



The curriculum of rural schools and its similarities to the principles of Countryside Education

 Célia Regina Nunes Cardoso Silva¹,  Sônia Fátima Schwendler²

^{1, 2} Universidade Federal do Paraná - UFPR. Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação. Campus Rebouças. Rua Rockefeller, 57, Centro, Curitiba - PR. Brasil.

Author for correspondence: regginae@hotmail.com

ABSTRACT. This article presents the result of a Master's in Education research on the movement of building the curriculum of the Rural Capoeira dos Dinos school, in the municipality of Piraquara/PR from the protagonism of the school's teachers. It seeks to examine how this school and the educators, in their pedagogical work, approach the principles of Countryside Education and how these principles shape the school curriculum. For this purpose, qualitative research was used, which articulated the participation and listening of the rural schoolteachers. The documentary analysis of three curricular proposals and the oral history methodology were adopted as instruments for data collection. Contributions from Arroyo (2007, 2010, 2015); Freire (2002); Schwendler (2010, 2017); Souza (2008, 2016); Sacristán (2000, 2011); Beirnsstein (1996); Caldart (2010, 2012) were essential for the debate on the prescribed and recontextualized curriculum and the Countryside Education. The data indicate that the school's curriculum proposal does not differ from the prescribed curriculum of the municipal network. However, the curriculum in action reveals attempts to prioritize content and strategies that address the specificities of the rural community, in teaching work, based on the process of curricular recontextualization. The results show the possibilities of reinterpreting and reworking the curriculum text, based on the paradigm of Countryside Education, concluding that the participation of teachers and the rural community is fundamental in the construction of the curriculum. The school in the countryside is advocated as a space for reconstruction, dialogue, and transformation, generating the construction of a curriculum that reflects the needs of the communities.

Keywords: countryside education, rural education, curriculum, recontextualization.

O currículo da escola no campo e suas aproximações com os princípios da Educação do Campo

RESUMO. O presente artigo apresenta o resultado de uma pesquisa de Mestrado em Educação sobre o movimento de construção do currículo da Escola Rural Capoeira dos Dinos, no município de Piraquara/PR a partir do protagonismo das educadoras da escola. Busca examinar como esta escola e os educadores, em seu trabalho pedagógico, se aproximam dos princípios da Educação do Campo e de que modo estes princípios configuram no currículo escolar. Para tanto utilizou-se de uma pesquisa de caráter qualitativo, que articulasse a participação e a escuta das educadoras na escola, localizada no campo. Adotou-se como instrumentos para coleta de dados a análise documental de três propostas curriculares e a história oral. Contribuições de Arroyo (2007; 2010; 2015); Freire (2002); Schwendler (2010, 2017); Souza (2008, 2016); Sacristán (2000, 2011); Beirnsstein (1996); Caldart (2010, 2012) foram essenciais para o debate sobre o currículo prescrito e recontextualizado e a Educação do Campo. Os dados indicam que a proposta curricular da escola não difere do currículo prescrito da rede municipal. No entanto, o currículo em ação revela tentativas de priorizar conteúdos e estratégias que contemplem as especificidades da comunidade rural, no trabalho docente, a partir do processo de recontextualização curricular. Os resultados evidenciam as possibilidades de reinterpretação e reelaboração do texto curricular, a partir do paradigma da Educação do Campo, concluindo que a participação das educadoras e da comunidade rural é fundamental na construção do currículo. Afirma-se a escola no campo como espaço que reconstrução, de diálogo, de transformação, provocando à construção de um currículo que traduza as necessidades das comunidades.

Palavras-chave: educação do campo, educação rural, currículo, recontextualização.

El plan de estudios de la escuela en el campo y sus enfoques de los principios de la Educación en el Campo

RESUMEN. Este artículo presenta el resultado de una investigación del Máster en Educación sobre el movimiento de construcción del currículo de la Escuela Rural Capoeira dos Dinos, en el municipio de Piraquara/PR a partir del protagonismo de los educadores de la escuela. Se trata de examinar cómo esta escuela y los educadores, en su labor pedagógica, abordan los principios de la Educación Rural y de qué manera se configuran estos principios en el currículo escolar. Para ello se utilizó una investigación cualitativa que articuló la participación y la escucha de los educadores de la escuela ubicada en el campo. El análisis documental de tres propuestas curriculares y la historia oral se adoptaron como instrumentos para la recopilación de datos. Las contribuciones de Arroyo (2007, 2010, 2015); Freire (2002); Schwendler (2010, 2017); Souza (2008, 2016); Sacristán (2000, 2011); Beirnsstein (1996); Caldart (2010, 2012) fueron esenciales para el debate sobre el plan de estudios prescrito y recontextualizado y la educación sobre el terreno. Los datos indican que la propuesta curricular de la escuela no difiere del currículo prescrito de la red municipal. Sin embargo, el currículo en acción revela intentos de priorizar contenidos y estrategias que abordan las especificidades de la comunidad rural, en la labor docente, a partir del proceso de recontextualización curricular. Los resultados muestran las posibilidades de reinterpretar y reelaborar el texto del plan de estudios, basándose en el paradigma de la Educación del Campo, concluyendo que la participación de los educadores y la comunidad rural es fundamental en la construcción del plan de estudios. La escuela en el campo se coloca como un espacio de reconstrucción, diálogo y transformación, provocando la construcción de un currículo que refleje las necesidades de las comunidades.

Palabras clave: educación del campo, educación rural, plan de estudios, recontextualización.

Introduction

The history of rural populations is bound up with the struggle and resistance of people who collectively face challenges imposed by capitalist society. Brazilian rural populations have long opposed the huge influence of international capital over agriculture and land. Public education policies, especially those pertaining to rural schools, are a major battlefield for this conflict. This is the backdrop to this article, which is the result of a Master's in Education research project. In light of the principles of Countryside Education, we researched curriculum-building processes among school educators from the Municipal Rural School Capoeira dos Dinos, located in the municipality of Piraquara.

Piraquara is a small city in the state of Paraná, Brazil, founded amid the slopes of a mountainous region near the sea called *Serra do Mar*, which is an Environmental Protection Area (APA) in Brazil. The community of the school is made up of small family farmers, predominantly ranchers, and residents indigenous to the locality. Capoeira dos Dinos was founded in 1922 and municipalized in 1992. In 2005, three nearby rural schools were shut down and since then, the residents of Colônia Santa Maria do Novo Tirol, Laranjeiras, and Roça Nova also began attending Capoeira dos Dinos. As a result, students and educators from these communities were subject to nucleation, causing long commutes between their homes and the school. The school currently serves approximately 90 students, spanning early childhood education to elementary levels, and employs a staff of nine educators, of whom three reside in the rural community.

This research was carried out through document analysis (Sá-Silva, Almeida & Guindani, 2009) and oral history (Thompson, 1998 and Portelli, 1997). We interviewed five educators who worked at the school and collaborated in the curriculum-building processes between 1992 and 2008. As a source of document analysis, we used the three curriculum proposals of the public education system of Piraquara.

Drawing on Countryside Education as a theoretical framework, this study aims to analyze data and address curriculum-building issues through the lens of the relationship between education and rural public policy. By synthesizing the literature on Countryside Education and curriculum, we explore possibilities for reinterpreting and redeveloping the curriculum at Capoeira dos Dinos. At its core, this study focuses on the movement to build a curriculum for rural schools based on the epistemological foundations of Countryside Education, which defends an education *for* rural people, *by* rural people. Specifically, the research investigates how the school and its educators approach the principles of Countryside

Education in their pedagogical practices, and how these principles manifest in the school's curriculum.

The findings reveal the protagonism of educators as the main agents of curriculum reinterpretation and reconstruction, empowering them as active participants in the curriculum-building process within educational networks and formative processes. This emphasizes the importance of people's participation, particularly in rural areas, to transcend the urban-centric model that has been adopted in certain educational institutions. Moreover, the cohesive relationship between the school, its professionals, and the community aids in cultivating a deeper understanding of the knowledge construction process, as well as the work, values, culture, knowledge, and identity among rural populations.

This research discusses the works of Paulo Freire (2002), Miguel Arroyo (2007, 2010, 2015), Gimeno Sacristán (2000, 2011), Maria Antônia de Souza (2008, 2016), Sônia Schwendler (2010, 2017), Basil Bernstein (1996), Roseli Caldart (2010, 2012), among others. Arroyo (2015) contends that reimagining the curriculum entails breaking down the barriers that constrain it. This is a descriptive process that fosters dialogue between the curriculum and Countryside Education, rather than being a merely prescriptive endeavor. Arroyo's insights highlight the need to investigate the potentialities of a curriculum that takes into account the experiences of rural communities and engages in a dialogue with the reality of rural life and its specificities.

Critical curriculum studies is a field concerned with freedom and the cultural and social struggles within education. It asks why some content is or is not included in the curriculum. Within Countryside Education, the curriculum must include the memory of rural people, their history of struggles, and the knowledge they have produced, in line with the principle of self-knowledge and the right to understand historical production (Arroyo, 2012). Thus, the organization of schools in rural areas is linked to a specific concept of education and school that is informed by the Countryside. This perspective sees the curriculum not as a self-contained entity, but as something that should *engage with* and be *shaped by* rural realities and experiences.

Countryside Education as a formative process

Education is a fundamental human practice that aims to promote the formation and humanization of individuals throughout their lifetime. It is recognized as a universal right that fosters the development of individuals as historical, social, cultural, and political subjects.

Education provides people with an awareness of their rights and empowers them to perceive and transform their material reality.

According to Freire (2002), education is a political act that enables the liberation and humanization of people. Through education, individuals can become conscious of their own power to transform their reality. Being conscious about reality is fundamental in the educational process, as it allows “people to know the historical context of the dilemmas that directly impact them and, armed with a conceptual repertoire, formulate political responses from their own questioning,” according to Costa (2016, p. 94).

The school plays a crucial role as a site of knowledge socialization in shaping consciousness and uncovering processes of dehumanization and negation of individuals. Schwendler (2010) underscores the educational dimension of social movements in light of the tension between humanization and dehumanization experienced by oppressed groups. It was only after the emergence of social movements, such as the Landless Workers' Movement, that education began to be discussed with rural people instead of being imposed on them, as was historically the case in the context of Rural Education. Thus, Countryside Education has emerged as a movement that amalgamates politics, rural principles, and educational practices.

Every educational process requires collective actions that are fundamental for understanding humanization and overcoming the processes of dehumanization caused by social contradictions. Collectives have consistently fortified their resilience in every historical moment and space while striving to restore their humanity. The Countryside Education Movement, which is born out of collective actions by collective subjects, exposes the diversity of knowledge and transformative practices in rural areas. It is through this lens that collective subjects devise fresh approaches to comprehending the world, generating knowledge, and innovating alternative pedagogies by absorbing and imparting new paradigms.

The practices, principles, and policies themselves are being remodeled based on past and current experiences. As Schwendler (2010, p. 273) explains, history is pushed “with the collective force of the people, of those who have fought and are in the memory of the struggles and of those who believe in change”. This means that the collective subjects are changing their ways of seeing the world, perceiving themselves as people that act and resignify their way of life, culture, work, and access to education and land. The collective process is inherently pedagogical and operates through dialogue as a collaborative and organized endeavor. Countryside Education, therefore, is a collective construct, embodying an

educational enterprise based on the principles, experiences, and struggles of rural social movements. The joint efforts of rural workers within this movement reaffirm their right to an education that is conceived *within* their land, inclusive of all members and linked to their culture, and aligned *with* their social and human needs.

Within this context, it is worthwhile to explore the paradigms of education in rural schools. Two opposing concepts of education and people stem from divergent pedagogical, political, and theoretical practices. Notably, two fundamental distinctions underlie these paradigms: space and protagonists.

As outlined by Souza (2016), Rural Education is defined as actions aimed *at* rural people, while Countryside Education is established and developed *by* rural people as a collective movement. From a counter-hegemonic standpoint, social movements for land ownership, education, and quality of life constitute Countryside Education. Conversely, Rural Education pertains to land as a business and the political subjugation of rural inhabitants, as Fernandes (2004) contends, leading to their education being founded on principles that seek to integrate them into capitalism. The paradigm of Rural Education is rooted in productivism, emphasizing the field's role as a site of goods production.

Countryside Education is a collective process driven by social groups; it sees the countryside as a contradictory space, a territory in dispute, and a place of material and symbolic production of life of the different people who live by working in the countryside. The paradigm of Countryside Education proposes new interrelationships in society that incorporate social and union movements into its demands (Silva & Borges, 2011). The term “Countryside Education”, initially “Basic Countryside Education”, emerged from the discussions for the 1st Conference on Basic Countryside Education, held in July 1998, and was later referenced in a National Seminar, held in Brasília in 2002, as highlighted by Caldart (2012). Sousa (2008) asserts that at that moment, the paradigm of Rural Education was questioned, and Countryside Education began as a new paradigm that sought to guide public policies and pedagogical practices related to rural workers. Thus, Countryside Education questions the interests of the dominant class expressed in the paradigm of Rural Education, as well as the contradictions of the capitalist mode of production.

Affirmative actions for Countryside Education occurred primarily through the adoption of curricular policies. Notably, the underpinnings of Countryside Education are rooted in scientific research and practical applications that “promote a pedagogy that respects the

culture and the identity of rural people; times; cycles of nature; mysticism of the land; appreciation of work; popular festivals, etc.” (Kolling, Nery & Molina, 1999, p. 93-94).

Decree No. 7.352 from November 4, 2010, outlines the policy for Countryside Education and the National Program for Education in Agrarian Reform (*Programa Nacional de Educação na Reforma Agrária - PRONERA*). According to Schwendler (2017), the PRONERA decree acknowledges the universal right to education and the responsibility of state and local governments to ensure its implementation. Social movements leverage this decree to advocate for and negotiate the development or enlargement of progressive initiatives in Countryside Education.

Public policies for Countryside Education are subject to an ongoing conflict regarding the allocation of public resources and the trajectory of the education program, which thoroughly impacts the pedagogical objectives and curricula of schools operating in this context. Thus, “as Countryside Education becomes institutionalized, it is disputed, invaded by a conception of Rural Education, based on the new demands of capital” (Schwendler, 2017, p. 69). Molina (2010) underscores the tension between various stakeholders, particularly the actions implemented by state and municipal education secretariats, which the author describes as “flatness, the rupture, the separation of the land from Countryside Education” (Molina, 2010, p. 138). For Molina, this practice excludes rural people from planning, pedagogical action, and the land itself.

... they want to do Countryside Education without the country... Without considering, as an inseparable dimension of this concept, the social praxis of countryside people; the materiality of their living conditions; the demands to which the students and their families are submitted/subjected in the process of ensuring their social reproduction, both as individuals and as a group (Molina, 2010, p. 138).

Additionally, a host of challenges confront the implementation of Countryside Education for rural communities. These challenges include: i) insufficient training for educators; ii) inadequate school transportation; iii) school closures; iv) insufficient resources and infrastructure; v) the expansion of agribusiness, which has displaced populations from rural areas; vi) insufficient funding for Countryside Education and related programs; vii) curricula and pedagogical projects that neglect the specific needs of rural populations; and, finally, viii) the criminalization of public schools located in Landless Workers' Movement (*Movimento Sem Terra - MST*) camps and settlements, where the organization promotes and participates in pedagogical practices. Moreover, the current political climate harbors efforts to

dismantle and erode public policies developed through years of dialogue and debate. On this, Caldart reminds us that we cannot expect the governments to:

(first) accept an education policy that takes a (practical) position for a popular agricultural project of development of the countryside and of the country that helps to train workers to fight against capital and to build another production system, another logic of social life (which is exactly the original goal of Countryside Education). And (second) to accept social movements as protagonists of Countryside Education, to accept poor rural workers as people who can build (form and content) public policies, even if specific to their own education (Caldart, 2010, pp. 119-120).

In recent times, PRONERA (1998) has undergone a substantial transformation. The ordinances that had previously established the participation of societal entities in governmental organizations were nullified by the Decree No. 9.759/2019, resulting in the dismantling of the National Pedagogical Commission of PRONERA. This commission facilitated collaboration between rural movements, labor unions, the National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform (*Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária - Incra*), and higher education institutions in developing educational initiatives for settlements and quilombos. Additionally, Decree No. 10.252/2020 dissolved the General Coordination of Countryside Education and Citizenship, which served as a management body for PRONERA. As a result, the government has assumed a more dominant role in controlling and regulating educational policies, which favor large landholders and agribusiness, and often infringe on the rights of rural communities.

The curriculum of education from/in the countryside

The curriculum is a social and cultural manifestation that is developed by those who are connected to educational institutions, including students, families, educators, employees, pedagogical staff, and management. According to (Sacristan, 2000), the curriculum is a cultural construct that structures educational practices. It is a dialectical construct that not only contextualizes educational practice but also is contextualized by it. Therefore, the curriculum is a dynamic, rather than static, entity and serves a vital social and cultural purpose.

The curriculum is a theoretical framework that brings together philosophical, epistemological, psychological, scientific, pedagogical, and social values and positions, whether explicitly or implicitly (Sacristan, 2017). The ideation of the curriculum is a result of reciprocal interaction among three major groups: i) cultural selection, where cultural content

is organized into an educational project; ii) the project is translated into rules that are enacted in practice, revealing the nature of the actual possibilities in which the curriculum materializes in schools; and iii) all curricula are conditioned by a complex reality that embodies the concepts, assumptions, and values that justify and explain the selected content.

The prescribed curriculum, as an official document, frequently fails to engage in dialogue with the genuine needs of the populace, and tends to lack diversity, as well as input from those who are engaged with and attending school. It refers to a collection of normative determinations generated from established guidelines, parameters, or shared consensus at the municipal, state, or federal levels. The imposition of the curriculum on schools follows a reproduction-based logic.

Sacristán (2000) examines the prescribed curriculum as a preconceived plan that outlines the content and structure of education. Operating within a larger education system, the curriculum functions as a blueprint for educational materials, didactic organization, and methodology. Through curriculum-building, knowledge and individuals are envisioned and legitimized, which results in the reproduction of these visions (Arroyo, 2007). According to the author, the social stereotypes about individuals in school, including “social, racial or gender hierarchies, in the countryside and in the city or in the streets and hills”, dictate and influence the planning of the curriculum (Arroyo, 2007, p. 23). These preconceptions shape how individuals are conceptualized and inform the development of the curriculum.

The selection of specific content and the organization of its sequence within the curriculum, as well as the division of individuals by year or grade and the allocation of times and spaces, reveal an exclusionary logic. Thus, reconceptualizing the curriculum as an action that commences with students necessitates a process that encompasses various stakeholders, which involves recontextualizing the practice and translating a formative curriculum. Sacristán (1985) posits that when educators materialize the curriculum, they interpret and implement it according to their own perceptions, worldviews, experiences, choices, and pedagogical methods. In the process of curriculum-building, the way individuals conceive of the people involved in education (i.e., students and educators) and the (re)interpretation of the curriculum represent fundamental dimensions. Sacristán (2008) underscores the effects of the prescribed curriculum in pedagogical practice, identifying six crucial steps to this process: i) utilizing the prescribed curriculum as a foundation for material preparation; ii) interpretation of the prescribed curriculum by educators; iii) transfer of the interpreted curriculum to the teaching plan; iv) implementation of the curriculum in the classroom; v) changes to the

curriculum due to cognitive, affective, social, moral, and opaque conditions present in the classroom; and vi) the limitation of teaching practice by the curriculum.

In light of the notion of the prescribed curriculum, the Countryside Education curriculum serves as a platform for exchanging ideas and knowledge by acknowledging the history and identity of the rural population. The development of this curriculum is part of a historical movement rooted in the struggles and establishment of Countryside Education. Nonetheless, the curriculum's proposed knowledge should be carefully considered. It aims to liberate and foster a dialogue with social, collective, and humanizing experiences that seek “to recover the stolen humanity, absent in the official curricula and teaching materials, but that dispute the territory of the curricula in rural schools.” (Arroyo, 2012, p. 506).

The Countryside Education curriculum places significant emphasis on the political and pedagogical participation of people in their education. This initiative takes into account their history, ways of thinking, and efforts to transform their realities, as these representations are integral to their lives. According to Arroyo (2012), all the educational and formative practices that occur at work and in emancipatory collective actions should be incorporated into the curriculum. Such reflections confirm that education is an intentional and political process that is continually under construction. Likewise, teacher training and school curricula are also historical, political, and intentional constructions. In the case of Countryside Education, these constructions are assumed by “social movements and by intellectuals who analyze and theorize this new consciousness.” (Arroyo, 2012, p. 58).

In this context, educational initiatives must translate the aspirations of rural communities within the parameters of possibilities, constraints, and challenges encountered in day-to-day school life. Consequently, schools ought to scrutinize and question their curriculum, engaging community members in constructive dialogue, and encouraging fresh perspectives on pedagogical proposals that foster the empowerment of educators, learners, and rural laborers. The overarching aim of this process is the humane production and sharing of knowledge, preparing students to combat all forms of discrimination, injustice, and inequality. A pedagogical enterprise that honors community knowledge and history recovers the peasant way of life and its epistemology through dialogue with universal knowledge. According to the Operational Guidelines for Basic Education in rural schools (Resolution CNE/CEB No. 01/2002), Art. 2, sole paragraph

The identity of the rural school is defined by its connection to the issues inherent to its reality, anchored in the students' own temporality and knowledge, in the collective memory that signals the future, in the science and technology network available in society, and in the

social movements in defense of projects that associate the solutions demanded by these issues with the social quality of collective life in the country.

Based on this and on the legal framework,¹ the curriculum serves a pedagogical and humanistic purpose by addressing the universal right to education through the unique characteristics and needs of rural populations. Similarly, a Countryside Education-focused curriculum proposal must diverge from the structure, content, and organization of urban schools' curricula. Developing such a curriculum necessitates incorporating knowledge of popular culture through a dialogue between rural and urban education, considering their sociocultural differences. The Countryside Education curriculum proposal, as stated in Article 2 of Decree No. 7.352 from November 4, 2010, conceives:

- I - respect for the diversity of the field in its social, cultural, environmental, political, economic, gender, generational, and racial and ethnic aspects;
- II - incentive to the formulation of specific political-pedagogical projects for rural schools, stimulating the development of school units as public spaces of investigation and articulation of experiences and studies directed to social development, economically fair and environmentally sustainable, in articulation with the world of work;
- III - development of policies for the formation of education professionals to attend the specificity of rural schools, considering the concrete conditions of production and social reproduction of life in the field;
- IV - valuing the identity of rural schools by means of pedagogical projects with curricular content and methodologies that are appropriate to the real needs of rural students, as well as flexibility in school organization, including the adaptation of the school calendar to the phases of the agricultural cycle and weather conditions; and
- V - social control of the quality of school education, through the effective participation of the community and social movements in the countryside.

In light of this discussion, Bernstein (1996) argues that the curriculum necessitates a process of “recontextualization.” According to the author, pedagogical discourse draws on scientific discourse and reworks it in accordance with political, cultural, and social values, resulting in a new discourse that reflects the specific context of the school. In this way, pedagogical discourse is a product of recontextualization, which involves the appropriation of other discourses and their adaptation to the educational context. The emergence of Countryside Education as a subject of academic inquiry is a manifestation of the demands and interests of social movements. These movements help to identify, “under conditions of advanced capitalism, many spaces of unequal relations between social groups - gender, ethnicity, religion, region - each with its own particular context of reproduction, generate (in the language of this essay) its own specific ‘voice message’.” (Bernstein, 1996, p. 73). Thus, recontextualization produces new codes and changes existing educational practices without being totalitarian by producing new and changing existing educational practices.

School as a territory of reconstructions

The present study conducted research with educators from the Capoeira dos Dinos Municipal Rural School to comprehend the curriculum implemented in a rural school setting. The process revealed that certain elements of the curriculum not only accommodate but also enrich the unique features and characteristics of the rural context.

The political-educational project posits the school as a central point of reference for the surrounding community, with educators forming strong interpersonal connections with community members to foster a sense of shared identity and belonging, which they preserve and transmit. These meanings prevail in the memories of educators and their relationships with one another, bringing the school to life, as shown in the transcripts below.

I was born and studied here in Capoeira, got married and had my daughter here. I don't think about leaving here, I want to see my daughter grow up and maybe have her children here. It is a good place to live. We know everyone here in the community. Before there were many people who planted crops for subsistence. My grandparents and my mother did this too. We collected fruit to make jams, but today there are few families who practice subsistence agriculture (Educator B, November 14, 2019).

When we graduated 4th grade here, it was very difficult. We had to go to the state school, it took about an hour to get there. Today the distance has shortened because there is public transportation, or we go by car, so it doesn't take much time. Many colleagues and friends didn't graduate, they only got through elementary school. The same happened when we graduated 8th grade, but we saw that many didn't get the importance of it. But it was important for the community to have someone in the family who had graduated. Teaching allowed us to continue here, so the women who left, and studied teaching came back and worked here in Capoeira, in Teófilo Antônio or in Zacarias (Educator A, November 19, 2019).

These narratives reveal, on one hand, the absence of a school education policy for the rural population and, on the other, the meaning of the school and the peasant reality for the educators who were born and grew up in this land. The challenge lies in building an education that articulates and integrates school and community, which demands from educators a critical and situated reading of this reality. By perceiving the school as a formative space, we refer to a place that recognizes the community of the countryside, whose traits and needs initiate their human formation. Therefore, curriculum-building is not only about systematizing contents, but also guaranteeing that students are at the beginning and the end of the formative process (Sá, Molina & Barbosa, 2011).

There are three different curriculum proposals for the municipal public school system of Piraquara, and they all carry the socialization of historically produced knowledge. These proposals date back to 1992, 2000, and 2008. Before 1992, the curriculum matrix presented in

the school was defined by the State Secretariat of Education, which determined that the contents be worked on every two months.

The first curriculum proposal was introduced when the school was municipalized in 1992. The 1992 proposal embraced critical-social pedagogy and engaged the school, the community, and school representatives, known as collaborators who expressed a commitment to the public school's political-pedagogical project, in discussions. This proposal indicates a democratic and participatory curriculum-building process that highlights the role of the principal as the central figure responsible for the actions taken within the social institution, striving for a model of school administration that is responsive to the school's needs. Likewise, it proposes that the conscientious principal articulate the collective in order to achieve the school's objectives. The proposed curriculum retains conventional subject areas while adopting a critical perspective that promotes comprehension of the human experience and society's conditions. The primary objective is to master scientific language and understand social and cultural realities, with particular emphasis on selecting relevant content for the benefit of the broader population. Despite this focus, continuing education initiatives have yet to adequately support the “new” approach to instruction in the classroom.

The promulgation of Law 9.394/1996 marked the inception of the Municipal Curricular Guidelines in 2000, which served as the theoretical and methodological foundation for pedagogical activities in schools. The guidelines were developed in partnership with faculty members from the Federal University of Paraná (UFPR), who contributed with a critical and theoretical approach to the curriculum. However, this initiative did not incorporate the perspectives of educators from schools and maintained a fixed timeline in the curricular organization and standardized contents for all municipal schools. In this case, each school could adapt the curriculum according to their needs, as long as the theoretical unity contemplated in the guidelines served as a reference for building a pedagogical proposal. Nonetheless, two prominent issues persist with this approach: first, a dependence on the principal for organizing pedagogical work and adapting the curriculum to suit the community's unique circumstances; and second, a trend towards centralized decision-making. These circumstances reveal shortcomings in educator organization and professional development, as well as the need for greater engagement with the community in shaping the school's decision-making processes.

The 2008 curriculum proposal was also developed through a process of collective construction. The selection of educators who participated in this process was based on

registration, and study groups were formed according to their areas of expertise. These groups were guided by teaching team coordinators from the Municipal Education Secretariat (SMED), and were consulted by teachers from UFPR.

This proposal introduced the recognition of the area of Geographyⁱⁱ as a fundamental component of the principles of Countryside Education. The discussion, initiated as educators analyzed the contents based on the local reality, was made official by the Decree No. 7.352/2010. These principles, which include respect for diversity and the promotion of pedagogical projects that value the identity of the school, aim to provide curricular content and methodologies that address the real needs of students. Geography is a discipline that enables students to comprehend society through an exploration of its conflicts and contradictions, as well as spatial organization and categories, including landscape, place, territory, spatial organization and representation, work, production and culture, and social relations.

With respect to the students, the importance of providing a platform for them to express their needs and interests was emphasized, promoting their engagement in finding solutions to the school's administrative challenges and underscoring the significance of their participation, given their historically marginalized position within such spaces.

The curriculum for the Capoeira dos Dinos Municipal Rural School, in all three versions, was drawn up by the Piraquara Municipal Department of Education, in a participatory movement, albeit by educators' representatives. These are unique proposals with urban-centric standards that do not distinguish between schools located in the countryside. However, there are school movements that put into practice the recontextualized curriculum.

Two educators from the school participated in the 2002 and 2008 proposals. On this topic, the educators describe

We studied a lot before going to the meetings. The readings were for the theoretical foundation. The contents were already defined, but we defined the evaluation criteria and the methodological aspects, which helped in building the lesson plans (Educator A, November 19, 2020).

I think participating in curriculum-building was very important for me. Everyone should participate in this endeavor, because when it comes time to plan the contents become clearer, because behind each one there is a historical, social, political, and cultural relationship (Educator C, March 20, 2020).

The active participation of educators in the official curriculum development is crucial. Incorporating the people and community promotes democratic education because they

materialize the importance of knowledge, as well as their expertise, and experiences into a curriculum proposal. According to Freire (1996), democratic management and school autonomy are fundamental for renewing the curriculum, creating reflective, dialogic, and democratic spaces.

The curriculum is the central and foundational element of the school's function (Arroyo, 2011), and a participatory approach requires recognition of the community's contexts, subjects, and meanings. However, community participation was not present in the curriculum-building proposals, and when consultation did occur, it was only to endorse already established projects. This situation is illustrated in educator D's transcript.

In the assembly at the beginning of the school year, we presented the proposal to the community, and we also had a meeting with the School Council, but it was not to give an opinion, only to pass on the information that there was a new proposal being built. Parents only have access to the contents that will be worked on in the assembly even when each teacher presents and shows the summary of the contents of the year (Educator D, November 7, 2019).

Throughout the implementation of the proposals, the school's educators engaged in targeted training sessions focused on curriculum content. Nonetheless, during each training session, the organization of lesson plans and teacher work plans (PTD) was prescribed, which ultimately reinforced a sense of reproduction, as interpreted by the educators.

The new way of organizing teaching, through teaching work plans, began with the 2000 curriculum guideline. In this plan we should put all the items of the PTDS (objectives, evaluation criteria, teaching resources and content) and this was a challenge to us, after all we did not know how to organize lesson plans that way. So, we followed a model imposed by SMED (Educator C, March 7, 2020).

The teaching work plan was something new until then, because before we kept class diaries, just marking content and methodology. The most difficult thing for me was to put the evaluation criteria, but since these plans were made by SMED, we only followed what was described in them (Educator B, March 5, 2020).

The ensuing transcripts reveal a preoccupation with teacher and student engagement, while also underscoring shortcomings in teacher education. Notably, a lack of familiarity with Countryside Education policies, or their disregard by local authorities, may foster misconceptions in this process.

I see that reorganizing the work is important to overcome the fragmented teaching we have. Our students have this right (Educator B, March 5, 2020).

We don't have a job totally focused on the needs of the field. Sometimes we don't even know enough about it, but we do want to make a difference (Educator C, March 20, 2020).

The transcript above reveals the educators' awareness of the pedagogical work and the crucial role it plays in the processes of recontextualizing the curriculum at school. Despite the fact that the organization of the pedagogical work still adheres to the structure of the curriculum, which is imposed by local policies, the everyday routine of the school has the potential to reshape this structure and provide cohesion and coherence to the curriculum, thus overcoming the problem of fragmentation and decontextualization of its contents.

In this context, education and its agents challenge the standardized, conventional, and urban-centric curriculum, questioning the place, continuing education, pedagogical materials, and concepts that predominate in the curricula, policies, and pedagogical culture. Despite the lack of differentiation in the curricular proposal of the school in comparison to other institutions in the educational network, there is an observable movement among educators who aim to address the specificities of the students and the community. This movement demands new perspectives on the processes of teaching, learning, and evaluation, leading to new understandings of the concepts of training, planning, and democratic processes.

Schools in the countryside play a crucial role in enhancing the resilience of rural communities. As such, the integration of community and school through the systematization of content facilitates the relationship between rural and academic knowledge. The participation of the community is vital in ensuring the development of collective and decision-making spaces concerning the activities to be carried out in the school and, most importantly, in addressing the needs of the school and the community.

The following transcript reveals the school's attempts to broaden community participation, starting with History and Geography

At first, we did a small census in the school. We divided up the teachers, students, employees, and some parents. We went door to door with a questionnaire about what the community thought about the school and what would be the main issues to be worked on. Then, at school, we organized the material and held a large assembly to discuss the subject, first with the students, who prepared posters with the main problems, which were: the lack of road structure, signals in the landmarks such as the school, lack of a hospital unit, land grabbing in Mananciais da Serra, and improvements in the school also. At the time there was no residents' association in the community. We drew up a letter of claim and sent it to the mayor, who after a few months came to the school to listen to the community (Educator D, November 7, 2019).

The perspective of the educator is indicative of an approach that is grounded in the community's reality, with the aim of enhancing the conditions of the space through

collaborative efforts between the school and the community. The contents emphasized by the educator encompass topics under Geography, such as spatial organization (in rural areas and farms) and environmental conservation, as well as issues related to the environmental quality of Piraquara municipality, such as deforestation, forms of occupation, and flooding. Additionally, under History, there is a focus on local history and its relationship to the broader context, along with the exploration of family memories to understand how people lived in the municipality in the past, work relations, culture, politics, and what it means to be a citizen.

The institution being examined displays a proactive approach to aligning course material with the real-life experiences of its students. Despite the numerous challenges posed by this approach, the school leverages the knowledge and experiences of the rural community to construct pedagogical strategies that allow for creative interpretations and adaptations of the prescribed curriculum. This highlights the importance of reinforcing the school's commendable efforts through continued theoretical and practical development, as well as fostering a collective culture that promotes educator autonomy.

In general, the content selection process in education tends to prioritize classical and urban-centric patterns. Observations in the school under analysis indicate a combination of practices that reproduce these patterns, as well as those that recontextualize the content to better reflect the realities of the students.

When reflecting on the curricular organization, provoking the school educators in their processes of approaching the conception and principles of Countryside Education, we highlight the marks of rurality present in the city of Piraquara. Family farming, rural tourism, environmental protection areas, cultural references, and demographic density help to discuss rurality and are aspects to be incorporated into the rural school curriculum. Moreover, the educators' perceptions of their students, the evaluation methodologies, school planning, collective meetings, and the development of the school's political pedagogical project all influence the teaching and learning processes. In the following transcription, Educator C reinforces these distinctive factors and underscores the need to move beyond course materials that solely reflect students' immediate reality or external contexts.

Not that we don't work based on the reality of the students and aspects of the community, such as the indigenous community, but sometimes we don't have concrete information, so the textbook, images, and other sources help us to work on certain contents. Most of the time, we also only use the lesson plans developed in the continuing education courses, because it is more practical. It is important to problematize the content and create relationships so that students learn (Educator C, March 20, 2020).

The analysis prompts us to consider critical questions regarding pedagogical practice, including the educators' appropriation of knowledge, and emphasizes the necessity of continuous training that caters to the unique characteristics and needs of educators.

Collective work as a formative process represents a promising strategy in the development of pedagogical practices at school, particularly in addressing the issue of fragmented instruction and content detachment from reality. By prioritizing collective work, the school can promote a more humanistic project that challenges traditional pedagogical approaches and leverages the knowledge generated by all individuals involved. This sentiment is echoed by Educator A, who highlights the school's adoption of the *Mais Educação* (More Education) Program as a basis for reorganizing the integrated curriculum.

I remember that we had to choose the macro-fields, and these should be based on the experiences and contexts of the community. We determined then, Agroecology: Sustainable Vegetable Growing and Culture and Art: Ethnogames, which aimed to restore traditional childhood games, known to the children and their families from the region. In these two macro-fields, we could work with the knowledge of the people of the community, with each one's ways of living (Educator A, November 14, 2019).

The school's aim is to utilize knowledge that emerges from social practice, with collective practice playing a pivotal role in knowledge generation and materialization. Group discussions raise questions about the “relations between what is lived (day-to-day) and what is unknown, beyond what one seeks to know (other places, other relations). This is the greatest challenge of the school” (Souza, 2011, p. 27).

When the school's community questioned the curriculum's organization, they engaged in a process of reflective and logical thinking that goes beyond established patterns, leading to a recontextualization of their practices by inferring their conceptions of education, students, community, and society. However, to fully incorporate these conceptions into the curriculum, it is essential to elucidate and align them with the principles of Countryside Education.

The challenge lies in encouraging educators to consider their students' context beyond the shallow confines of the curricular matrices and to acknowledge their land and its history, land rights, land use, and the struggle for social justice. Defining what to teach and how to teach it guides the pedagogical work, which evaluates and limits contents, raising their complexity as totalitarian or fragmented.

Concluding remarks

Our focus on the curriculum-building movement from the perspectives of educators and professionals revealed the school's struggle to balance the implementation of an urban-centric education policy, as reflected in the curriculum, with efforts to address the needs and aspirations of the rural community. This conflict challenges educators to rethink their role in transforming the prescriptive curriculum into a curriculum that translates the needs and desires of the rural community.

The proposal adopted in the municipal school system, which consisted of three versions, was developed with universal parameters and bases. However, the educators' involvement in its creation has been limited to representation, and the discussion of the “fundamental” contents follows the local policy's ordering, disregarding the municipality's diversity and particularities, such as its rural marks. Thus, By using the paradigm of Countryside Education as a lens, it becomes apparent that the rural school in Piraquara displays traces of Rural Education, which doesn't consistently address the needs and perspectives of the rural community. Despite this, there are signs that suggest efforts to prioritize content and strategies that recognize the rural context in the curriculum, through the process of recontextualization of the curriculum.

Research results suggest the potential for educators to take on a leading role in reinterpreting and adapting the curriculum proposal to the local context. The data show that most educators tend to prioritize content uniformity in terms of content selection, since the school's curriculum proposal is similar to others in the municipal education system. However, the educators also acknowledge the importance of deviating from the uniform content selection process and emphasize the need to include other knowledge and values that are not reflected in the official text. They also stressed the significance of identifying and promoting the identity of the rural school through collective debate that involves the community and school in decision-making regarding pedagogical issues

Investigating the curriculum through educators' eyes reveals a close relationship between educators and students that goes beyond prescribed text limits and rewriting new interpretations of what and how to teach. This process of recontextualization of curriculum organization involves displacing meanings, which leads to the implementation of new discursive and pedagogical practices and creates a space for the treatment of systematized contents in the school context.

As per the Operational Guidelines for Basic Countryside Education, the curriculum of rural schools encompasses historically systematized knowledge, as well as knowledge gained from life experiences and the way of life of rural communities. Therefore, the concept of Countryside Education urges and encourages us to re-examine pedagogical practices, and to view both the school and the community as educational environments that facilitate the comprehension of social and historical realities. Thus, it is imperative to work with subject matter that fosters critical thinking and autonomy among students, thereby empowering educators and students alike to become protagonists in their own histories.

The investigation of community participation with the school revealed indicators that follow limited and conventional patterns when inviting community to participate in certain school events. Only a single instance of collective action was observed during the episode of the school's attempted closure in 2006. This finding raises crucial questions, such as the factors that hinder greater community involvement, why the school and its community continue with a practice that alienates the community, and what perspectives community members hold about the school.

When examining the topic of community participation, we defend that curriculum-building should involve the community as it reflects societal and educational conceptions. It is essential for individuals to engage and take part in discussions about the curriculum and pedagogical decisions, as it is their right. In delving into the curriculum and its associated pedagogical practices, a fundamental link between the right to education, the right to a school, and the right to citizenship are established. By involving the rural communities in this process, it is possible to bring about a transformative impact on their reality.

The findings of this study reveal several obstacles that need to be addressed to construct a curriculum for rural schools based on the principles and guidelines of Countryside Education. Among these challenges are: the need to acknowledge the practices developed within the school context in order to promote an education that values local communities and knowledge; the establishment of the rural school's identity by recognizing and identifying rural communities within its documents; and the integration between the school and the community as a means of enabling participation by all parties when building curricular proposals and pedagogical projects.

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ⁱ Legal frameworks include: CNE/CEB Resolution No. 1/2002 that establishes the Operational Guidelines for Basic Countryside Education; Resolution No. 2/2005; Opinion No. 1/2006, regarding alternating school days; CNE/CEB Resolution No. 4/2010 that defines the identity of the rural school and recognizes it as a specific modality; Decree No. 7.353/2010 that provides for the national policies of Rural Education and PRONERA.

ⁱⁱ Our findings show that the areas of knowledge in the curriculum that most relate to the rural community were History, Geography, and Science. However, during the data collection with the educators, we noticed that Science is the area with the least in-depth work and content systematization in the school.

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