

## **Education of teachers from rural schools: Notes on some actions and Programs Developed by Higher Education federal schools in Minas Gerais State**

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**ABSTRACT.** This article presents some actions and programs provided by the higher education federal schools of Minas Gerais state in partnership with the Ministry of Education regarding the formation of rural teachers. It is part of the research entitled “Políticas públicas de formação do professor das escolas do campo: uma análise da parceria MEC e as IFES mineiras” [Public policy on the education of rural teachers: an analysis of the partnership between the Ministry of Education and federal institutions of higher education in Minas Gerais]. In terms of methodology, a survey of public documents (laws, public notices, decrees, opinions, ordinances, and pedagogical projects), and private documents (supervisor reports collected through semi-structured interviews) was carried out. The results indicate that courses have been implemented in undergraduate, graduate and regular undergraduate teacher education programs in rural education. They show that there has been an expansion in the provision of teacher education courses, whose implementation has been successful, but has also faced difficulties. However, despite some relative achievements, one cannot affirm that public policy on the education of rural teachers has been consolidated in Minas Gerais state, since these actions have not yet overcome the predominant discontinuity of public policy in recent decades.

**Keywords:** Teacher Education, Rural Schools, Public Policy.

## **Formação de professores da escola do campo: apontamentos sobre algumas ações e programas desenvolvidos nas IFES mineiras**

**RESUMO.** O objetivo geral deste artigo é apresentar algumas ações e programas oferecidos pelas Instituições Federais de Ensino Superior (IFES) do estado de Minas Gerais em parceria com o Ministério da Educação (MEC) referentes à formação de professores do campo. Ele integra a pesquisa “Políticas públicas de formação do professor das escolas do campo: uma análise da parceria MEC e as IFES mineiras”. Quanto à metodologia, foi realizado um levantamento dos documentos públicos (leis, editais, decretos, pareceres, portarias e projetos pedagógicos) e privados (relatos dos coordenadores colhidos por meio de entrevistas semiestruturadas). Os resultados do levantamento das ações e programas oferecidos pelas IFES mineiras sinalizam que foram implementados cursos de aperfeiçoamento, pós-graduação e cursos regulares de graduação de licenciatura em Educação do Campo. Evidenciam que houve expansão quanto ao oferecimento de cursos de formação, com êxitos e dificuldades na implementação e desenvolvimento desses cursos. Contudo, a despeito dessa expansão e dos êxitos obtidos, não se pode afirmar que esse movimento expressou a consolidação de uma política pública voltada à formação de professores do campo no estado de Minas Gerais, uma vez que essas ações ainda não superaram a descontinuidade das políticas públicas predominante nas últimas décadas.

**Palavras-chave:** Formação de Professores, Escolas do Campo, Políticas Públicas.

## **Formación de Profesores de la Escuela Rural: apuntamientos acerca de algunas acciones y programas desarrollados en las IFES de Minas Gerais**

**RESUMEN.** El objetivo general del artículo es presentar algunas acciones y programas ofrecidos por las Instituciones Federales de Enseñanza Superior (IFES) del estado de Minas Gerais en asocio con el Ministerio de Educación (MEC) referentes a la formación de profesores rurales. Este artículo integra la investigación “Políticas públicas de formación del profesor de las escuelas rurales: un análisis de la asociación entre el MEC y las IFES de Minas Gerais”. Metodológicamente, se realizó una búsqueda de los documentos públicos (leyes, edictos, decretos, dictámenes, ordenanzas y proyectos pedagógicos) y privados (relatos de los coordinadores obtenidos por medio de entrevistas semiestructuradas). La búsqueda de las acciones y programas ofrecidos por las IFES de Minas Gerais evidencia que fueron implementados cursos de perfeccionamiento, posgrado e cursos de Licenciatura en Educación Rural. Los resultados evidencian que hubo expansión en cuanto al ofrecimiento de cursos de formación, con éxitos y dificultades en la implementación y desarrollo de esos cursos. Sin embargo, a pesar de esta expansión y de los éxitos obtenidos, no se puede afirmar que ese movimiento expresó la consolidación de una política pública orientada a la formación de profesores rurales en el estado de Minas Gerais, ya que esas acciones aún no superaron la discontinuidad de las políticas públicas predominantes en las últimas décadas.

**Palabras clave:** Formación de Profesores, Escuelas Rurales, Políticas Públicas.

## Introduction

The *formation of professors* has been one of the most recurring themes in the educational agenda over the last decades. However, the continuity and the emphasis on this theme reveal its relevance and also the difficulties to equate it with transforming solutions (André, 2000; Bueno, Chamlian, Sousa, & Catani, 2006; Gatti, 2008, 2010; Antunes-Rocha & Martins, 2009; Saviani, 2009; Bocchetti & Bueno, 2012).

Despite the endeavour towards the discussion about the formation of teachers, it can be observed the number of studies about specific, contextualized and necessary formation of professors who acts in schools located in rural areas. The lack of studies about this theme is surprisingly scary, to the extent that it involves great demands and requires careful treatment due to its specificities; the academic research and the production of methodologies that are coherent to the rural reality should be more prominent.

However, there is, as a result of an exercise of resistance, an appreciation of the relevance by scholars for the educational and political project of the social movements in the rural areas, which are gaining prominence in the academic debate and are trying to

contemplate various aspects and dimensions of rural education (André, 2000; Cavalcante, 2003, 2013; Arroyo, 2007; Baraúna, 2009; Alencar, 2010; Souza, 2010; Antonio, 2010; Ghedini, & de Moura Abreu, 2013; Campos, 2015; Molina, 2015; Ovigli, Lourenço, & Colombo Junior, 2016; Santos, 2016; Bicalho, 2017).

Accordingly to the census done by the IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics), in 2010, the rural population of Brazil was approximately 30 million people. To satisfy the needs of the people of rural areas, according to official data, there were more than 280.000 professors working only at elementary rural schools. It should be stressed that only 36% of these professors had university degree; that is to say, approximately 64% of the professors had only primary and secondary school (Brasil, 2011). This shows that, even after more than one decade of the promulgation of the LDB (the laws that regulate education in Brazil) nº 9.394, of 20 December 1996, and some actions and programmes, it was still too large the number of rural professors that did not have university degree.

Analysing the policies for the rural education, Santos (2007) affirms that the concern with the formation of professors

that work exclusively in rural education is still too timid. Arroyo (2007, p. 159) summarizes with acumen the disregard of public policies for the rural education, and even its absence:

The policies of nucleation of schools and of the transportation of children and adolescents from rural areas to city schools radicalized this practice and this urban paradigm. The professor wouldn't have to travel for hours to the rural areas, and to work in precarious and disperse rural schools, and it wouldn't be necessary any adaptation to the rural reality. Students move to urban schools, with urban teachers and colleagues. Children and adolescents of rural areas would forget their identities and culture to be socialized with urban childhood and adolescence, with urban identities and culture.

Studies also point out that the lack of public policies of formation of professors in rural areas and the destructuring of rural schools are parts of the deconstruction of rural culture (Arroyo, 2007; Molina, 2015). Given this situation, it's necessary to develop studies to survey and analyze the legal frameworks, the programmes and actions that aim the formation of these professors.

Seeking to contribute for the discussion about programmes and actions towards the formation of rural professor, it was developed, from 2014 to 2016, a research called "Public policies for formation of the professors of rural

schools: an analysis of the partnership between MEC (Brazilian Ministry of Education) and Federal Institutes of Higher Education of Minas Gerais", financed by Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de Minas Gerais (FAPEMIG)<sup>i</sup>. This article reports some results of this research.

The general purpose of this article is to present some actions and programmes from MEC (Brazilian Ministry of Education) offered over the last years by some few Federal Institutes of Higher Education of Minas Gerais concerning the formation of rural professors. As specific objectives, the research intended to: a) show public documents such as laws, public notices, decrees, statements and pedagogical projects that base rural education; b) produce and describe private documents, specifically obtained through interviews with coordinators of improvement courses, post-graduation and graduation in rural education in the Federal Institutes of Higher Education of Minas Gerais.

Sequently, the article presents the methodological paths concerning the survey and description of public and private documents. In the next section, it brings a brief overview of public policies of rural education in Brazil, presenting laws, public notices, decrees and statements. Subsequently, the article

describes the incursion Federal Institutes of Higher Education of Minas Gerais from pedagogical projects of the offered courses and reports of semi-structured interviews made with the coordinators of the courses. The last part brings the final considerations about the research, presenting the advances and setbacks of public policies for formation of professors of rural schools in Minas Gerais, embodied by the courses that were being offered by the Federal Institutes of Higher Education at that time.

### **Methodological Paths**

The research is of qualitative nature, with emphasis on descriptive analysis of documents. These analyses were based on the collection of two types of documents: a) public (laws, public notices, decrees, opinions, ordinances, and pedagogical projects); b) private (reports of semi-structured recorded interviews made with the coordinators of the courses held in person in the institutions). From the bibliographic search of previous works with the same topics and discussed questions in the research group, it was decided to do a qualitative analysis of the documents.

In the documentary research, it was considered as a document any written material that can be used as a source of information about the human behaviour

(André, 1982). In this research, the selected documents were those of official character published in circulation vehicles of the Ministry of Education; other documents were produced with interviews with the coordinators of courses of Rural Education offered by the Federal Institutes of Higher Education of Minas Gerais.

Interviews, when transcribed, are considered private documents. Therefore, they should be considered as oral reports (Queiroz, 1988). The appreciation of orality in the contemporary world has led researchers to adopt interviews to learn better the reality of professors of rural education.

For this research, semi-structured interviews were chosen because of their malleability; in other words, their adequacy to the objectives of the research and the interviewed subjects. According to Manzini (1991), it is an alternative to the model of rigid inquiry, since we wanted not only to raise data, but also to build knowledge and to comprehend the meanings related to the verbalized contents by interviewed people and the conexions of these meanings with an historical analysis of public policies of rural education.

Semi-structured interviews complied with ethical rigor, which included, the signature, by the participants, of a Term of

Free and Clarified Consent, which certified their knowledge about the secrecy of their names when the text of the article would be written. For this purpose, fictitious names were assigned to the coordinators, created by merging names of cities of Minas Gerais. Each one of the participants was also aware that the participation in the research was voluntary, and that in any given moment, there was the right to leave the research, and to refuse to answer any question, without any losses.

To carry out the interview, the research group elaborated a script with guide-questions: 1) Which are the offered courses by the university in terms of types and modalities? 2) Has the university attended to any public notices from MEC (Brazilian Ministry of Education)? 3) How was the course financed? 4) Which is the teaching structure for the course? 5) Does the university have its own structure for the course? 6) Who are the students attended by the course? 7) Which are the main difficulties and perspectives for the course?

After that, the researchers went to field. The places of the interviews were defined through a prior agreement between the subjects and the interviewers. Generally, they were made in the institutions that allocate the courses of rural education. The interviews were transcribed by the members of the research

group for the elaboration of private written documents. Subsequently, they were analyzed and resulted in the following text.

### **Overview of public policies for formation of professor of rural education in Brazil**

The movements and liaisons towards an adequate education project for the rural areas, as well as the pursuit for the universalization of good public schools for the rural people, began at the 1930's. However, only after a long process of fight, having as a guide the defence of rights of rural people and the public policies of education, more concrete actions emerged. Over the last years, specific movements towards rural schools were propeled, particularly after the promulgation of the LDB (law that regulates education in Brazil), in 1996, and specially from 1998, with the creation of the National Articulation for Rural Education, a supraorganizational entity that discusses, promotes and manages joint actions towards the schooling of people of rural areas.

This organization promoted two editions of the National Conference for Basic Rural Education (1998 and 2004), the institution, by the CNE (National Council of Education), of the Operational Guidelines for Basic Education in Rural

Schools (2002) and the creation of the Permanent Working Group of Rural Education (GPT–Educação do Campo) in 2003. With the first conference, arised a fertile and promising debate about rural education, which brought the question of the formation of professors, as Molina (2015, p. 150) points out:

Marked since the first National Conference for A Basic Rural Education (CNEC), held in 1998, the requirement of a specific Public Policy to support and guarantee the formation of rural educators will be consolidated as one of the required priorities by the Movement, at the end of the II National Conference for Rural Education, in 2004, whose motto was exactly “For a Public System of Rural Education”.

From this debate, the legal frameworks that would sustain the main changes in the legislation regarding rural education at that moment were elaborated. In December 4th of 2001, it was presented and approved, at the Chamber of Basic Education of the National Council of Education, the Report n° 36, made by Edla Araújo Lira Soares. Having as baseline the Art. 28 from the LDB (the laws that regulate education in Brazil), the rapporteur presented the proposal of important changes in the Brazilian rural education scenario, which would orientate the course of public policies and the formation of professors. This Report

originated the Resolution n° 1 of the Chamber of Basic Education, which instituted the Operational Guidelines for Basic Education in the Rural Schools, approved on April 3rd of 2002 (Resolution CNE/CEB n° 01). This document is considered fundamental for the debate about rural education and the proposals of professors’ formation.

On June 3rd of 2003, MEC instituted the Permanent Working Group of Rural Education (GPT–Educação do Campo), through the Decree n° 1.374, with the assignment of articulating the actions of the Ministry pertinent to rural education, to spread and e discuss the implementation of Operational Guidelines for Basic Education in the Rural Schools, which should be observed in the projects of institutions that integrate municipal and state educational systems, established at Resolution CNE/CEB n° 1. Many entities participated in this GPT, such as the MST (Landless Rural Workers Movement), the CONTAG (National Conferation of Agricultural Workers), the CPT (Pastoral Comission of Land), the CEFFAS (Familiar Centers for Formation by Alternation), and others.

This group elaborated na expansive document – *Referências para uma Política Nacional de Educação do Campo* (References for a National Policy of Rural



Education) –, that points out some directions for the discussion of public policies in this context. Guided by the Operational Guidelines for Basic Education in the Rural Schools, the document presented:

... a set of informations and reflections which aim to subsidize the formulation of Rural Education policies in national scope supported by diagnosis of the educational sector, in the interests and longings of the subjects that live in rural areas, and the demands of the social movements. (Brasil, 2004, p. 5).

We would like to emphasise that the discussions about the Brazilian rural areas at that time were settled at the basis of the Lula's Government, which had the priority the elaboration of a multi-annual plan for the implementation of a policy of agrarian reform and the development of familiar agriculture as indispensable instruments of social inclusion, and reinforce that education was seen as a fundamental strategy for the emancipation and citizenship of rural people, according to this document (Brazil, 2004).

From that point, there was a great debate, at universities and social movements, aiming to contribute for the reduction of inequalities, serving specific audiences and historically excluded from the educational process. In this perspective,

we highlight the Resolutions of the National Council of Education, which establish the National Curricular Guidelines, orientating the construction of an inclusive educational system that guarantees the universal right of access to schooling and ensures, as integral part of this right, respect and valorization of human diversity, in social, cultural, ambiental, regional and generational aspects.

During Lula's government, it was proposed a new institutional arrangement, which had the objective to organize the programmes located in other Secretaries of MEC, trying to agglutinate in the same instance the programmes, projects and actions that were dispersed, in an attempt to articulate the actions of social inclusion with the valorization of Brazilian ethnic and cultural diversity, as Moehlecke (2009) points out.

For this purpose, MEC has created, in 2004, the SECAD (Secretary of Continued Education, Literacy and Diversity); in 2010, it was renamed as SECADI (Secretary of Continued Education, Literacy, Diversity and Inclusion). This Secretary was created by means of the Presidential Decree nº 5.159, in July 28th of 2004, resulting from the fusion of the Extraordinary Secretary of Erradication of Illiteracy and the Secretary

of Educational Inclusion. It was in this context that the Ministry of Education, through SECADI, released a series of programmes and actions directed to rural professors.

According to the official documents (Cadernos SECAD, 2007), the General Coordination of Public Policies of Rural Education has created and undertaken, during the years 2005 and 2006, programmes, projects and activities aiming the continuous formation of professors, technicians and managers that work in federal government, in states and cities, as well as in institutions of education related to social movements linked to rural contexts.

In the sphere of higher education, some actions were released in line with the National Plan of Professionals of Rural Education, which are: Specialization Course in Sustainable Territorial Development, with the Federal University of Campina Grande; graduation courses in Rural Education, involving federal public universities, for the realization of pilot experiments; and a distance course, realized in partnership with Brasilia University, aimed at professors, technicians and managers of public educational systems and organized civil society, oriented towards diversity in education (Cadernos SECAD, 2007, p. 25).

Also, there are other programmes, projects and actions developed by SECAD aiming rural people: Saberes da Terra (“Knowledge of Earth”), Programa de Apoio à Educação do Campo (“Support Programme to the Rural Education”), Fórum Permanente de Pesquisa em Educação do Campo (“Permanent Forum of Research in Rural Education”), Revisão do Plano Nacional de Educação (“Review of National Plan of Education”) (Law 10.172/2001), and Plano Nacional de Formação dos Profissionais da Educação do Campo e Licenciatura em Educação do Campo (National Plan of Formation of Professionals of Rural Education and Graduation in Rural Education).

In 2006, it was formulated the National Plan of Formation of Professionals of Rural Education, which was one of the priority proposals of the GPT – Rural Education. This proposal had the objective to establish a national policy of permanent and specific formation which would attend the demands and necessities of students, professors, education networks and rural communities in partnership with universities and social organizations and agreements with public universities, for the realization of formation courses for the professionals of rural education. The proposal was structured in two action lines: 1) the policy of initial and continued

formation aiming high school, graduation and post-graduation; and 2) production of specific educational material and the realization of researches. Since 2007, it has been verified new contours and institutional arrangements in MEC (Brazilian Ministry of Education), as it is going to be presented subsequently.

One of the actions developed was the presentation of the proposal of a graduation in Rural Education, approved by MEC, which had the purpose of promoting the formation of professors in different stages and modalities, through regular courses in public universities. It should be noted that MEC has invited four institutions indicated by social movements related to rural education, in order to implement a pilot-experiment: Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), University of Brasília (UnB), Federal University Federal of Bahia (UFBA) and Federal University of Sergipe (UFS).

According to Molina (2015, p. 151), with the pilot-experiment running and aiming to attend the huge demand of formation of rural professors and the pressure of social movements, MEC has released public notices in 2008 and 2009, which enabled the accession of other institutions. They could offer the Graduation of Rural Education; from these public notes, 32 universities offered the

course, but without any guarantees concerning their continuity and permanence, as this offering through public notices is made by approval in higher educational institutions of special projects, dealt and authorized only for the pilot-experiment.

In 2008, MEC has released the programme REDE (Education Network for Diversity) through a partnership between SECAD, current SECADI, SEED (Secretary of Distance Learning) and CAPES (Coordination for higher Education Staff Development), with the objective to constitute a permanent group of Public Institutions of Higher Education (IPES) dedicated to the continued formation, semi-presential, of professionals of the public network of basic education and to the production of specific educational material. This programme aimed to disseminate and develop educational methodologies for the insertion of diversity in the routine of classrooms.

It was also an attribution of the REDE to foster the accession and the development of proposals of the IPES in themes and areas of diversity, seeking to expand the opportunities of formation of professors and educational managers of the public network of basic education and offering extension, improvement and specialization courses. Also, it sought to

elaborate methodologies and contents for the specific areas.

For its implementation, MEC (Brazilian Ministry of Education) intended to have the accession of IPES (Public Institutions of Higher Education) belonging to the System of Open University of Brazil (UAB) and the Secretaries of Education of the states, cities and Federal District. Therefore, technical and financial support could be offered for the programme's implementation and development. A significant mark in the process of construction of a public policy for rural education was the Decree n° 7.352, of November 4<sup>th</sup> of 2010, which concerns about rural education policy and the National Programme of Education in Agrarian Reform (PRONERA). However, according to Molina (2015), this context was considerably different from the previous moment, when the GT of 2005-2006 elaborated the guidelines of Graduations on Rural Education with a much larger space for the protagonism of social movements.

An important legal mark of the first term of Dilma Rousseff government was the approval of Ordinance n° 86, on February 1<sup>st</sup> in 2013, that instituted the National Programme of Rural Education – PRONACAMPO – and defined its general guidelines. The PRONACAMPO consists

of an articulated set of support actions to the educational systems for the implementation of the policy for rural education according to the Decree n° 7.352, of November 4<sup>th</sup> of 2010.

The formation of professor constitutes one of the axis of PRONACAMPO, which comprehends the following aspects: the initial formation of current professors of rural education will be developed in the sphere of the UAB's Support Programme for the Superior Formation in Graduation of Rural Education and the National Network of Formation of Educational Professionals (RENAFOR), ensuring conditions of access to graduation courses that aim the teaching acting in the final years of elementary school and high school, with the possibility of applying the Alternation Pedagogy; and the continued formation of professors in improvement and specialization levels in rural education with pedagogical proposals by areas of knowledge and thematic projects. This programme had an audacious goal: to form 45.000 rural professors. According to some researchers, the programme has suffered relevant critiques by the Movement of Rural Education and there are also studies that have analyzed the inadequacies of these courses, as they don't incorporate the formation specificities of teachers that

work with this kind of education (Brito, 2013; Molina, 2015).

### **Formation courses of rural professors in some IFES (Higher Education Federal Schools) of Minas Gerais: brief history and e contextualization**

The state of Minas Gerais has a territorial extension of 588.384 km<sup>2</sup>. In Brazil, it is the fourth largest in terms of surface area. In 2010, its population was more than 19 million people, which lived in 853 cities, 1.535 districts and were distributed in its vast rural area. It should be emphasized that the rural population of this state, with strong agricultural vocation, was almost 3 million people (IBGE, 2010).

According to official data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) (2010), the rural population is distributed equally, and there is no concentration in a certain region. However, when it comes to analyze the macroregions of the state, it is observed that some regions have a quite significant percentage of people that live in rural areas, like Jequitinhonha/Mucuri, North of Minas and South of Minas.

Minas Gerais has 17 Higher Education Federal Schools, which are: Federal Center of Technological Education of Minas Gerais (CEFET-MG), Federal Institute of Minas Gerais, Federal Institute of the North of Minas Gerais, Federal

Institute of Southeast of Minas, Federal Institute of the South of Minas, Federal Institute of Triângulo Mineiro, Federal University of Alfenas (UNIFAL-MG), Federal University of Itajubá (UNIFEI), Federal University of Juiz de Fora (UFJF), Federal University of Lavras (UFLA), UFMG, Federal University of Ouro Preto (UFOP), Federal University of São João del-Rei (UFSJ), Federal University of Uberlândia (UFU), Federal University of Viçosa (UFV), Federal University of Triângulo Mineiro (UFTM) and Federal University of Vales do Jequitinhonha and Mucuri (UFVJM).

It was made a survey about federal institutions that developed, during the period of realization of the research, any programmes or actions towards rural education. These institutions were: UFSJ, UFV, UFMG, UFTM and UFVJM. This set of institutions was the object of this research, apart from UFV<sup>ii</sup>, which could not be visited. Hereinafter, it is going to be made a brief presentation of the pedagogical proposal of the actions that were analyzed from the reports of the coordinators and the pedagogical projects of the developed courses, which were: Improvement Course in Rural Education (UFSJ) and three graduation courses in Rural Education (UFMG, UFTM and UFVJM). It is important to point out that

other courses were or still are offered by these institutions (*lato sensu* postgraduate courses, improvement, extension and even lines of research in *stricto sensu* postgraduate courses), but these were not included in our analysis.

### **Universidade Federal de São João del-Rei – Improvement Course in Rural Education**

In order to attend a one of the calls of MEC/SECADI, as one of the actions of PRONACAMPO, UFSJ applied with a project of a Improvement Course in Rural Education (CAEC), which was offered by its Center of Distance Education (NEAD), from December 2014 to July 2015. The course, financed by MEC/SECADI and by FNDE, aimed to meet the demand for initial formation of professor and professionals working on rural education.

The course was offered in accordance with the guidelines established by MEC for rural schools (Resolution CNE/CEB 1, of April 3<sup>rd</sup> of 2002) and PRONACAMPO, of February 1<sup>st</sup> of 2013. According to the coordinator of the course, “UFSJ has offered, for the first time, a course in this area in the modality of distance learning” (Marliéria Alfredo de Vasconcelos, interview, in June 2<sup>nd</sup> of 2015).

According to the *Pedagogical Project* (2014, p. 2-3), this course had the objective:

To amplify the access to continued formation for professionals of rural education, aiming to contribute for the offer of a rural education uma educação do campo contextualized with the realities of its populations, with quality and in accordance with the Guidelines for Rural Education, offering theoretical and practical referential for the qualification of political-pedagogic practice of professors of public rural schools, seeking to reflect about the pedagogic practice that consider the differen subjects of rural areas in their sociocultural contexts and providing mechanisms of access to continued formation through information and communication technologies.

The course was offered to 100 students and was structured in three modules, with total course load of 240 hours: Pedagogic Practices in Multi-serial Classes of Rural School Education; Child Education in Rural Areas; and Agroecology and Racial-Ethnic Relations.

This course had the duration of eight months, was developed with Moodle Plataform and had three meetings at the supporting presential poles in Ilicínea (South) and Francisco Sá (North). The target public was professor, managers, school psychologists, technicians, leaders of settlements and camps of social land movements and other interested people,

active or involved with rural education.

According to the coordinator:

In the pole at the South of Minas, most students were professors, directors and secretaries of rural schools and urban schools that receive students that come from rural areas, due to the closure or the process of nucleation of rural schools. Now at the North of Minas, most students live in urban areas and work in rural schools. (Marliéria Alfredo de Vasconcelos, interview, June 2nd of 2015).

One of the difficulties pointed out by the coordinator of the course was the shift of the students to the pole. Therefore, she has justified:

Many students came from distant cities of Francisco Sá (almost 300 km, close to the frontier with Bahia). In the case of Ilicínea's pole, there were also students from cities more than 300 km far from the pole. Most of the students shifted to the pole with a city hall's car, but there were some mayors that did not provide city transport. Besides that, professor did not receive subsidies for accommodation and meals. (Marliéria Alfredo de Vasconcelos, interview, June 2nd of 2015).

About the supporting presential poles, the coordinator of the course claims that they were carefully structured and had que eram bem estruturados e possuíam computer labs, multi-means rooms etc. However, there was a library only in one pole. Therefore, the coordinator asked:

How can the students use the pole if they come from very far places? And some of them have difficulties in dealing with computers and internet. To do the tasks and to participate in the forums, they attended, most of the times, *lan houses* or used the internet of the school where they worked, when it was available. (Marliéria Alfredo de Vasconcelos, interview, June 2nd of 2015).

In spite of the difficulties, the coordinator emphasizes the importance of the continuity of this course, and recommends the opening of new courses for the formation of professionals to work in rural education. This proposal can be justified, since there were many positive ratings by the students. But, it would be necessary to overcome some difficulties found and to promote: the resizing of the pedagogical project, a larger coverage of the poles – with the intention of getting closer to students' houses –, guarantee of financing of activities and remuneration of professors and tutors and the establishment of partnerships with the city halls. None the less, there was only one edition of the course.

### **Federal University of Minas Gerais – Graduation in Rural Education**

The course analyzed in UFMG was the Graduation in Rural Education, aiming the formation of professors to work in rural schools. It aims to attend people from different rural social segments: sons and

daughters of farmers, professors and technicians that act in rural areas, quilombolas, populations struck by dams, professors from Minas Gerais' Association of the Agricultural Family School and rural wage earners, and others. This public, historically, has been excluded from basic and higher education, mainly because of the lack of professors.

One of the main characteristics of the Graduation in Rural Education is the use of alternation pedagogy, in which the students perform part of the activities in UFMG and part in his own community. That way, the student spends approximately 30 days attending classes at university and, in the rest of the school term, develops activities of study and research at his house and/or work place. The course offers four habilitations: Life and Nature Sciences; Languages, Arts and Literature; Mathematics; and Social Sciences and Humanities.

Despite the request of the research group to the coordination of the course, it was not possible to obtain the pedagogical project of the course to analyze its content. According to the coordinator, the Project was in a process of changes and, for this reason, it could not be made available. However, through the interviews, it was possible to glimpse which are the objectives modes of action of the course.

According to the report of the coordinator, this course was created much earlier than SECADI:

The course arises with the history of rural education, since the [I National Conference: for a Rural Education] held in 1998. The Conference already denounced the conditions of the schools and of the formation of rural professor announced the necessity of a public policy directed to the formation of professors of rural schools. In the second Conference, in 2004, there was an indicative of the struggle for occupation of this space by the Federal Government and by the social movements. These courses arise not from the university to the movements, but, in contrast, from the demands of the movements for the occupation of the State and with the dialogue with the State. (Açucena Lima Duarte, interview, November 12<sup>th</sup> of 2015).

In 2004, UFMG applied with a project, which was financed by INCRA (National Institute of Colonisation and Agrarian Reform), via PRONERA. According to the coordinator of the course, this project “took too long to pass through the higher bodies of the university because it had its specificities, namely, it should have a specific selection process. It has taken more than a year for the process to carry on at the university and only in November of 2005 it was started” (Açucena Lima Duarte, interview, November 12<sup>th</sup> of 2015).

UFMG was the pioneer in offering a course of Graduation in Rural Education



on site and by using the alternation pedagogy, as it is emphasized in the following excerpt:

From our history and our course, MEC has invited us, in 2008, to participate in a pilot project in Brazil, together with UFV, UnB, UFBA and UFS with resorts from MEC, no longer with financing by PRONERA. The objective was to provide grounding to the programme of formation of professors by PROCAMPO. These pilot projects were fundamental to amplify the support from federal government for the formation of the rural professor. But it was still a project, and not a regular course. Only in 2009, with the REUNI (Restructuring and Expansion of the Federal Universities), we have entered with the request of a regular course and received 11 vacancies for professors for the Faculty of Education, not specifically for the course, because the professors act in the many courses offered by the Faculty. So, we were the first to offer a regular course of Graduation in Rural Education in Brazil. This experience has been extremely successful and, pedagogically, he have been redefining our pedagogical and political project. (Açucena Lima Duarte, interview, November 12<sup>th</sup> of 2015).

According to the coordinator of the graduation, this course had its first class destined to social movements:

The first class was destined to MST and Via Campesina, with 60 students. But we knew that we couldn't stay only as a project. Rural education had to take root and to consolidate, and to write its history at the Faculty of Education. From 2005 to 2008, there was a negotiation and

a maturation in terms of the consolidation of the course. And one of the discussed aspects was about the subjects that should be attended by this course. We knew about the diversity and heterogeneity of the subjects that live in rural areas, that struggle in these areas. In 2007, there was a mobilization, mainly from trade unions, social movements and other organizations, which consolidated the occupation of these movements and organizations in the university. (Açucena Lima Duarte, interview, November 12<sup>th</sup> of 2015).

Initially, the selection process was realized through a specific exam. Now, the entry in the course is done by the Enem (National Secondary Education Examination). For the coordinator of the course:

Another characteristic of the course is that we would offer only one habilitation, in an alternate way. In each year, there is one entry for each habilitation (in 2009 with the habilitation in Life and Nature Sciences; Languages, Arts and Literature, in 2010; Social Sciences and Humanities, 2011; and, in 2012, in Mathematics). In 2015, UFMG had four classes, with a total of 142 enrolled students. The annual entry comprehends 35 students with the aim to maintain the quality of the course. (Açucena Lima Duarte, interview, November 12<sup>th</sup> of 2015).

According to the coordinator, the university funds mobility, accommodation and meals for the students; documents that prove that the student live or work in rural areas are required. The coordinator affirms:

The documents required for the approval of the inscription are those that legitimate their relationship with the rural areas, trade unions, INCRA, city halls, and others. Rural worker or their sons, not only those who are linked to social movements, which could be farmers, tenants etc. We attend students from Minas Gerais and other states. (Açucena Lima Duarte, interview, November 12<sup>th</sup> of 2015).

Currently, the course of UFMG is regular, with additional resource of PROCAMPO, via PROLIND (Programme of Support to the Higher Education and Indigenous Intercultural Graduations). The materials used by students are produced by the professors and constitute of didactic material and orientation for the activities on the School-Time and Community-Time.

The coordinator stressed the importance of the organizational structure of the Center of Núcleo de Education, Research and Extension in Rural Education. Presently, UFMG offers improvement, specialization, graduation and professional master's degree in education, which is already in its third class with a research line of rural education. Besides that, it has already offered two classes of the course of Specialization in Rural Education, as a project, in response to the public notices of SECADI.

## **Federal University of Triângulo Mineiro – Graduation in Rural Education**

UFTM has got Graduation in Rural Education, with two majors: Natural Sciences and Mathematics. The course is a result of a process of selecting the proposals of the IFES (Higher Education Federal Schools) for the criation of courses of Graduation in Rural Education, of PROCAMPO, Public Notice SESu/SETEC/SECADI n° 2, on August 31st of 2012. The proposal of UFTM was approved with the release of the Decree n° 72, on December 21<sup>st</sup> of 2012.

According to the Pedagogic Project (2014), the quality of the proposal presented by UFTM permitted that it was approved by the Comission of Statutory Assessment, envisaged at the public notice of selection, without alterations, being classified in the 7<sup>th</sup> place, in a total of 40 courses approved by MEC.

The course is structured, from alternation pedagogy, in two “times”: the School-Time, with intensive school attendance in January and July, and the Community-Time, when students, inserted in their communities of origin and with follow-up of professors, develop the remainder of their learning.

Students are: not qualified professors that live, acted or still act in rural areas; other professionals that acted or act in non-

formal educational process; and general public – young people and adults that have concluded the secondary school.

According to the *Pedagogic Project of the Course of Graduation in Rural Education* from UFTM (2014, p. 85), the general objective of the course is:

To contribute for the formation of professors in rural schools (especially those who do not have formation of higher level) to act in the final years of Elementary School and Secondary School, as graduated in Rural Education, in the habilitations of Natural Sciences or Mathematics, bearing in mind the specific cultural and socioeconomic reality of the populations that work and live in rural areas.

UFTM funds the transport and the accommodation of the students, as well the acquisition of basic school materials. The objective is that the students have all these expenditures of the School-Time assured by MEC's funds. The course has 15 effective professors, and 14 of them were hired specifically to teach the course.

The entry of the students is done vestibular; 50% of the vacancies are directed to professors of rural areas and the other 50% for people that have some relation with the rural areas, or social demand, or those who have interest in this area. Thus, the coordinator affirms: “students form a group quite heterogeneous and from most varied

localities of the country; but there is a noticeable part that lives in the rural zone” (Mariana Coração de Jesus, interview, November 6<sup>th</sup> of 2015). It should be emphasized that nearly 5% of the students have some other graduation.

### **Federal University of Vales do Jequitinhonha e Mucuri – Graduation in Rural Education**

The course of Graduation in Rural Education from UFVJM attends a demand formulated by MEC, with the mediation of SECADI, opened with the Public Notice n. 2, on April 23<sup>rd</sup> of 2008, with habilitation in the areas of History, Mathematics and Portuguese. According to the *Pedagogic Project of the course of Graduation in Rural Education* (2014), UFVJM has been offering this course since 2010, from the approval, by the Council of Teaching, Research and Extension of UFVJM (Resolution CONSEPE 27/2009, on October 30<sup>th</sup> of 2009), attending to the Public Notice n. 2, of April 23<sup>rd</sup> of 2008.

Also based on the alternation pedagogy, the curricular organization expects intensive stages during the months of January and July, which refer to the School-Time, and the rest of the months interleaved with Community-Time. The proposition considers the intrinsic articulation between education and the specific reality of the populations of rural

areas, as well the necessity to facilitate the access and the permanence in the course of the acting professors, that is to say, avoiding that the entry of young people and adults in the higher education reinforce the alternative to leave the life in rural areas.

The student learns with a curricular matrix that develops a multi-disciplinary strategy of teaching's work, offering two habilitations: the first in Humane and Social Sciences, which must be fulfilled by every enrolled student in a period of two years; after the conclusion of the first habilitation, the approved students study a second habilitation, with 30 vacancies offered for Mathematics and the other 30 vacancies for Languages and Codes.

According to the *Pedagogic Project of the course of Graduation in Rural Education* of UFVJM (2014, p. 9-10), the general objective of the course is:

To promote the formation of professor for the final years of of Elementary School and Secondary School to work at rural schools. To amplify the formal training of education professionals that work in rural schools and others that develop educational actions for the rural populations. To contribute for the construction of a Rural Education tied to the causations, the challenges, the dreams, the culture of the worker and the history of rural populations. To contribute with public policies for the Rural Education expressed in PRONACAMPO.

The Graduation in Rural Education of the UFVJM started as a pilot-project, similarly to UFMG, UnB and UFS, as we have already mentioned before. According to the coordinator:

In 2009, UFVJM responded to the public notice of Procampo, constituting the *Procampo* Class. The course was started by a demand of the North of Minas Gerais (including Vale do Mucuri and Vale Jequitinhonha), aiming the formation of leaderships of the movement related to the agricultural matters. Without knowing which would be its proposal, initially, the course was allotted in the Pro-Rectorry of Extension; after a while, it was noted that it was a graduation course with the objective to train professors and, so, it was allotted in the Inter-disciplinary Faculty of Humanities. (Diogo de Vasconcelos Faria Lemos, interview, January 13rd of 2016).

Since 2012, a process of institutionalisation was established. There was a vestibular for entering in 2013 and, with this event, started the first class of Graduation in Rural Education as a regular course and with new pedagogic project, as emphasizes the coordinator. The change was induced, because the course did not expect an effective teaching staff. However, with the institutionalisation, there was a selection of professionals specifically to work with rural education. So, after three years, the course was no longer financed by SECADI and it started

to receive resources directly from the university.

To have access to the course, it is necessary to prove the domicile in rural area. According to the coordinator, “rural” gains a different meaning from the conventional, since the little cities with up to 20 thousand inhabitants are considered part of the rural areas. In the North of Minas Gerais, this encompasses a large number of cities. For the coordinator, almost 95% of the students have some sort of feeling of belonging to the rural. The course enables the subject to struggle for different rural area and familiar agriculture. It is emphasized that, “for many of them, this course will be the gateway for the higher education. Therefore, forms politically engaged people for a more human rural area” (Diogo de Vasconcelos Faria Lemos, interview, January 13rd of 2016).

According to the coordinator, the methodology of the course consists of the alternation pedagogy. He points out:

This model has disadvantages and advantages. The disadvantages are always logistical, because there is a demand of transport including drivers and cars to cover the whole territorial extension covered by the course. Sometimes, the university does not have enough logistics. The relation of the students with the distance from their homes in the School-Time is also a difficulty of the course. One of the advantages is the possibility of the university to go to the subjects of

the knowledge, the residents of rural areas. In this way, there is a greater approximation between the academia and the rural areas, with their peculiarities. It is in the relation between the two worlds that emerges the knowledge. (Diogo de Vasconcelos Faria Lemos, interview, January 13rd of 2016).

It was verified that the course has one of the lowest drop-out rates of the university – about 10%, whereas, for other courses, the rate is almost 30%. One reason for such success may be the incentive coming from the government through the Permanence Scholarship (four hundred reais for regular students and nine hundred reais for quilombolas and indigenous students in 2015).

About the financing, the coordinator claims that until 2015, there were no difficulties: “however, for 2016, it is completely unknown for us, as it is the first time that the process ceases to happen through the SECADI, provoking uncertainty about the transfer of resources by the federal government” (Diogo de Vasconcelos Faria Lemos, interview, January 13rd of 2016). Such resources come together with other financing of the university, through the LOA (Annual Budget Law). However, it comes identified as destined to rural education.

About the changes that happened over the two mandates of Dilma’s government, the coordinator asserts that is

difficult to realize them, although he affirms:

The project of education in rural areas had a more effective role of social shield during the first mandate in relation to the second, enabling the continuity of the course at that time. The doubts about the transfer of resources is marked by the social movements as a problem. The governmental actions are seen in the social movements as one of the few effective measures that remained in rural education, although bellow of the demanded. The course is seen just as a stage of a series of rights of the rural subjects. (Diogo de Vasconcelos Faria Lemos, interview, January 13rd of 2016).

About future perspectives, the coordinator sees the course in a process of consolidation of the university, but requires more institutional autonomy and management of resources to have guaranteed vitality. There is a demand by the students, as it is the most popular graduation of the university. Hence, the number of applicants per vacancy has increased exponentially in each new entry.

### **Final considerations**

Analyzing the speech of the coordinators and the pedagogic projects of the courses, it is verified that there is a similarity in its historical constitution. Such similarity can be observed, as the projects emerged from the Conferences of 1998 and 2004 – For a Basic Education in

Rural Areas –, which brought to the academic debate the rural education and its subjects. Initially, these courses had nature of project, as they responded to specific public notices released by SECADI.

It was observed that the presential graduations in rural education are relatively recent (the oldest one has accumulated experience of a little more than 10 years – Federal University of Minas Gerais) and are graduation courses integrated to the IFES, in process that are different from the applicable to regular graduation courses, and, in many times, were not expected in PDI (Plan of Institutional Development) and result of direct negotiations between the IFES and MEC or negotiations mediated between IFES and MEC by INCRA/PRONERA (for many times the financier of these courses). However, at the moment of the research, some of these courses of Graduation in Rural Education were constituted as regular courses, with their own pedagogic projects and financed by the universities.

From the point of the pedagogic view, the graduations are structured in the model of alternation pedagogy, trying to attend the subjects that have some bond with the rural areas and aim a formation in this field. The curricular organization expects intensive stages at the School-

Time and with the rest of the period interleaved with Community-Time. According to the coordinators of the courses, this practice promotes the production of new knowledge not only in terms of accessing the universal knowledge but also about the valorization of local knowledge.

Some successful experiences and difficulties were pointed out by the coordinators. The difficulties are related to the maintenance of the courses, primarily over financial questions. It is known that the same government that emphasizes the creation of courses for the formation of professors do not maintain the continuity to the execution of the programmes, showing, therefore, that the discontinuity in the public policies of rural education is one of the greatest obstacles to the its realization. The succesful experiences, pointed out in most of the interviews, tell us the possibility of acting of professors of higher education, as they are motivated to develop their areas of knowledge aiming to attend the specificities of the subjects of rural areas, that were, for long time, kept from the academia. We should notice the importance of social movements in the construction of these actions. They were born from outside to inside the university, that is to say, from social movements and organizations to the university, in

accordance with the history of public policies and reports of the coordinators.

Another peculiarity of the actions in Minas Gerais' IFES involves the pioneerism and the succesful experiences of the regular courses of Graduation in Rural Education. According to the coordinators, this happens due to the participation and commitment with the social movements and organizations of rural areas, and also the implementation of research and extension cores about rural education, which contributed for the consolidation of this space at the universities. One of the consequences of this effort is the maintenance of courses and the creation of others, such as the Master Degree in Education, from UFMG, with a line of research in Rural Education.

In short, difficulties and potentialities were observed for the implementation and development of the courses. There is still discontinuity of some actions and programmes. Therefore, despite the effort and the accession of Minas Gerais' institutions, it is not possible to affirm that this movement expressed the consolidation of a public policy focusing on the formation of rural professors, as these actions haven't still surpassed the predominant discontinuity of public policies over the last decades.

It should be emphasized that, despite these difficulties, Minas Gerais is pioneer and reference in the debate about rural education and that there was a significant increase in the accession of IFES of the state to develop formation courses of professionals to work in rural areas. However, more researches are needed to comprehend and contribute with the formation of rural professors in Minas Gerais. Conversely, it is emphasized, thus, the validity of popular strength, since education only makes sense and reaches its purposes if it is organized and transformed together with all citizens.

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<sup>ii</sup> Due to the strike in the period of the field research, which many federal institutions of higher education participated, and other mishaps of different natures, the members of this research were not able to interview the coordinators of the Licentiate in Rural Education of the UFV.

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