter of the teaching-learning process and facilitator of new experiences that lead the students to other situations and problems. 87.5% of the students consider the methodology adopted by the good teacher, while 12.5% consider the average and no student considered the methodology poor.

When using the methodology where one learned how to make different materials using plastic bottles, 100% of the students found the methodology to be "good", since proposals disarticulated with the context of the daily life of these students and with the peculiarities inherent in the Youth and Adult Education modality increase their Difficulties in learning, contributing to repetition or avoidance. Thus, consistently with what Paulo Freire proposes<sup>18</sup>, it is understood that it is necessary to teach in Youth and Adult Education through a methodology that departs from the daily life of the student worker and that considers, above all, their personal experiences and professionals.

The methodology reused, between May and November, about 2000 two-liter plastic bottles collected by the Youth and Adult Education classes. The approximate total weight was 110 kg, which would take many years to degrade in the environment. The methodology presented difficulties in collecting a sufficient number of bottles for the production of the furniture, mainly for two reasons: the bottles for the production of the furniture have to be standardized with the same format (almost always of the same manufacturer); There are plastic bottle sizes that do not give the correct fit for the production of the furniture, limiting the methodology to almost two manufacturers. At first the methodology was started teaching the students of Education of Young and Adults to build puffs, that is the base for the construction of diverse other furniture. From the moment these students are perfecting themselves in the technique and collecting more bottles, new furniture could be produced. These teaching materials were exhibited at the School Arts and Sciences Fair (Figure 1).



**Figure 1:** Presentation of materials produced at the school science fair.

The furniture that has been produced in plastic bottles are as much and even more comfortable and resistant than furniture produced from other natural resources. This type of recycling has gained increasing visibility, not only in the business sector, but also with the often marginalized population who envisage an opportunity to make income through the transformation of these materials.

A lecture on the importance of solidarity economy was given during the science fair of the school, where other students from the school community were present besides the students in the class. The generation of income work is related to the incentive to associativism, to cooperativism, to entrepreneurship and teamwork, management skills that tend to enable the student / worker to make decisions. These factors were motivated in the classes using alternative pedagogical practices, such as the construction of furniture with plastic bottles and the lecture on solidarity economy.

All the students interviewed thought that the materials produced could be used as a source of income. The expected result was achieved in view of the motivation of Youth and Adult Education students through activities aimed at transforming a waste that could be irregularly disposed of in nature or recycled at a price that could not be so attractive in materials for use or commercialization. The work promoted the aggregation of value to the product, providing multiplication in several times of the sale value of the final product. In this way, this material could be marketed by students who wanted an alternative income.

#### IV. Conclusion

Youth and Adult Education is a teaching modality that focuses on an audience denied the right to education during childhood and / or adolescence, perhaps due to the irregular availability of places, inadequate education systems or Unfavorable socioeconomic conditions in which the student was. The teacher has to adapt the individual needs of these students by providing new means of learning.

With an innovative pedagogical practice it was possible to teach in an alternative way, presenting an environmentally correct solution for the final destination of used plastic bottles and also a more profitable way for other people to raise money from the manufacture of these materials, implementing among them a Solidarity Economy. It was observed that when content is integrated in some way to its historical context and having this knowledge practical application, the act of knowing activates the imagination and the interest.

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