

The challenges of educational systems adopted in Modular High School in the countryside at Rui Barbosa School, Medicilândia, Pará

 Alcinei da Silva Araújo¹,  Fabíola Aparecida Ferreira Damacena²,  Carla Giovana Souza Rocha³

^{1, 2, 3} Universidade Federal do Pará - UFPA. Campus Universitário de Altamira/Faculdade de Etnodiversidade. Rua Coronel José Porfírio, 2515, Campus II, Bairro Esplanada do Xingu. Altamira - PA. Brasil.

Author for correspondence: alcinei1414@gmail.com

ABSTRACT. The research aims to reflect on the Modular Teaching Organization System (SOME) based on a case study at Escola Rui Barbosa, Medicilândia, Pará. Focusing on supply and operation, in addition to understanding the process of acceptance of the Interactive Educational System (SEI) by the community. The approach was quali-quantitative, with interviews, collection and processing of secondary data and documentary research. Secondary education in this community is the result of collective social struggle, with an increase in the number of enrollments from 2003 to 2019, as well as a decrease in the number of dropouts. Despite the challenges of ensuring the supply of subjects, teachers and infrastructure, SOME was defended by the school community for guaranteeing access to secondary education in the countryside. The local community does not support replacement by the SEI presented by the state government as a pilot proposal, considering that there will be a loss in the quality of education and a devaluation of teachers. Popular participation in the definition of public educational policies is not a priority for public agents, who continue to define them without discussion with society.

Keywords: countryside education, high school, modular teaching.

Os desafios dos sistemas educacionais adotados no Ensino Médio Modular no campo na Escola Rui Barbosa, Medicilândia, Pará

RESUMO. A pesquisa tem como objetivo refletir sobre o Sistema de Organização Modular de Ensino (SOME) a partir do estudo de caso na Escola Rui Barbosa, Medicilândia, Pará. Buscou-se sistematizar parte da trajetória do ensino médio modular das escolas do campo no município, com enfoque na oferta e funcionamento, além de compreender o processo de aceitação do Sistema Educacional Interativo (SEI) pela comunidade. A abordagem foi quali-quantitativa, com a realização de entrevistas, coleta e tratamento de dados secundários e pesquisa documental. O ensino médio nessa comunidade é fruto da luta social coletiva, ocorrendo o aumento no número de matrículas de 2003 a 2019, assim como a diminuição do número de alunos evadidos. Apesar dos desafios de assegurar a oferta das disciplinas, professores e de infraestrutura, o SOME foi defendido pela comunidade escolar por garantir o acesso ao ensino médio no campo. A comunidade local não apoia substituição pelo SEI apresentado pelo governo estadual como proposta piloto, considerando que haverá perda na qualidade da educação e desvalorização dos docentes. A participação popular na definição de políticas públicas educacionais não é prioridade dos agentes públicos, que continuam definindo-as sem a discussão com a sociedade.

Palavras-chave: educação do campo, ensino médio, ensino modular.

Los desafíos de los sistemas educativos adoptados en la Escuela Secundaria Modular en el campo en la Escuela Rui Barbosa, Medicilândia, Pará

RESUMEN. La investigación tiene como objetivo reflexionar sobre el Sistema Modular de Organización de la Enseñanza (SOME) a partir de un estudio de caso en la Escola Rui Barbosa, Medicilândia, Pará. Centrándose en la oferta y operación, además de comprender el proceso de aceptación del Sistema Educativo Interactivo (SEI) por la comunidad. El enfoque fue cuali-cuantitativo, con entrevistas, recolección y procesamiento de datos secundarios e investigación documental. La educación secundaria en esta comunidad es el resultado de la lucha social colectiva, con un aumento en el número de matrículas de 2003 a 2019, así como una disminución en el número de abandonos. A pesar de los desafíos de asegurar la oferta de asignaturas, docentes e infraestructura, SOME fue defendido por la comunidad escolar para garantizar el acceso a la educación secundaria en el campo. La comunidad local no apoya el reemplazo por el SEI presentado por el gobierno estatal como una propuesta piloto, considerando que habrá una pérdida en la calidad de la educación y una devaluación de los docentes. La participación popular en la definición de políticas públicas educativas no es una prioridad para los agentes públicos, quienes continúan definiéndolas sin discusión con la sociedad.

Palabras-clave: educación rural, escuela secundaria, enseñanza modular.

Introduction

The Organization System of Modular Education (SOME) meets the demand of peasants and traditional populations for access to High School in Pará, a state in the Brazilian Amazon region. Since 2017, it has been replaced by the Interactive Educational System (SEI), causing numerous criticisms and dissatisfaction from rural communities and education professionals, who have required effective participation in the evaluation and definition of policies.

The relation between the countryside and the city marks the process of subject formation - peasants who have historically struggled for conditions of equal access to the right to Basic and Higher education, for educational policies or affirmative actions. This access provides the opportunity for training and acting as teachers and researchers in rural schools, ensuring formal education in rural communities. Furthermore, the training directly implies the understanding of the individual as a subject and their belonging to the territories for which they resist and fight for public policies aimed at citizens.

In this study, we brought together students and teachers from primary schools and universities to discuss the reality of High School offered to rural communities

in the Transamazônica region, in the southwest of Pará. In the process of data production and organization, we accessed research reports from the *Tempos Comunidade* (Community time) of the Licentiate degree in Rural Education, which is the period students develop field research, internships, and interventions in their communities.

The Teaching Degree in Rural Education, from the Federal University of Pará, offered by the Faculty of Ethnodiversity in Altamira's Campus, is a regular, on-site course, which through the Pedagogy of Alternation, with alternating stages of training, whose degree offer is given by area of knowledge. The course is structured from the articulation between teaching, research and extension, whose objective is to promote teacher education contextualized in the reality of their communities of belonging, something important for the reorientation of educational public policies. This form of alternating training is offered in the intensive system and makes it possible the access of traditional populations and rural educators, who historically have not had the opportunity to take a degree in a public institution.

The academic works produced during the *Tempos Universidade*

(university time), a period in which students are in the classroom, consist of practical activities on the actions developed in the Community Times, with the aim of mobilizing students to this commitment to their own education and to doing science aware of their role as representatives of their rural communities and schools. At the same time, studies on the methods that represent the practical and instrumental part of the research and the epistemologies which signal theoretical discussion and vigilant reflection on practices and experiences that are woven throughout training, towards the understanding of these articulations necessary to ensure the rigor and quality of scientific production in the areas of education and social sciences, without losing sight of the historical contextualization of the events (Gamboa, 2018).

In this sense, scientific research as an action to understand phenomena, practices, problems and social issues, is necessarily articulated with the solution of problems and with the social and historical contexts that define them.

This study presents a reflection on the Organization System of Modular Education (SOME) offered at the Rui Barbosa Municipal Elementary School, located on the banks of the

Transamazônica highway (BR 230), in Agrovila Jorge Bueno da Silva, in Medicilândia, Pará, as well as how it systematizes part of the trajectory of modular secondary education in rural schools in this municipality, focusing on the functioning and challenges of offering this type of education, and seeks to understand the process of acceptance by the school community for the implementation of the Interactive Educational System (SEI), proposed by the state government of Pará.

Methodology

This qualitative research uses the case study as a method. Merriam (1998, p. 13) argues a qualitative case study is “an intense, holistic description as well as an analysis of a limited phenomenon, such as a program, an institution, a person, a process or a social unit”. From this statement by Merriam, the case can be “a person, a program, a group, a specific policy and so on”, using interviews, observations, and document analysis for data collection (Yazan, 2015, p. 174). Thus, the case study of modular secondary education systems took place within the context of the Rui Barbosa School, in Medicilândia, Pará.

In this research, data were produced from structured interviews with students

and managers of schools at the Polo Rui Barbosa and Francisca Gomes dos Santos, as well as the 10th Regional Education Unit (URE) and of Medicilândia Department of Education (SEMED). The subjects agreed to participate in the research for academic-scientific purposes by signing an Informed Consent Form¹, and identified by the initials of their names.

Due to the new coronavirus (SARS-COV 2) pandemic and as a consequence of this context the closing of schools and institutions, interviews with graduate students from the Rui Barbosa School, with the coordination of the 10th URE and with representatives of the City Department of Education were carried out via message app (WhatsApp).

Data from the reports of the observation period and research in *Tempos Comunidade* were also considered, as well as from one of the supervised internships in high school carried out in the Teacher Degree in Rural Education (Araújo, 2019). We also present demographic censuses from the IBGE, and data from the school census of the head school EEEM Professora Francisca Gomes dos Santos, of the 10th URE/SEDUC and of the Rui Barbosa School.

Therefore, recognizing that the countryside, beyond being a place, is a

territory, whose rural communities play a direct role in the production of research experiences, provoking a philosophical reflection on the nature of those experiences in their manifestation in the educational area. Both the perspective of totality and the particularity of reality are crossed by different areas of knowledge and paths in the process of describing and debating the construction of the object "education" by the human subject, woven in the context of historical and cultural reality (Gamboa, 2018).

The Modular Education System: political and pedagogical path at Rui Barbosa School

The Organization System of Modular Education (SOME) of the State Department of Education (SEDUC) Pará is implemented in the expectation of meeting what was provided for in the Brazilian Federal Constitution of 1988, in item II, of article 208, of constitutional amendment n° 14/1996, which establishes that it is the State's duty to guarantee the progressive universalization of free secondary education in public schools.

For Sacramento (2018), formal education at the basic level is characterized by the process of integration and subject formation. Based on this assumption, modular high school aims to develop human skills in general, providing the

necessary conditions for the acquisition of knowledge and, in a way, considers the social needs of young people, since the practice of coexistence depends on the development of knowledge that now becomes important instruments for personal and collective fulfillment, within their family or community of belonging.

This education system (SOME), as a public policy, was created in 1980 in the state of Pará, with the objective of guaranteeing basic education to rural populations, and started to be implemented by SEDUC in 1982. In 2019, it served 144 municipalities, according to SEDUC, constituting a strategy to take secondary education to communities with difficult access and with lower demographic density (State Department of Education, 2008).

SOME is still working today by offering disciplinary modules for secondary education to young people and adults in 22 Regional Education Units (UREs). Among these regions, the 10th URE is located in the municipality of Altamira, it is responsible for a total of eight municipalities in Pará, namely, Altamira, Anapu, Brasil Novo, Medicilândia, Porto de Moz, Senator José Porfírio, Uruará and Vitória do Xingu, with a total of seventeen schools (State Department of Education, 2020). According to the coordination of the 10th

URE, the regional has a staff of 51 teachers, 41 permanent and 10 temporary, 01 supervisor and 01 teacher acting as a technician and has approximately 10,393 enrolled students, according to the Census of 2019 (State Department of Education, 2020).

It is undeniable that the decentralization of education was a fundamental milestone in the history of education in Brazil, as it enabled the return of young adults from the countryside to schools, which for years had no access to secondary education, or even to the final grades of education fundamental, because they are concentrated in the urban environment.

In Medicilândia, according to the history of the Political Pedagogical Project of the Professora Francisca Gomes dos Santos High School, Modular Rural was implemented in 2001, along with the *Ensino-Normal Magistério*, courses that enable one to teach in Early Childhood Education. During this period, teachers came from other cities due to the lack of qualified professionals in the locality to work in secondary education. In 2003, in view of the students' demands, it was authorized the regular High School through Ordinance nº 529/2003-GS-SEDUC. In 2005, modular education (basically a structure formed by a module referring to a

certain discipline or area of knowledge) was abolished in the urban environment, and until today the provision of regular education from kindergarten to high school remains.

SOME's focus at the time was vocational high school education, the students were trained and able to work in the labor market, in the areas of Teaching and Accounting.

Brayner (2012) emphasizes that, according to SEDUC records, in her research on the Organization System of Modular Education in rural areas:

In the first moment of implementation, the Teaching course was prioritized with the intention of training teachers to work with the initial grades of elementary school. In the second moment, there was expansion with the courses of Accounting, Administration, Human and Biological Sciences, seeking to meet the requests and demands of the municipalities (Brayner, 2012, p. 18).

The author goes on to explain the organization and functioning of the system, which: "... at the time, they provided for the displacement of the teacher from the city to the rural area, in order to teach his subject during the period foreseen for the module, staying in each location, with the teacher having to fulfill the workload and pass the necessary content for the desired training". (Brayner, 2012, p. 18).

Considering the need to offer high school in the municipality, local representatives sought out the State Department of Education (SEDUC) to demand a type of education that contemplated and met the population's needs. Thus, the teaching modality known as rural modular was implemented, which operated at the Abraham Lincoln School and served both people from urban and rural areas. Thus, according to information from the school principal, Abraham Lincoln School was the first institution to receive SOME in the municipality of Medicilândia, later transferred to Francisca Gomes dos Santos state school.

Therefore, the modular educational system was implemented in the city before what is shown in the history of the current reference school. In this regard, the current principal of the Abraham Lincoln School, who was the principal in charge at the time, reported that:

I don't know when SOME was actually implemented in the school, I only know that it was in the 1990s. It worked as follows, one subject at a time, teachers came from Altamira and other cities and stayed at other teacher's houses and taught one subject at a time in a module, in the night shift (Teacher Z.M., Principal of Abraham Lincoln School, 2020).

With the city's population growth, the demand from students increased and thus the modality of modular education

started to be implemented in four other communities: Jorge Bueno da Silva (Rui Barbosa School), Nova Fronteira (Gaspar Viana School), São Braz (Vitória Régia School) and União da Floresta (Nossa Senhora das Graças school). These four are called the Head schools (*escolas pólo*), which in turn are responsible for the adjacent schools. The attached schools are in the neighboring areas, which are the unpaved roads that depart from the main axis, which is the Transamazon Highway and enter tens of kilometers into the rural area of the municipality.

With the territorial extension of 8,272,629 km² and with 65% of rural population, according to the 2010 IBGE Census, Medicilândia has as its economic base agricultural activities predominantly family-based, in which the reality and daily life of the countryside are well differentiated in relation to the city center, lacking access to public services, commerce in general and infrastructure. The implementation of high schools in rural communities created new possibilities for maintaining families on their properties and improving living conditions.

The director of the school Rui Barbosa, who was the educational supervisor at the time, points out that before SOME was implemented in the

community, the teaching modality operated through the Special Group for Modular Education (GEEM) program, which offered high school education, but there was resistance from the community who expected the modality for its regular offer and not in modules. This project worked until the implementation of the SOME.

The Modular System generally works in rural communities, occupying classrooms in municipal schools, provided by the local government, when there are no hours with elementary school classes. In the Jorge Bueno da Silva community, high school classes happen at night, providing access to people who work during the day.

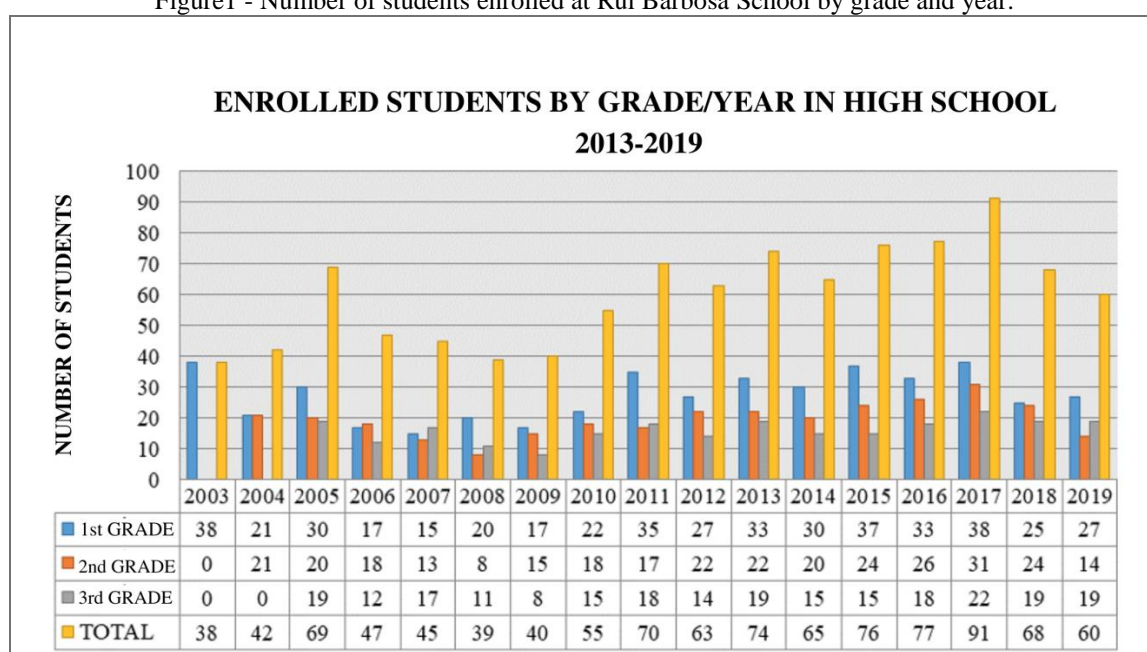
It is important to point out that this educational system was gradually implemented in the city, as well as in the Jorge Bueno da Silva community, where it started in 2003. As evidenced by Silva and Tontini (2007, p. 48), finally, in 2003, it began the secondary education, which was incorporated gradually, that is, from the 1st to the 3rd grade. In March 2006, there was the graduation ceremony of the first high school class at the Rui Barbosa School. High school was a source of pride and happiness for the entire community, as reported.

The happiness of all those present was visible, as the children of farmers who until then had walked 20 km to study in the city and often could not return home on the same day due to the puddles caused by the rains in the winter period, preventing the traffic of the vehicles that carried them ... these students often slept in the car or walked home at dawn the next day, as they studied at night, and the situation on the Transamazon Highway did not

offer trafficability (Silva & Tontini, 2007, p. 48).

Figure 1 contains the numbers of students enrolled in high school over the years, in the SOME modality, according to each grade in the Rui Barbosa School since its implementation.

Figure1 - Number of students enrolled at Rui Barbosa School by grade and year.



Source: Data provided by the Rui Barbosa School's office (2020).

The educational statistical data presented in Figure 1 show there was a rise in the number of students enrolled in high school/SOME between 2003 and 2019, reaching 91 students enrolled in 2017. From the year 2005, period when the three high school grades began operating in this location, there was a decline in the number of enrollments in 2008 with 39 students enrolled and then,

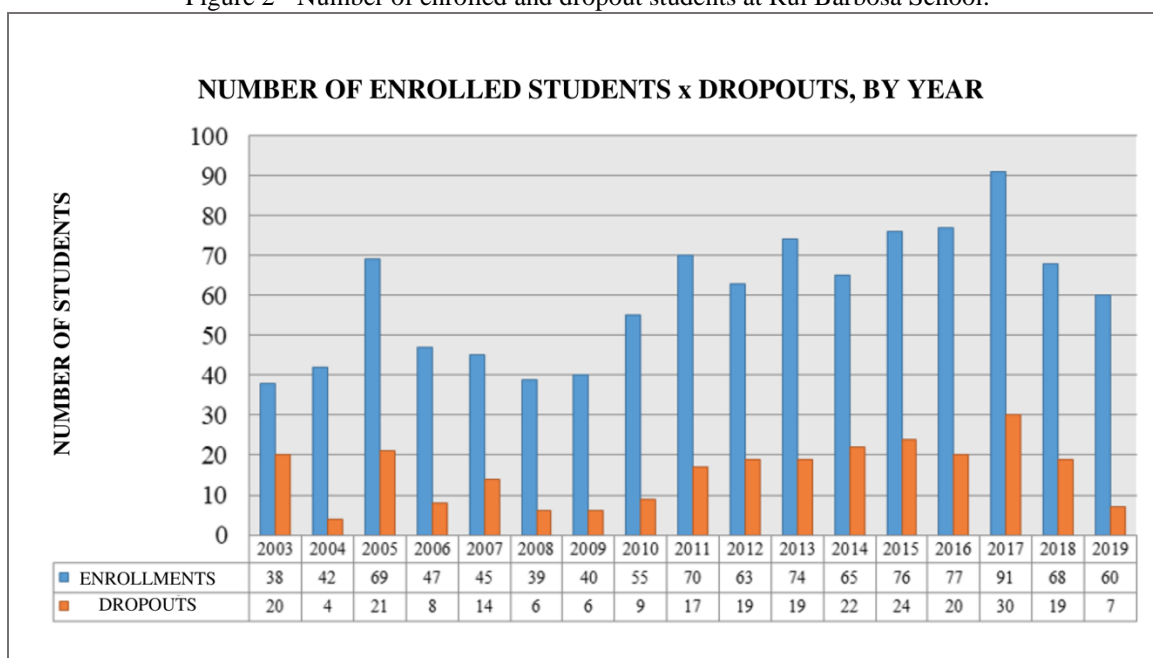
there was a progressive increase, decreasing again in 2019.

The 2010 Census indicated the rural population of Medicilândia was 17.820 inhabitants out of a total of 27.328, and in later years an increase in migration to the city center and to agrovillages was observed, in search of education and health services, as well as work. In other words, the Rui Barbosa school is an

important reference of access to education for families and, in 2020, 54 students were enrolled in high school, 24 in the 1st, 12 in the 2nd and 18 in the 3rd grade, representing 26.7% of the total number of students enrolled in this modality in the city.

Next, dropout will be analyzed as one of the challenges that educational systems face, as the data in Figure 2 present. Dropout rates also vary widely, and in the years 2019 and 2018 there was a significant drop.

Figure 2 - Number of enrolled and dropout students at Rui Barbosa School.



Source: Data provided by the Rui Barbosa School's office (2020).

According to the students, there are several factors that lead them to give up on their studies, among which the following were highlighted: distance between the school and their homes; closed roads during the rainy season; tiredness, because they are workers during the day, whether in domestic, contracted or other forms of work; pregnancy and lactation period, in the case of women who end up being the main responsible for the care of their children.

In the region, cocoa production predominates, many families move to work as sharecroppersⁱⁱ, thus, school dropouts happen because they need to migrate to other locations. We also highlight the instability during the modules, due to the lack of courses offered not having qualified teachers available. All are factors that influence school dropout and, in turn, reverberate in the limitation of the modular system.

The data collected at the Rui Barbosa School shown in Figure 2 also indicated a reduction in the number of enrollments in the last 2 years, with 68 students enrolled in 2018 and 60 in 2019. The school principal emphasizes the reduction in enrollments is due to the number of local youth which is also decreasing, some leaving the community in search of job opportunities, others are getting married and there are those who no longer want to study.

Although the number of students has decreased compared to 2017, the rate of students who completed high school in the community and entered higher education increased in 2018 and 2019.

The Organization System of Modular Education has the following hierarchy and function: State Department of Education- SEDUC (responsible for state coordination); the Regional Education Unit - URE/SEDUC (regional coordination responsible for providing qualified teachers); head school (coordination of circuits by municipality, responsible for document administration) and Polo Schools, where SOME is offered.

Thus, the state government is responsible for maintaining qualified teachers and the municipal government's duty is to provide the structure where classes will take place, which is not the

case of Rui Barbosa, as the structure is already statewide. The municipal government ensures the provision of school transport, as guaranteed in the Law of Directives and Basis for National Education (*Lei de Diretrizes e Bases - LDB*) no. 9.394/96, in article 208, to ensure education for students who live in villages farther from the school in which it is offered the module, however, transport only works while elementary school classes take place. School meals are also the responsibility of the municipal government, as guaranteed by Law no. 11.947/2009, in Article 208 of the Federal Constitution. Regarding the management, Rodrigues and Silva (2018, p. 268) state that:

There is no specific management team for the modular system in the operating locations. Although the school is in their community (or in neighboring areas), they are linked to a Head School, located in the city and responsible for meeting the pedagogical-administrative demands in conjunction with the Regional Education Units.

In this sense, despite not having a specific management team to meet the modular system, the school's technical-pedagogical and administrative team provides support in the enrollment and during the school year, such as access to the library, use of the laboratory, information technology, currently

installed in the library, printed materials, maintenance of classrooms, among others.

Throughout the year, the school offers four modules and each module lasts 02 months, depending on the workload of each curricular component, namely, Portuguese, English, Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, Biology, History, Geography, Physical Education, Philosophy and Sociology; and the diversified curricular components that are, Arts and Aspects of Citizen Life for the 1st grade, Amazon Studies for the 2nd grade and Portuguese Language II for the 3rd grade. When they are unable to offer all the components during the year, they are offered at the beginning of the following one as a replacement, parallel to the new school year.

According to reports from the school principal, in 2017 and 2018 some subjects were no longer offered because there were not available teachers. There is a huge concern not only on the part of the students who are taking the course, but also by the school management, in relation to the difficulties in the learning process and in the development of skills to succeed in the National Secondary Education Examination (ENEM), college admission exams and public contests.

There was also school dropout throughout the school years, despite the decrease in 2019 and 2018, it may be related to the socioeconomic characteristics of students in the community and the very functioning of the modular education system, which need to be considered when discussing the planning of educational actions aimed at the countryside, as well as rethinking the curriculum itself in rural areas. Besides, SOME's vision is focused on preparation with a view to entering university, which is not always the expectation of young students, as concluded by Oliveira (2010, p. 105) on other points of view to be considered for teaching in rural schools:

... SOME does not experience informative and training aspects related to local production, its contents are aimed at preparing for the college entrance exam and the urbanization process. It opens new life expectations for its users, especially the aspiration to attend higher education and the search for work in urbanized areas. In other words, the starting and ending point of knowledge is the city, an aspect that, in principle, the Program was intended to avoid.

Participants do not question the pedagogical quality of education offered by SOME, however, there is no appreciation of local knowledge, as the contents take urban living as a reference,

rather than encouraging students to study and stay in their communities, valuing the countryside and its way of life. As if this decontextualization of education was not enough, in 2017, the state government began to implement the replacement of SOME by SEI (Interactive Educational System), which, according to SEDUC, is a methodology for regular and in-person secondary education with technological mediation through video lessons, whose implications in the learning process are reflected below from the subjects who experience this reality at Escola Rui Barbosa.

SOME and SEI: what do students, teachers and managers think?

The Interactive Educational System (SEI) is a project of the Department of Education of the state of Pará that proposes to expand high school in rural communities. At first, it uses a face-to-face methodology, mediated by video lessons (SEDUC, 2021). It was authorized by the State Council of Education of Pará through resolution No. 202, April 25, 2017, Opinion No. 205/2017 - CEE/PA and has among the goals of the State Education Plan, that of "raising the quality of basic education in all stages and modalities, with an improvement in the school flow, in order

to reach an average of 5.3 in the Basic Education Development Index (IDEB) by 2025" (State Department of Education, 2018).

It is also important to highlight that the Interactive Educational System is an initiative made possible by the Program for Quality Improvement and Expansion of Education Coverage in Pará, made possible through financing provided by the state government with the Inter-American Development Bank in December 2013 ... classes are broadcast daily from the Media Center located in Belém, the state capital, and taught by teachers specialized in their respective disciplines. The content is received in rural communities by students and local teaching activities are conducted by mediating teachers, dedicated exclusively to the SEI class and present daily in the classrooms. The role of these teachers is central in the methodology of face-to-face teaching with technological mediation, since they are responsible for connecting students to teachers in real time, answering questions and carrying out classroom dynamics that encourage exchanges and maintain the quality of teaching (State Department of Education, 2018).

According to SEDUC-Pará, from a technical point of view, students watch the classes transmitted via satellite through a TV installed in the room dedicated to the SEI, located in a School of the Municipal Network. All classrooms also contain microphones for communication between students, mediators and teachers, a computer, where the mediator can send questions through online chat, answered by a

teacher on duty, located in the Media Center (State Department of Education, 2018).

The Department of Education justifies the implementation of the SEI by the complexity of the provision of secondary education in rural regions, the demand to be met, the phytogeographic conditions and the proficiency and dropout rates.

In this universe of State Schools, there is a high dropout rate and low proficiency rates in Portuguese and Mathematics, 17% of rural students drop out of studies, against 14.9% in urban areas, according to the School Census/ INEP. According to the 2016 results of the educational assessment system in Pará, 60.7% and 78.6% of students are below basic proficiency in Portuguese and Mathematics, respectively (State Department of Education, 2018).

SEI classes would normally start in the 2018 term. SEDUC's goal was to bring regular high school, through technology, to 145 classrooms. By the end of 2018, this education system was to be in operation for the participation of 6,400 students in pilot classes in 61 locations in Pará.

To verify the position on the SEI, the point of view of teachers and students from the Rui Barbosa School was sought, who participated in a meeting that took place at the 10th URE, municipality of Altamira on the implementation of this

teaching modality that would take place at the school community in the year 2018, the period in which the change would take place and would be the target audience of this system.

At the meeting held in Altamira in 2017, some questions about the new system to be implemented were clarified and students raised several concerns about its structural and pedagogical feasibility and requested that SOME continued. From this manifestation and others, the SEI modality was implemented only in one community in the city for testing, at Magalhães Barata School.

Students were asked about SEI, as students of the Modular Teaching System and the potential future users of the new modality. The subjects were dissatisfied and unsure about the benefits of this change, as shown in the statements below.

I believe it would have no benefits but harms. Because this system would only delay the teaching of our community, which is already behind compared to large cities. In my opinion, it would not work, because it is already very difficult to learn with the teacher in the classroom to clear all our doubts, imagine just a class on television, where students would not have the resource to answer their doubts, which is essential for the learning (E.P.A, former SOME student in the community, 2020).

In my point of view, the model that was to be implemented would cause some delays in education because it prevents the student from interacting in real time with the teacher, the student from clarifying their doubts and everything else. In my opinion, this is what the teacher is for, he is there to talk, interact with the student, to clarify all doubts and if the student were to have a class, let's say remote, we would have it at home, we would study at home through internet, but not all students had internet at the time. The teaching modality they wanted to implement would bring some changes and would probably delay education, because with the teacher in the classroom it is already difficult, imagine just a class being broadcast through a screen or television for us (E.C.A, former SOME student, 2020).

When questioning another student, she stated to have the same way view, and cites as an example the moment the world is going through, with the confrontation of the new coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), students are trying to continue their studies through digital platforms, however, are finding it difficult to learn the content, not to mention that not all students have access to technology.

I believe that it would be a delay in learning, because it is difficult to learn only by watching classes on the internet, not everyone has an easiness to learn, but with the teacher in the classroom we don't learn a lot, imagine with only videos, outside that the teacher would be replaced

by a technology that would not benefit everyone. We have seen many examples now with this pandemic, many students are not studying because the classes are being made through videos, and many, as I mentioned earlier, have difficulties to learn. It's been a big challenge for young people today, I even saw in the newspaper that many young people are complaining about these classes through videos. (S.S., former SOME student in the community, 2020).

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The interviewees basically have the same vision in relation to this interactive educational system, mainly in terms of accessibility and learning through video lessons. Regarding the issue of high school reform, when we questioned

pioneer teachers of the modular education system about the possible replacement of SOME by SEI and the struggles they have been facing to maintain this type of education, they answered:

SOME is a project to serve rural communities, where the internet is not yet of good quality and the replacement of the presence of teachers in these communities by an internet system or TV signal is an unfeasible project, firstly the population's culture from the field is another. It is the contact, the dialogue with the professionals that increases learning, staying in front of a device will not have learning, it may reduce the high school completion rate, the quality will be much lower. And with that, it will harm the competition for places at universities between those who live in the countryside with those who live in the city, because those who are in regular high school have access to a high-quality course and the internet; today, SOME competes on equal terms with the regular system of any city in the state of Pará. This SEI project is unfeasible, we have already been to Belém with the Education Department of the previous government, the union continues to discuss this. As for the government, we are the ones who work and know the reality of rural communities in the state of Pará, we disagree with this project and hope that the government can give up and keep SOME working in rural communities and that it can take it to others that do not yet have it (A.N., SOME professor, 2020).

In the same sense, SEI is not appreciated by the teacher A. C. R, who works at SOME, and has resisted,

fighting for a quality education to be offered by the current modular system.

Currently, SOME has been facing several government attacks to replace SOME by SEI. Such an attempt is an affront to the student from the countryside, as we know of the scrapping suffered intentionally by the Modular Education Organization System, aiming at discrediting it in favor of the implementation of SEI, since it does not offer maintenance of basic needs for students regarding the teaching-learning process. Despite the issues caused by government neglect, SOME has shown, over the years, a positive performance in the educational process, thus strengthening the struggles of educators and students in maintaining in-person classes and not the cold and inert teaching proposed by SEI. (A.C.R., SOME teacher, 2020).

As we can see in the opinions posted, SEI it's a system not well regarded by students from the communities and teachers who work at SOME. From this perspective, when questioning the municipality's Secretary of Education in relation to the system implemented as a pilot project in one of the schools in the municipality's rural area, he points out:

Today we have only one school with the SEI system, now entering the 3rd year through media intervention. I had the opportunity to follow the classes via the platform, where the students observe the classes, they pay attention to the teacher and then

work on solving the activities. I didn't particularly find any negative in relation to this type of teaching. In fact, at the time I was watching, I even saw students much more concentrated than in a normal classroom. In my point of view, it's a way, a new methodology that can work! Because the student is not absent from the teacher. Did you understand? The teacher is only at a distance, transmitting his lessons through a screen, but it is as if it were a normal face-to-face lesson, because there is interaction with the teacher. From my point of view, I didn't find faults, I found it merely positive and interesting, and it was even proven to Magalhães Barata school students, including one of the students who completed the 3rd grade last year, took the ENEM and he didn't do it bad in the test. Did you understand? So, I don't have criticisms, I need to observe more so I can present criticisms, because until then I have nothing to complain about, from the little time I observed the SEI teaching classes, which is the Interactive Educational System (Professor W.F., Medicilândia's Department of Education, 2020).

The representative of the Municipal Department of Education sees the system as a viable alternative for communities that until then had not been offered secondary education, and which have only seen positive points when observing the classes in the pilot school.

The former coordinator of modular rural system and current coordinator of educational programs in the city, professor C.N., who accompanied the entire process of the program

implemented at Magalhães Barata School, 27 km from the municipality's center, says that the community in general, students, parents, mothers and teachers evaluate the program as positive, and it will be implemented in three more schools. When asking him why this school was chosen, he explains that:

The pilot plan was to install at km 80, at the Gaspar Vianna school. But given the dynamic that no one knew about the program, the community did not accept it. Then we got together and tried to take it to one of the communities that always fought for the implementation of secondary education. Magalhães Barata school was chosen because the 10th URE had already been visited, and Magalhães Barata is a Head school, which serves students from km 105 to 90, students from neighboring areas. (Professor C.N., former coordinator of modular rural system and current coordinator of municipal programs, 2020).

When asked what he thinks of this modality and how teachers in the region and municipality who qualified to work in secondary education would be included in the SEI, and although he did not problematize the issue, he replied:

The SEI is not bad as people say. When participating in a class, you realize that there is no difference from what is done in regular education. Only the dynamic changes. For communities that cannot install SOME and regular classes, it is extremely important. During classes when there are

doubts, the student solves it normally. Although they are broadcast live via satellite, the classes are recorded, if there is any problem, the students can watch them later. I participated in a class and from my point of view, very interesting, when I return to classes, I will invite some regular students to join a class. For teachers to be included in the program, they need to undergo a selection process that is carried out by SEDUC (Professor C.N., former coordinator of the modular system and current coordinator of municipal programs, 2020).

We observed that, to work at SEI, the professional as a monitor needs to be dynamic and qualified to help students solve their doubts, including by mobilizing teachers remotely and having a certain mastery of the knowledge of each discipline. It is in this way that the government provides a significant decrease in the hiring of education professionals and travel costs.

When questioning the current city programs coordinator about how the curriculum is worked at SEI, whether it is suitable for local specificities or is already made, unified, states:

Regarding the Curriculum, students are not harmed. The curriculum is the same as regular education. However, in this case, meetings are held with students, parents and guardians and communities in general, and within them, projects are organized that must consider the reality of the community. Also, workshops are organized with

themes that improve the quality of life of those communities (Professor C.N., former coordinator of the modular system and current coordinator of city programs, 2020).

Although both programs, the Organization System of Modular Education and the Interactive Educational System, are criticized and seen in their pros and cons, they are the only policies that aim to bring formal education to rural communities, with a gradual reduction in investments for those students to have quality regular education, in-person, with structure and qualified and valued teachers. These systems are defined because education, and even more, that offered to rural populations, is not a priority, given the neoliberal, excluding perspective, which discriminates and denies social rights.

SEI certainly does not respond to this challenge, it cannot manage to redirect the state's path in rural secondary education, it cannot meet the goal of providing support to around 5.000 students in all integration regions of the state through the installation of a total of 145 teaching transmission points.

The Forum of Rural Education in Pará has been an important space of struggle and has resorted to the Public Ministry of the State of Pará, in order to take legal measures and possible

interventions in favor of the diversity of peasant populations, *quilombolas*, traditional communities and indigenous peoples, which resulted in public civil actions to suspend the offer of secondary education by the Interactive Educational System, in conjunction with mobilization actions by the Pará State Public Education Workers Union (SINTEPP) and mobilizations by school communities.

Educators from the Modular Education System SOME mobilized students and their families in the municipalities to pressure the Departments of Education not to adhere to SEI. The Forum of Rural Education in Pará has denounced in its meetings the derisory attendance of secondary education in rural, indigenous, extractivist and *quilombola* territories in the state of Pará, which does not reach 18% of young people in the age group defined by legislation (from 15 to 17 years old) (Forum of Rural Education in Pará, 2021).

The State needs to create public policies to serve these populations, especially in education, offering textbooks to meet the needs of schools and communities of the countryside, forests and waters and that are consistent with the modality of teaching, materials and technologies to contribute to the quality of education offered. This would be the role of the State when we say: “Education in the countryside, everyone's right, the State's duty”.

The continuing education of teachers and the offer of teaching materials based on a curriculum designed within a proposal that seeks to break the dissociation between school knowledge and citizenship, which can consider both school content and local reality, elements of the socio-historical context of construction of the teaching and learning process (Rocha & Nunes, 2009). In this methodological and dialectical movement, the curriculum, contextualized, can express characteristics and temporalities of traditional communities to give life and potential for transformation and emancipation to the subjects of the school and the community.

Education as a political and social act must provide the development of children, youth and adults, in order to promote training with a view to preparing them for participation and full exercise of citizenship. We remember Paulo Freire when we thought of education in its political, emancipatory, and quality character.

Quality of education; education for quality; education and quality of life, no matter in which statement they are found, education and quality are always a political issue, outside of whose reflection, from whose understanding it is impossible for us to understand neither one nor the other (Freire, 2000, p. 43-44).

Understanding the limits of educational practice indisputably demands political clarity from educators regarding their project. It demands that the educator assume the political nature of their practice. It is not enough to say that the political act is also educational. I cannot think of myself as progressive if I understand the space of the school as somewhat neutral, with little or nothing to do with class struggle, in which students are seen only as apprentices of certain objects of knowledge to which I lend magical power. I cannot recognize the limits of the educational-political practice in which I am involved if I do not know if I am not clear in the face of who I am practicing in favor of. Or in favor of who I practice, I find myself at a certain angle, which is of class, in which I divide the against whom I practice and, necessarily, why I practice, that is, the dream itself, the type of society whose invention I would like to participate (Freire, 2000, p. 46-47).

Among the many lessons left by Paulo Freire, we have the task of radical and liberating critical training, working on the legitimacy of the ethical-political dream of overcoming unfair reality.

To work on the genuineness of this struggle and the possibility of change, that is to say, is to work against the force of the dominant fatalist ideology, which encourages the immobility of the oppressed and their accommodation to the unjust reality, necessary for the movement of the dominators. It is to defend a teaching practice in which the rigorous teaching of contents is never done in a cold, mechanical and lyingly neutral way (Freire, 2000a, p.43).

The voices of students and research subjects are witnesses to the history of the construction of Brazilian people's rights who live in the countryside and work with education. These are experiences and practices of educators from various popular movements, who translate the daily reality of education in the countryside and deconstruct the idea of the city as a civilizing reference, understanding that the spaces of the countryside and the city are inseparable from the point of view of the expression announced by Arroyo (2007).

An education conceived based on the reality of agrarian reform areas, *quilombola* and riverine territories, has demanded the construction and improvement of rural education projects. The social and union movements are protagonists in this process of conquest, however, given the national situation we are experiencing, we need to point out the difficulties and challenges of the educational process that involves the rights of rural peoples and their living and citizenship conditions.

Rural Education in the context of its theoretical and practical challenges has its history circumstantiated by the contradictions of rural reality and expresses that rural education is not isolated, it is collective and

contextualized in the perspective of social transformation and alternative and collective forms of production of life.

The researches carried out by the undergraduate students of the Undergraduate Course in Rural Education reveal the contradictions that exist in the rural elementary school, the history of the subjects' struggle, the migratory process and collective organization of community life, in search of access to knowledge and schooling as part of the strategy of resistance to the exploitation of capital.

We have lived and built an accumulation of diverse educational and pedagogical political experiences in the context of the Rural Education undergraduate course, in the search and fighting for an education project, society changer, impregnated with meaning and life, “this life lived every day as it is experienced and thought of by the different categories of people in the place, but mainly by the students and through them, which is important to consider as a starting point” (Brandão, 2003, p. 231).

The knowledge we produce, in the relationship between university and elementary school, in the daily experiences of professional training and performance, in practices and in public policies, culminate in a community that we form through the project of society

that we aspire to and are building. We are nourished by critical pedagogical conceptions, based on an epistemology that challenges the trends and conceptions that have been shaping contemporary Brazilian educational policies, thus demanding the transformation of the school (Moura *et al.*, 2020).

High school has a lot to advance in terms of the principles of rural education, and the triad: countryside, education, and public policy. The reality of the countryside, of peasant territories, indigenous peoples, *quilombolas*, forest and water peoples, express urgent demands and it is necessary to think of an educational action that considers the reality of public policies as they are presented in each historical period, as public policy does not exist without public education, without public schools, which in turn, in order to exist, need a social and political territory.

The study of reality plays an essential role in transformative education. It is related to a pedagogical work that aims to provide the student with knowledge of reality and self-knowledge. It also aims to establish and expand a growing interrelationship with the community, with a view to transforming the school into a “center of production, recreation and irradiation of culture” (Brandão, 2003, p. 230).

We discussed about data from the reality of a school to reflect about building social and academic struggle strategies through knowledge construction processes mediated together with the subjects in the elementary school classroom, in the university that is training teachers, in the context of a movement that it has a political, social, epistemological, and methodological position on human formation.

In this sense, several rural communities, the State Public Ministry, Forum of Pará state, Regional and Municipal Forums for Rural Education, the Rural, Indigenous, Extractivist and *Quilombola* Social Movements and Organizations took a stand against the implementation of the Interactive Educational System (SEI) in the rural, indigenous, extractivist and *quilombola* communities of the state of Pará, which has advanced in the territories in these times of pandemic. Despite government speeches and actions in favor of expanding the SEI, social movements continue to resist in favor of guaranteeing and universalizing the right to public education that recognizes and acts based on the sociocultural and territorial diversity of the Amazon and with the effective participation of these

populations in the definitions of educational policies.

Final considerations

Rural populations, especially young people, defend the importance and permanence of the SOME teaching modality in the Jorge Bueno da Silva community, with a view to guaranteeing and continuing to offer basic education, enabling peasants to complete high school in their place of origin, given the high cost of living in the city and the loss of daily contact with family members and community.

On the other hand, there are gaps in the education system to meet the needs of students, their local specificities and public policies that enhance the training of these citizens and promote insertion in other labor markets or develop their craft as peasants. Although teachers seek to offer quality education, the applied methodology does not offer students good learning expectations, since the curriculum itself is urban-centric, disregarding traditional knowledge and losing its characteristics of rural education principles and assumptions.

Despite having numerous criticisms related to the functioning of SOME, the community feels more contemplated with this type of education and refuses to

accept the replacement by the SEI program, which offers high school through the media system. In this movement of data construction and systematization, it was possible to experience a deepening of reflections on the challenges of providing secondary education in the countryside, with a view to guaranteeing the rights of peasant populations and, especially, of educational public policies.

In order to understand how the State has been treating rural populations in their access to secondary education, this research raised the importance of subsidizing municipal actions and mobilizing the collective task to guarantee their rights. By having access to what other researchers are developing, we confirm how far we must walk together, school, university, and government spheres, in carrying out research and studies on the concrete reality that we, social subjects, live.

Furthermore, we discussed the need to reflect on how these material conditions of existence of subjects in their communities and schools are relevant and should be taken into account so that we can work towards an emancipatory education, with quality and commitment to the taste of belonging, from respect for ancestry, resistance for rights and access

to technology, to conditions of equal access, permanence and quality of basic public management education, to universal knowledge, valuing the presence and affirmation linked to the territories where the peoples and communities live, whether in the countryside or in the city.

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ⁱ We consider respect for human dignity and the special protection due to participants in scientific research involving human beings and we consider development and ethical engagement as set out in Resolution no. 510/2016 of the National Health Council.

ⁱⁱ Person who, through an employment contract, carries out harvesting and other activities in the cocoa plantation of third parties, receiving half of the harvested production as payment; when formalized, the sharecropper signs a rural partnership contract in which the obligations and rights of both parties are foreseen; they are usually a family of sharecroppers and may temporarily live in the farm owner's establishment.

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