

## ARTIGO

# FAO'S RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION PROPOSALS IN THE 1950'S AND TODAY: FORGING CONSENSUS AS SOCIAL DISGUISE

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**ABSTRACT:** The Food and Agriculture Organization - FAO, a UN Agency - acts with expressiveness in hunger relief and rural development programs in Brazil, as well as in other countries in Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa. In this article we analyze the relationship between FAO's rural development proposal and educational principles advocated by the agency during the 1950's and also since 2005. The study was conducted through secondary and primary sources. Summarizing the conclusions, today, as in the 1950s, the organization supports campaigns that gather antagonistic social sectors around projects that promote insertion of countryside population subordinated to market's logic, a strategy consistent with FAO's methodology for the establishment of social consensus for rural and educational development.

**Keywords:** Rural Development. Education. FAO. International Organizations. Rural education.

## A PROPOSTA DE DESENVOLVIMENTO RURAL E DE EDUCAÇÃO DA FAO NOS ANOS 1950 E NA ATUALIDADE: FORJANDO CONSENSOS COMO DISFARCE SOCIAL

**RESUMO:** A Organização das Nações Unidas para Alimentação e Agricultura – FAO, agência da ONU, atua com expressividade nos programas de governo de combate à fome e de desenvolvimento rural no Brasil, bem como em

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países da América Latina, Caribe e África. Neste artigo apresentamos como objeto de estudo a relação entre a proposta de desenvolvimento rural da FAO e os princípios educativos defendidos por esta agência nos anos 1950 e a partir de 2005. O estudo foi realizado por meio de fontes secundárias e primárias, cuja síntese das conclusões apontam que como nos anos 1950, e coerentemente com a metodologia da FAO de constituição de consensos sociais em torno das propostas de desenvolvimento rural e educativa, atualmente são lançadas bandeiras de lutas que aglutinam setores sociais antagônicos em torno de uma proposta que promove a inserção subordinada das populações do campo à lógica do mercado.

**Palavras-chave:** Desenvolvimento rural. Educação. FAO. Organizações internacionais. Educação rural.

## INTRODUCTION

Education is not the core mission of FAO. However, since the very beginning of its activities in 1945, FAO has had a prominent role to play since 1945, because it considers the issue as a way to increase and improve productivity, the quality of life of the rural population and the levels of nutrition and food security. Although FAO is a specialized food and agriculture agency, education has been one of its main strategies for poverty reduction, rural development and food security, and it became an expensive and hot topic for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (2000):

Education for Rural People is crucial to achieving the Millennium Development Goals - the global targets set by world leaders at the Millennium Summit in September 2000 - and especially to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empower women, and ensure environmental sustainability (FAO, 2004b, p. 4).

These proposals for rural development are strategically linked to education and are disseminated through projects, programs and policies<sup>1</sup> in Brazil. The education projects developed in partnership with FAO train teachers, school cooks and agricultural technicians, inducing changes in the curriculum, pedagogical practices and also in food production.

This international agency has been developing activities in Brazil since 1949, having started in forest activities aimed at rural development in the Amazon. Their historical background showed that the food discussions were related to the lack of efficiency of food production and, therefore, there was a need to create an international organization that could investigate, standardize and direct world agricultural production<sup>2</sup> in order to modernize it and make it more

efficient. The agency was officially founded on October 16<sup>th</sup>, 1945, in the post-war period. In 1951, its headquarters were transferred to Rome - Italy, where it is located since the Italian government was responsible for the creation of the first intergovernmental international organization to deal with world agricultural issues (BARACURY, 2006).

## THE PROPOSAL OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION OF FAO

FAO is one of the specialized agencies of UN's ECOSOC, the Economic and Social Council,<sup>3</sup> which acts in partnership with the Organization<sup>4</sup> agencies and with international organizations, among others that develop joint and/or individual agricultural technology cooperation actions that involve research projects and policies programs and projects for and/or together with its member countries. Such actions produced documents with technical cooperation reports, as means of disseminating the experiences and disseminating the proposals that were successful. We realize that what moves the intentions of this Agency is the perception of the existence of a narrow relationship between the nutrition of individuals, the well-being of the people, rural development and economic growth.<sup>5</sup>

Since its creation until today, FAO assumes the role of specialized agency that acts as a “neutral forum” in member countries. For it, being a “neutral forum” acquires a “non-partisan” position,”[...] where all countries, developed and developing, meet on an equal footing to negotiate agreements, discuss policies and promote strategic initiatives” (FAO, 2011). Although FAO presents itself as a “neutral forum” in the capacity of a specialized agency of an international organization (UN), it possesses legal status under public international law, or in other words, it has the power to sign treaties and conventions with nation-states and other international organizations. For Milani and Loureiro (2013, p. 3), the soft power<sup>6</sup> relationship between a nation and an international organization “is reversed by ideologies forged and refined in the West with the objective of maintaining and reproducing structures of economic, cultural and political domination, mainly from the end of the Second World War”.

We emphasize that even though there is a reduction in cooperation provided by FAO in Brazil, the country has acquired rights and obligations to establish a treaty with the Agency. Amongst other things, we can cite the implementation of policies, programmes and projects at the national level, as well as the transference of “experience” to developing countries (CHIANCA, 2008).

The relationship established between a country and an international organization, in this case, the power of influence that FAO exerts over Brazil, can be characterized as soft power. Historically, FAO was placed in the position of “Neutral Forum”, where its actions are determined not by one, but by all member countries in which it cooperates. In the meantime, the “recommendations” made by it are not just proposals that may or may not be implemented by member countries, they are measures that they claim to be “successful”, which must be incorporated into the policy of each member nation in order to reach a specific target.

FAO’s cooperation actions for rural development in Brazil were strengthened in the period 1945 to 1964 (FAO, 2010), because at the time of the International Technical Cooperation projects - ITC were articulated to the developmentalist project of the nation, which would endorse “[...] a project of industrialization planned and supported by the State[...].” (BIELSCHOWSKY, 2000, P. 247).

The projects of rural development in countries where FAO operates, mainly in those considered peripheral, went through four stages: the first refers to projects with a community approach (end of the 1940s to the 1960s), also known as local development projects - with some similar characteristics to the current proposal of rural development; The second is rural development projects with a focus on agrarian reform (from the 1960s to 1980s, which was resumed later between 1990 and 2000); the third, integrated rural development between 1980 and 1990; the fourth and current, sustainable rural development with a territorial and participatory approach to poverty alleviation. However, we have dated the perspectives of rural development, it is important to note that the changes in paradigms of rural development did not occur linearly with the enclosure of a model and the beginning of another. During these different periods, the different principles were defended concomitantly, but with different emphases, depending on the country and its economic context.

According to Favareto (2010), rural development with a community approach began in the 1930s and was strengthened since 1945 with the creation of the UN and its agencies. This concept of rural development, with a community-based approach, has as its matrix the strengthening of the potential of communities through the participation of the population and the creation of cooperatives, much like the current discourse on rural development.

We identify that the education proposed by FAO, in this community development approach, is not only of a formal nature aimed at children in pre-school age and elementary education. They

are privileged educational activities of a non-formal or informal nature, aimed at the formation of young people and adults. Therefore, in 1951, a round table was held on rural education in Brazil, convened by Josué de Castro, with the participation of representatives of FAO and the Rural Education Commission in Itaperuna - Rio de Janeiro State. In it, it was declared that “to literate the man of the countryside, do not solve their problems, because many times they are hardly an element to be rooted out of the rural milieu” (CPDOC, 1951). The proposal of rural education presented in the round table sought to avoid rural exodus and, at the same time, to form new leaders of young people and adults who could be inserted into the development process of the country. It indicates the need to modernize production methods through technical training: “the technician is very important, because it has the function of disseminating the environment. Brazil is in a position of advantage over the rest of the world in rural education” (CPDOC, 1951, p. 5).

The Rural Education Commission of Itaperuna, which participated in the round table in 1951, had held the First Rural Adult Education Mission in 1950. This mission has as its objective the “integral educational action” to elevate the conditions of “material and social life”, through a “social organization of the community” through the assistance of technicians and specialists. The Rural Mission was made up of specialists in the areas of medicine, nursing, veterinary medicine, social assistance, agronomy, agricultural education, home economics, radio and cinema operator and driver. The Rural Mission operates in four main sectors: medical-sanitary, agricultural, domestic economy and social services (CPDOC/FGV, 1950). The experience of the Rural Education Mission of Itaperuna serves as a model for the creation of the National Rural Education Campaign - NREC in 1952. However, “for its ‘errant’ character - which proved to be inefficient - it led NREC to opt for fixed rural education missions” (BARREIRO, 2010, p. 53).

According to Barreiro (2010), as the Rural Education Missions formed the NREC’s action centre. The training of technicians for the Rural Missions was carried out in the United States, where they made “technical-ideological financial agreements between NREC and Ponto IV[...] an American agency interested in expanding the ideology of modernization and capitalist mode of production”. An agreement was also made between NREC and Cooperativa Americana de Remessas of the Exterior of the States - (Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere - CARE), which by means of an agreement donated tools, medicines and first aid kits for farmers and rural carpenters (BARREIRO, 2010, p. 54).

In this debate between FAO representatives and members of the Rural Education Commission in Itaperuna, State of Rio de Janeiro, promoted by Josué de Castro (CPDOC, 1951), as well as the Notebooks of the National Campaign for Rural Education (REVISTA DA CAMPANHA NACIONAL DE EDUCAÇÃO RURAL, 1954 -1955), we highlight the principles for this type of education: 1- The fixation of man to the rural environment by alterations of socioeconomic conditions, related to the improvement of living conditions and ideological aspects that would have the function of avoiding adherence to communism through the implementation of a “non-radical agrarian reform”; 2- Promotion of changes in the mentality of the subjects for the formation of active individuals, with the desire of changes and conditions of “acting in the reality” in which it is inserted, by means of the strategy of implementation of local, flexible and interdisciplinary intervention plans for the formation of leaders; 3- The defense of the constitution of an educational proposal for the population of the countryside that attends to the needs of the local population and of the local school system for the formation of educators with a cultural identity with the environment.

Since 1960, there has been a reduction in these projects of medical education, since they depended on both human resources and external financing, making it difficult to expand and maintain them in peripheral countries. Another element highlighted by Favareto (2010), in the reduction of these projects during this period, refers to the introduction of foreign practices to the communities’ traditions, is, paradoxically, to which it is proposed. These were vertical projects that did not take into consideration the culture of the communities.

Between 1951 and 1971, Brazil received “more than 80 short-term or circumstantial missions” (FAO, 2010, p. 7). Among the missions carried out during this period, those that stand out refer to modernization and efficiency in food production. For that reason, in 1946, FAO created the Economic and Social Department, with the objective of establishing a political framework for rural development; to collect, evaluate and monitor the nutritional, food and agricultural situation in the world; to analyze national and international food, agricultural and commodity policies and to provide international planning assistance to national governments and regional organizations. This department was composed by several divisions,<sup>7</sup> including the Human Resources, Institution and Agrarian Reform Division (FAO, 1981).

Moreira (1998) points in Brazil to the creation of the Nationalist Parliamentary Front (FPN), by initiative of the youth

of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) in 1956, which articulating progressive politicians of different parties came to defend the Agrarian Reform, in an attempt to overcome extreme poverty of the rural population as a mechanism of expansion of the internal market, as a central element for an autonomous national development. Therefore, a discourse is developed that points to a national bourgeoisie as a representative of the interests of the different classes in national industrialization such as the proletariat of the countryside and the new middle class. Thus, a consensualist perspective was developed, which minimized the radicalization of class differences, inasmuch as it encouraged the possibility of constituting a homogeneous national community articulated by the liberal thesis, according to which the productivity of the work with new production techniques would raise the standards, disguising, in this way, the political-ideological conflicts between the different social groups (MOREIRA, 1998).

From the 1960s onwards, FAO's proposals for agrarian reform took shape. However, it should be remembered that the agrarian reform proposed by FAO for developing countries was not about compulsory land distribution, but the integration of small farmers and the landless into the market. The transformation of the worker into a small owner was the only way to save him from communism (MARTINS, 1986, p. 88, apud BARREIRO, 2010, p. 93).

In that perspective, the Agency believes that in order to achieve rural development, it is necessary to guarantee access to land, as well as modernizing production methods, investing in training of knowledge and agricultural inputs. This concept of agrarian reform addressed the interests of the Brazilian State, which for its part was contrary to the agrarian reform prompted by the movements of struggle for the land.<sup>8</sup> In addition, during this period there was a concern of the governments of developing countries, mainly of Latin American governments - including the Brazilian government- to contain the expansion of communist ideals that "amazed" the poor, considered more "vulnerable" to the communist campaign. In this sense, the reformist political matrix proposed by international organizations and, especially by FAO, converges with the interests of the Brazilian State in the containment of agrarian conflicts and in the insertion of developmentalist policies. This is a conservative proposal that did not envision the end of land concentration, but the insertion of the labourer without land in the logic of the market, the minimization of land conflicts and the maintenance and perpetuation of the capitalist system.

Between 1950 and 1970, FAO carried out several joint activities between UN agencies (UNESCO, ILO, UNICEF, IBRD, among others) to make rural development projects viable in peripheral countries (FAO, 1981). In the meantime, it should be noted that between the 1960s and 1970s its main activities were centred on the development of the forestry sector. This is, with the end of World War II and the urgency to rebuild Europe, the Brazilian wood industry has assumed an important role in the world economic context. During a period forty years, its activities in Brazil were turned over to the development of the economy exporting wood.

Since the beginning of FAO's work in Brazil until the 1980s, the largest part of the cooperation provided was linked to the forest sector, where local wood was used for two purposes: the reconstruction of countries affected by the Second World War and the strengthening and expansion of the national industry. However, the focus on rural development in the region is one of FAO's priority priorities, and it is clear that Brazil appears as a means of promoting the country's economic development and not as an end in itself.

From the 1950s onwards, the Amazon rainforest became an important destination for FAO's missions, whose objective was to develop rural areas in the perspective of the Amazonian forest exploration (FAO, 2010). This perspective of rural development culminated with the so-called Green Revolution, "also known as conservative modernization that, by stimulating the use of machinery and new agricultural inputs, concentrated on the land and promoted the rural exodus" (NUNES, 2014, p. 17), which did not result in the elevation of nutrition levels and in reducing rural poverty. On the contrary, they deepened the conflicts and social inequalities.

In the period in which the emphasis was on integrated rural development, between 1980 and 1990, FAO's perspective of rural development was related to food production based on the insertion of new technologies in the fields, such as the use of machinery, equipment and chemical inputs (fertilizers and pesticides). Thus, the focus of technical training for young people and adults is on the formation of a "new" farmer profile and on the viability of these technologies. The food security was also defended as a way to guarantee the well-being of the rural and urban population, in addition to avoiding conflicts caused by the family and by the misery wrought in the post-war period. The increase in food production was considered one of the main elements for the development of rural areas, since according to FAO, the absence of development in rural

areas was considered a production problem and not an inequality resulting from the concentration of land and wealth.

We identify in this discourse and strategies of FAO the conception of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean - ECLAC, which Oliveira (2013) characterizes as dualist, by identifying in the developing countries elements considered “modern”, this is, favored to the development and “backward”, meaning elements that hindered the evolution of these countries to the standards of the central countries of the capitalist system. ECLAC indicated that the modern characteristics were related to industrialization; the archaic characteristics had mainly established relations in rural areas. This perspective ignores the fact that they are the relations of extreme exploitation in rural areas, among others, that allowed the advance of the industrialization process of the country, because they provide food at a low cost, reducing the value of the work force for the industries, as well as constituting a stock of labor reserves that pressed for low wages. As Oliveira (2013) makes it clear, the delay and modernity in Brazil are not dichotomous - as FAO’s development discourse seeks to create -, they are above all congruent and complementary.

It is evident that in the rural environment the backward relationships must be overcome, but not in opposition to the modern industrial world (permeated by extreme exploitation and production of misery), even because it maintains an organic relationship with the latter. This discourse, which has been widely spread and deepened in the country by the Higher Institute of Brazilian Studies - ISEB. From the 1950s onwards, it was decided to bet on the lack of industrialization of the rural environment as a solution to the social diseases of the countries and on education as the main means for this.

For FAO (1979, p. 38), only rural development could have been possible if “several types of industries” were installed in the rural areas. For this reason, it was necessary for the States to invest in infrastructure “[...] economic and social, especially in sanitation and education[...]; in pre-school educational services and fundamental education for children, young people and adults,”[...] the creation and expansion of training and extension networks for men and women, allowing them to acquire and improve techniques and increase productivity[...]; in the execution of agrarian reform programs that would help to reduce land conflicts and rural exodus and, consequently, to avoid a “disorderly urban growth” (FAO, 1979).

The Agricultural Extension and Education Service of Rural Youth plays a strategic role in the rural development activities proposed

by FAO, which aims to promote through technical training a new profile of farmers who, in addition to producing for subsistence, are also inserted in the market. In 1979, FAO held a World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Development in Rome. This conference resulted in the “Declaration of Principles and the Program of Action that constitutes, in fact, the Charter of the poor rural population[...]” (FAO, 1979, p. 12), also known as the “Letter of the Peasant”. This “letter” aims to orient “[...] national development policies, in the sphere of countries; the realization of a New International Economic Order in the whole world” (FAO, 1979, p. 12).

We can see that the objectives of industrialization of the rural environment in Brazil were broadly effective, but long enough to suppress the social problems and conflicts, they served the purpose of exacerbating them. Ianni (1984), when studying the municipality of Sertãozinho, in the interior of São Paulo, shows the historical process of industrialization of the countryside with the implantation of sugar cane mills. This industrialization resulted in the sugar cane mill and the sugar cane field. In the plant there is a complex organization of the work... and in the sugar cane field the work is carried out mainly by the migrant worker, resident in the city and involved in the condition of insecurity of the work relationships, who dreams, above all, of a formal work.

This way, integrated rural development as well as the other rural development processes proposed for peripheral countries are marked by contradiction. The first is to look for improvements in the living conditions of the poor rural population without altering the agrarian structure, that is, without socializing the means of production to reproduce their existence; The second one, to include only those who possess the means of production in the development process, leaving the majority of the rural poor and landless population on the margins; Third, to increase productivity without the deconcentration of land, benefiting only the industrial, financial and commercial capital of pesticides, fertilizers, equipment and agricultural machines that, in many cases, bring small producers to the acquisition of crops and the loss of their land, increasing even more the concentration of land and wealth.

Despite FAO (2010) affirming that since 1990 there has been a reduction in the number of technical cooperation projects in the forest sector, it has been verified that after 1980 there has been a significant increase in projects in this sector, but with different approaches. Until the 1980s the focus was on the development of the forest sector, mainly through the exploration of natural resources. From 1980 onwards, due to the pressure of the environmentalist

movements that culminated in the drafting of the Brundtland Report (1987), also known as “Our Common Future”, caused changes in the perspective of rural development proposed by FAO. Since 1990, the project approach has focused on the conservation of forest resources. After 2000, the focus was on sustainable management of forests (FAO, 2010), as shown below.

**BOX 1. FAO Projects in Brasil – 1990 to 2011 period**

<b>Food Security / Poverty Reduction and Rural Development Projects</b>	
<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Period</b>
UTF/BRA/040/BRA - Productive Organization of Poor Communities – PRODUZIR	1994-2009
UTF/BRA/040/BRA - Productive Organization of Poor Communities – PRODUZIR – Módulo AMAZÔNIA	1995-2009
UTF/BRA/057/BRA – Support for Sustainable Development of Family Farming in Brazil	2002-2008
UTF/BRA/064/BRA – Support for the Implementation and Scope of Zero Hunger Program Results	2004-2009
UTF/BRA/067/BRA – School Feeding Training with Councillors and Associate Agents for the National School Feeding Program	2005-2009
GDCP/BRA/001/ITA – Support to the Fome Zero Program for Water Control in DoisIrmãos area Brazil	2005-2008
GDCP/BRA/002/ITA – Technologies for Improvement of Food Security in selected districts of the city of Teresina, Piauí State.	2005-2008
TCP/BRA/3101 – Methodological and Training Support for the National Agrarian Reform Plan (PNRA) and for the National Family Farming Program – PRONAF	2006-2008
<b>Sustainable Management of Natural Resources Projects</b>	
<b>Project title</b>	<b>Period</b>
UTF/BRA/060/BRA – Rural Environmental Management in Human Assemblies	2002-2009
UTF/BRA/062/BRA – Project for the Consolidation of Political and Institutional Instruments for the Implementation of the National Forestry Program	2004-2009
UTF/BRA/066/BRA – Development of Coastal Communities	2006-2010

GCP/BRA/061/WBK – AtlanticForests Project	2004-2008
TCP/BRA/3101/3202 – Establishment of a Methodological Basis and Partnership Building for the National Forest Inventory.	2008-2010
GCP/BRA/070/EC – Forest Management, Support for Sustainable Production and Strengthening of the Brazilian Civil Society	2007-2011
<b>Projects for Facilitation of Technical Cooperation – TCP</b>	
<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Period</b>
TCP/BRA/3102 – Component 02 –Communication Strengthening TCP/MDA	2006-2008
TCP/BRA/3102 – Component 03 – Residual Biomass Agro-energy	2006-2008
TCP/BRA/3102 – Component 04 –Agro-energy: economical and environmental impacts	2006-2008
TCP/BRA/3102 – Component 05 – Preparation of the Plan of Integral Management of the Ecosystem for Baiadallha	2006-2008
TCP/BRA/3102 – Component 06 –Production Chain of Aquaculture in the State of Paraná	2006-2008
TCP/BRA/3102 – Component 07 – Good Manufacturing Practices in Food Security in Brasil	2006-2008
TCP/BRA/3102 – Component 08 – ImprovementoftheJudiciary Charter ofthe Federal Government for theSustentable use ofForests.	2006-2008
TCP/BRA/3201 – Support to the National Programo on Sustainable Development in livestock, pasture recovery and in the intensification of sustainable production in Brasil.	2008-2009
<b>Regional Project</b>	
<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Period</b>
TCP/RLA/3106 – Emergency Assistance for the early deteccion of Avian Flu in the Southern Cone.	2006-2008
TCP/RLA/3108 – Preparation of a Regional Animal Health Program	2007-2008
TCP/RLA/3109 – Development of Technical Reference Tools for the Management of an Extended Biosafety Management for the MERCOSUR member countries.	2007-2009
TCP/RLA/3110 – Analysis and strengthening of Community Nutrition and Feeding programs.	2007-2008
TCP/RLA/3111 – Improvement of domestic fish and fish products markets in Latin America and the Caribbean.	2007-2009
TCP/INT/3201 – Formulation of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP) South-South / North-South Cooperation for the Implementation of the UM Convention to Combat Dessertification (UNCCD).	2008-2009

**Source:** CHIANCA (2008) and FAO (2010). Made by the Author (2015).

These alterations in the perspective of rural development in the Agency also provoked changes in FAO's educational proposal that, since 1990, have adopted or another approach to education for rural development. In this sense, in 2002, after the World Education Forum 2000, in Dakar - Senegal, during the World Summit on Sustainable Development, in Johannesburg, a partnership was signed between FAO and UNESCO, in which a new specific education programme for rural people was created, considered a framework of the Education for All - EFA initiative (FAO, 2004a; 2004b; 2004c). In 1996, at the World Food Summit, FAO representatives also called attention to the importance of basic education for rural people, poverty reduction and household poverty reduction, food security, peace and sustainable development (FAO, 2004b).

The partnership between FAO and UNESCO, as well as the inter-institutional approach between the other UN agencies, was one of the commitments discussed at the Dakar Forum and at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which aimed to facilitate and make more efficient the actions developed between the agencies, in order to achieve one of the most efficient and efficient cooperation between the agencies: poverty reduction and education for all (FAO, 2004a; 2004b).

The Education for Rural People Programme - ERP, established between FAO and UNESCO in 2002, aims to reduce the disparity in access to education between urban and rural areas, overcome illiteracy through formal and non-formal education and capacity building, as well as through skills training for self-employed, diversified work.

According to FAO (2004, p. 21) the reduction of poverty, food security and basic education, forms a nucleus of the new discourse on assistance to development" of the new millennium, being one of the most persecuted goals of international organizations and agencies since the 1990s and throughout the beginning of the 21st century, in order to improve the quality of education for all.

In 2002, after some months of partnership between FAO and UNESCO for ERP, the First Intergovernmental Meeting of the Regional Education Project for Latin America and the Caribbean was held, which launched the ERP regionally. In the following year, in 2003, several national ERP meetings were held to prepare a symptomatic document presenting a diagnosis of rural education in member countries. The document was prepared based on the experiences of rural education carried out in the countries, with the participation of civil society, NGOs, Ministries of Education and international cooperation agencies. They were the first to be published in the

document on “Education for Rural Populations in Latin America: Food and Education for All”, which served as the basis for the discussion of the Regional Seminar on Rural Education in Latin America and the Caribbean. The seminar was organized by FAO in partnership with UNESCO, the International Institute for Educational Planning - IIEP, with the financial support of the Italian Cooperation for Development and with the collaboration of IICA. (FAO, 2004b; 2004c).

In Brazil, the synthesis document was prepared by Eliane Dayse Pontes Furtado,<sup>9</sup> which presents a historical panorama of Brazilian rural education, as well as the “new” perspective called “Education of the Countryside”, which traces in its scope “the struggle of the countryside for public policies that guarantee the right to education, an education that is in the countryside and from the countryside”. In addition to Brazil, other countries of Latin America and the Caribbean also presented the synthesis document on rural education in their countries, such as Chile, Colombia, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay and Peru, which served as a basis for the discussions held in Africa, Asia and Europe in 2005 and 2006 (FAO, 2004b).

The document “Education for Rural Populations in Latin America: Food and Education for All” (FAO, 2004b),<sup>10</sup> presents a review of the plans and strategies of rural and agricultural development, as well as a general diagnosis of policies and agrarian programs in progress, including the main organizations and institutions and the educational needs of the sector. In addition, it focuses on the general situation of rural education in Latin America, such as the main issues and problems related to basic education, child development and education in early childhood, fundamental education, medical and vocational education for young people, the formation of basic competencies for life and permanent education. It also presents discussions on strategies and “best practices” to improve the quality of rural people’s education, including teacher training, adequate curricula and didactic materials to meet the needs of the rural population, broadening community participation in education, improving the use of technology and information tools.

In the same year FAO with UNESCO cooperation published the document “Education for the Rural Development: New Political Answers” (FAO, 2004a),<sup>11</sup> which presents a study on education and rural development, as well as a “new agenda” for the development and alleviation of rural poverty. The document brings together FAO’s educational perspective, which defines the philosophical and pedagogical conception of education from Basic Education to Higher Education,

as well as the formation of competencies and skills necessary for the work and development in the rural areas. This document outlines a specific item on the Brazilian experience, considered successful in that it refers to the creation of an organism that satisfies the formation of skills and competencies for the rural areas. The agency that refers to FAO and UNESCO is the National Service for Rural Learning - SENAR, created in 1991 by Law No. 8.315.

SENAR is a private entity linked to the “S system”, supported by the State and the rural employers’ class, it is a large land-owners and rural entrepreneurs, and it is linked to the Confederation of Agriculture and Livestock of Brazil - CNA, composed primarily by representatives of the Brazilian agribusiness sector.

It is this perspective that gives FAO’s conception of education, based on the formation of skills and competencies, linked to a project of social and human formation, which has as its starting point the formation of human and social capital for capitalist development.

In 2005, after the publication of the document “Education for Rural Development: new political responses”, FAO established a project of technical cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the National Fund for Educational Development - NFED, with the proposal “innovative in environmental, food and nutritional education”. Technical cooperation includes projects with schools for the application of technical and environmental knowledge, which also complement the National School Food Program - PNAE. The project of technical cooperation TCP/BRA/3003, “The School Garden as a Generating Axis of Communitary Dynamics, Environmental Education and Sustainable and Healthy Feeding”, between the years of 2005 and 2006, was implemented the pilot project with more than a few school gardens, and has as a public three municipalities with a low Human Development Index - of the States of Goiás, Rio Grande and Bahia (FAO, 2010, p 9-10).

It is possible to verify that after 2000, with the Dakar Commitment and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, it is a “new” perspective of rural education for the peripheral countries, especially Brazil, which we characterize in five moments: Firstly, the partnership established between FAO and UNESCO of EPR in 2002; secondly, the partnerships established between FAO and UNESCO of EPR in 2002; secondly, the partners from Latin American countries on the diagnosis of rural education (2003); thirdly, the Seminar on Education for the Rural Population of Latin America (2004); fourthly, the publication of the document “Education for Rural Development:

new political responses”, which deals with the conception and necessity of a “new” education for the rural population, for rural development (2004); fifth, the implementation of the technical cooperation project between FAO, the MEC, NFED and PNAE (2005), with school farm projects, which is characterized by the implementation of the “policy responses” set out in the 2004 document.

It is important to note that the discussions about rural education have always been present in FAO’s strategic proposals for the development of rural areas, and it has already been highlighted. In the meantime, we have verified that since the 1990s and, above all, after 2000, with the advance of the sustainable development perspective in the global agenda, the approach to rural education gains more expression and space in the center of educational policies.

It is verified that the changes in the conception of rural education occurred in the late 1980s and early 1990s is the result of the process of neoliberal reforms, in which “capital imposes the productive restructuring and with the ideological affirmation and ideological affirmation, according to which, there would be an importance of basic education for the professional formation of the individuals”. In this sense, basic education is seen with greater relevance, “above all because in this sense the formation of the work force, developed as” competencies “to attend to the needs of the market” (BATISTA and ALVES, 2009, p. 3).

In this sense, FAO (2004a, p. 273-290) says that in addition to schooling and training, labour experience contributes to the formation of human capital, whether it is linked to the agricultural or non-agricultural sector. For FAO, in the context of rural transformation, higher levels of education and the availability of non-agricultural jobs facilitate adjustment. “[...] A higher level of education increases the demand for human capital and consequently opens up access to higher non-agricultural wages [...]” (FAO, 2004a, p. 273).<sup>12</sup>

In return, poor rural populations with low levels of education and training are excluded from both agricultural and non-agricultural work. The path taken by FAO to increase the access of poor rural populations to the labour market is the formation of competencies for agriculture, as well as those linked to the non-agricultural sector, that is, industry. FAO therefore discusses the need for a “specific” and “general” curriculum for the rural population. The first for specific training for agriculture that would contribute to the work force of agricultural labor; and the second, to increase the probability of employment in non-agricultural sectors.

The transformation of the rural labour markets implies that the systems of offerings provide relevant answers to the needs of the rural populations that participate in a wide range of economic activities, including agriculture, but also industrial, tourism and other services (FAO, 2004a, p. 276).<sup>13</sup>

In this perspective, FAO (2004a) defends the need for investments from both the public and private sectors in technical and professional training for rural areas, because it meets the demands of skills training and competencies necessary for rural development and poverty alleviation.

Strengthening social cohesion is one of the strategies established by FAO for territorial development, since social cohesion is understood as a form of “negotiation”, “conciliation” and “barter”, this is a consensus among the different actors, whether they are “powerful” or “marginalized” (FAO, 2007;2005). For FAO (2007), powerful actors are those who exert some kind of influence or respect at the local level, such as religious leaders or other influential personalities, who have a “deep understanding of the local context and their role as repositories of historical knowledge”. On the other hand, “marginalized actors” are those excluded from the social and economic processes of the local context, being necessary to build a collaboration between all social and economic actors for the training of “weaker people”, so that they may have “assuming active roles in the decision-making process”, and, for this reason, facilitate the construction of a consensus among the different actors, so that it is materialized in a “Territorial Social Pact” (FAO, 2007, p. 53-54).

Therefore, when FAO draws up its DTPN methodology, education as a strategy for rural development, it verifies that this concept of education is not neutral, but marked by contradiction. First, because education is considered by FAO to be one of the main instruments for promoting dialogue and reconciliation among the different actors, whether they are the ones who produce or sell their work force. This is, education as an ideology that overcomes class differences, and promotes the “harmonious” development of capitalist relations, in which oppressed and oppressors are “allies” of peace and social order. Secondly, FAO’s concept of education is linked to a societal and educational project that does not aim at full human emancipation, or in other words, education is understood as the formation of skills and competencies necessary to promote capitalist development, and not the all-round human development. Thirdly, the education proposed by FAO to the working class, has as one of the objectives the reduction of poverty and hunger, as well as the improvement of the life of the people in the region. However, the education model proposed by

FAO is linked to a privatisation project, in which it is conceived and organized by a conservative sector linked to large estates, agribusiness and agro-industry, which aim to maintain the relations of domination and power, being the precariousness of work and life conditions. Fourth, and finally, the rural development that sustains the capitalist and unequal system will never be sustainable. Thus, the concept of education as a panacea of economic, social, cultural and environmental problems is a way of omitting the structural problems that are inherent to this system, and of holding accountable the “individuals” for the hardships produced by it, as if education could protect them against the overwhelming perversity of capital.

## FINAL REMARKS

We note that, in keeping with the historical diversities of the 1950s, FAO, acting jointly with other international organizations, is working to create a tray of guidelines around education, which contributes more to dissipate class antagonisms around the problems of land concentration in the country, and to convey an agglutinating characteristic to the policies aimed at promoting the concentration of land in the country. In the 1950s, in full economic development, the national development model served as an element for the defense of an agrarian reform in conservative moulds, collaborating to neutralize the actions of the peasant movements, nowadays, the discourse of “sustainable rural development” and the proposal of education addressed to this one, in the perspective of the rural sustainable development organizations, develops a similar role.

We also consider that, with the globalization of capital, the concentration of wealth has increased and, consequently, poverty and hunger in peripheral countries has always increased. From this perspective, international organizations act in the sense of enlivening and/or humanizing the destructive processes that are inherent to the capital. However, their actions represent a placebo effect, or in other words, in that they do not materialize, because it is not education that prevents the subjects from effectively participating in political, social and economic processes and culture, but rather poverty, a condition that is necessary for the reproduction of capital.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Such as the Educating with the School Garden project, Territorial Development Project in Cantuquiriguaçu - PR Territorial Development Project in Cantuquiriguaçu - PR (amongst others), National School Feeding Program, Family Zero Program, National Program of Family Agriculture and Agrarian Reform, National Fishing and Aquiculture Program and Still, The National Forest Program.

<sup>2</sup> With the Treaty of Versailles, at the end of the First World War an International Organism was created - IO, called League of Nations, whose objective was to enliven the conflicts, establish peace among the nations and prevent future wars. The League of Nations had 44 member countries, and outlined in its constitution liberal political principles, anchored in the project of a new international social order: “With the League of Nations, the right should prevail over power and democratic processes over aristocratic ones in the conduct of international relations. The “balance of power” would be replaced by a “community of power” (BARACURY, 2006, p. 356). For Rodrigues e Mialhe (2003, p. 2), the League of Nations “[...] played an important role in the period between wars, providing the base for the creation of the UN”.

<sup>3</sup> The Economic and Social Council - ECOSOC is made up of programmes and funds, technical committees, regional commissions and specialized UN agencies. The specialized agencies are independent organizations that work together with the UN, and one with the other through the coordination of ECOSOC at an international level (UN, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> The term “Organization” refers to the UN.

<sup>5</sup> The presentation of this relationship hides the structural conditions that involve economic growth. In the scope of the Marxian analysis the capitalist regime is subject to periodic crises of super production, as a consequence of the central contradiction of this mode of production. This contraction is referred to as the collective character of the social production and the private appropriation of the results (MARX, 2003).

<sup>6</sup> Meaning “the ability to influence others to do what you want by attracting rather than coercing” (GUERALDI, 2005, p. 66).

<sup>7</sup>The Economic and Social Department was composed of five divisions: (a) Division of Policy Analysis; (b) Division of Commerce and Commodities; (c) Division of Statistics; (d) Division of Food and Nutrition Policy; and (e) Division of Human Resources, Institutions and Agrarian Reform. (FAO, 1981). Currently, the Economic and Social Department has another organization (according to Table 1, p. 10).

<sup>8</sup>The Peasant Leagues formed the main Brazilian movement in the 1960s, which defended agrarian reform, its word of order was: "Agrarian Reform by law or by force". However, its existence was barely ten years old (1954-1964), the Ligas Camponesas had a huge power of mobilization in Brazil, which lasted until the Military Coup of 1964. In addition to carrying out at the end of the latifundium, the Leagues were articulated to organizations and parties that sought a profound transformation of society, this is, went on another societal project, for that reason it was a model of agrarian reform that the government wanted to combat (STÉDILE, 2012, p. 9-16).

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<sup>10</sup>Original title: Educación para la Población Rural (EPR) en América Latina: Alimentación y Educación para Todos (FAO, 2004b).

<sup>11</sup>Original title: Educación para El Desarrollo Rural: Hacia nuevas respuestas de política.

<sup>12</sup>Original quote: "Un nivel más alto de educación aumenta la dotación de capital humano y, por consiguiente, abre el acceso a salarios no agrícolas más altos."

<sup>13</sup>Original quote: "La transformación de los mercados de trabajo rurales implica que los sistemas de oferta den respuestas pertinentes a las necesidades de las poblaciones rurales que participan en una amplia gama de actividades económicas, incluyendo la agricultura, pero también industriales, de turismo y otros servicios."

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