

# UNIVERSALIZATION OF THE EDUCATION IN THE BRAZILIAN MUNICIPALITIES

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Diego Pinheiro Alencar <sup>a\*</sup> - Juheina Lacerda Ribeiro Viana Alencar <sup>b</sup> - Adenilda Rodrigues da Silva Junqueira <sup>c</sup>

(a) Dr. in Geography. Professor at the Federal Institute Goiano, Iporá (GO), Brazil.

**ORCID:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9413-4514>. **LATTES:** <http://lattes.cnpq.br/0272401401068579>.

(b) PhD student in Geography at the Federal University of Goiás, Goiania (GO), Brazil.

**ORCID:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2113-6524>. **LATTES:** <http://lattes.cnpq.br/4963577140780720>.

(c) Master student in Professional education. Professor at the Federal Institute Goiano, Iporá (GO), Brazil.

**ORCID:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4417-0311>. **LATTES:** <http://lattes.cnpq.br/9474975506673314>.

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## (\* ) CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

**Address:** Rua José Levy Guedes, 606. CEP 19060-260, Presidente Prudente, São Paulo, Brasil.

**E-mail:** [essposito@gmail.com](mailto:essposito@gmail.com)

## Abstract

The educational inequalities in Brazil may be illustrated by the first Census of 1872, which pointed out that 15.11% of the country's population was composed of slaves. In that year, 50.95% of the population was considered illiterate. The related studies to the Brazilian social issue point to the North and Northeast regions as the most vulnerable in the national territory, a dynamic also reflected in educational opportunities. The population of the Northeast region, for example, presents a primary education completion rate of 27.43% lower in relation to the population living in the Southeast region. The Brazilian social inequality manifests itself in different dimensions, such as the cutting out of gender, ethnicity and region. At the municipal level, the percentage representation of the non-conclusion of the primary education is more evident in sparsely populated municipalities, with a predominantly rural population. In this profile of municipality, Youth and Adult Education is an important mechanism for tackling educational inequalities, especially when articulated with social protection policies.

**Keywords:** Educational opportunities, Income inequality, Youth and Adult Education, Brazilian municipalities.

## Resumo / Resumen

### UNIVERSALIZAÇÃO DA EDUCAÇÃO NOS MUNICÍPIOS BRASILEIROS

As desigualdades educacionais no Brasil podem ser ilustradas, preteritamente, no primeiro Recenseamento Demográfico de 1872, que apontava que 15,11% da população do país era composta por escravos. Naquele ano, 50,95% da população era considerada analfabeta. Os estudos relacionados à questão social brasileira apontam para as regiões Norte e Nordeste como as mais vulneráveis do território nacional, dinâmica refletida também nas oportunidades educacionais. A população nordestina, por exemplo, apresenta índice de conclusão da educação básica de 27,43% inferior em relação à população residente na região Sudeste. A desigualdade social brasileira se expressa em diferentes dimensões, a exemplo dos cortes de gênero, étnico e região. Na escala municipal, a representação percentual da não conclusão da educação básica é mais evidente em municípios pouco populosos, com população predominantemente rural. Nesse perfil de município, a Educação de Jovens e Adultos é um importante mecanismo de enfrentamento das desigualdades educacionais, sobretudo, quando articulada às políticas de proteção social.

**Palavras-chave:** Oportunidades educacionais, Desigualdade de renda, Educação de Jovens e Adultos, Municípios brasileiros.

### UNIVERSALIZACIÓN DE LA EDUCACIÓN EN MUNICIPIOS BRASILEÑOS

Las desigualdades educacionales en Brasil pueden ser mostradas, en su curso histórico, en el primer censo demográfico de 1872 el cual apuntaba que el 15,11% de la población era compuesta por esclavos. Aquel año, el 50,95% de la población era analfabeta. Estudios, relacionados al tema social brasileño, muestran que las regiones Norte e Nordeste como las más vulnerables del territorio nacional, esto también habla de las oportunidades educacionales. La población del nordeste, respecto a la conclusión de la educación primaria, por ejemplo, presenta índice de 27,43% inferior en relación a la población residente en la región Sudeste. La desigualdad social brasileña se expresa en distintas dimensiones: género, étnico, e regional. A nivel municipal, los municipios menos poblados suponen un porcentaje más alto en los números de la no conclusión de la educación primaria. En este perfil de municipio, la Educación de Jóvenes y Adultos es una manera de enfrentar las desigualdades educacionales, sobre todo, mientras se articula con las políticas de protección social.

**Palabras-clave:** Oportunidades educacionales, Desigualdad de renta, Educación de Jóvenes y Adultos, Municipios brasileños.

## INTRODUCTION

Chapter 101 of the soap opera called *Cabocla* (2<sup>nd</sup> shooting) presented Nastácio (a middle-aged black man and rural worker) asking a teacher to allow him to attend night classes at a school located in the municipality of Pau d'Alho (in the state of Espírito Santo). After the granting of the request, the character emphasizes during the whole story his dream to finish his studies in order to become a doctor (BARBOSA, 2004). In the early decades of the twentieth century, the realization of Nastácio's dream represented an utopia to rural workers, mainly those who were black. The challenges faced by Brazilian working classes and by the population who inherited the worst from the slavery are exposed both in dramaturgy and in Brazilian official statistics, as it appeared in the Brazil Census of 1872. School access and attendance in Brazil have selectively developed, meeting the interests of the market and/or authoritarian projects. The universal coverage of education in Brazil only became prominent in the political agenda, represented by programs and actions, after the redemocratization, especially with the promulgated Constitution of 1988 (BRASIL, 1988).

In 2018, 11.3 million people who lived in Brazil were not literate, which reflects the discrepancy in the access to basic education while enhances the strategic importance of *Educação de Jovens e Adultos* (EJA or Youth and Adult Education). The Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE or Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics) defines an illiterate person as someone who doesn't know how to read and write a simple note. However, this basic education modality has not been valued, it is enough to mention that the amount EJA has been receiving, via *Fundo de Manutenção e Desenvolvimento da Educação Básica e de Valorização dos Profissionais da Educação* - (FUNDEB or Fund for the Maintenance and Development of Basic Education and Educational Professionals Valorization), represents the lowest revenue among basic education different levels<sup>1</sup>.

The illiteracy rate in Brazilian population is the clear proof that income inequality and education opportunities went together in the history of Brazil. Differentiated public and private investments centralized not only resources but also public and private structures, reverberating unequal access to essential services. The regionalization of the disparity of educational equipments and opportunities indicates North and Northeast regions as the most vulnerable of the country.

Relations and structures attached to EJA oppose the regional inequality logic developed in the national territory. In general, there is a noticeable significance of youth and adults access to education in areas which have been historically neglected by the private capital and public power, as it occurred to the Northeast region. Besides considering the regional context, government policies must also include locations that are more prone to social vulnerability as the municipalities' rural areas with low demographic pattern.

## THE ACCESS TO FORMAL EDUCATION IN BRAZIL

The universal coverage of the access to education in Brazil is an issue that precedes the Brazilian Republic and remains in the contemporary society. The Brazilian education system has its roots in an ethnocentric view, when catechizing assumed an elementary function, also providing the literacy of natives in the Portuguese language (STRELHOW, 2010). The author addresses the continuity of the social exclusion directed by the education during the Empire, in which:

The Brazilian education identity was being marked at that time by the elitism that restricted education to the wealthier classes. *Aulas régias* (Latin, Greek, philosophy and rhetoric), that were an emphasis of Pombal policy, were specifically appointed to Portuguese colonizers children (white and male), thereby excluding black and native populations. (STRELHOW, 2010, p. 51)

In different periods of Brazilian history, as shown in Table 1, education was treated as one basic right of citizens. However, it is important to advise, when considering constitutional provisions, that the citizenship status has not always been destined, by the letter of the law, to every inhabitant of the country.

Constitution	Basic Principles	Illiterate population	(%) in relation to the population
1824	The Constitution guarantees free primary education for all citizens.	-	-
1891	The education given in public institutions will be lay.	5.059.395	50,95
1934	Everyone has the right to education and must be offered by the family and the public authorities.	18.549.085	60,55
1937	The state is obligated to ensure the accessibility to education through the establishment of public educational institutions.	18.549.085	60,55
1946	Everyone has the right to education and it is inspired by the ideals of freedom and principles of human solidarity.	21.295.490	51,64
1967	Everyone has the right to education and it is inspired by the ideals of national unity, freedom and human solidarity.	27.578.971	38,20
1988	Education is the right of every Brazilian and duty of the State.	32.731.347	27,12

Fonte: Brasil (1824, 1891, 1934, 1937, 1946, 1967, 1988); IBGE (1940; 1960; 1980)\*\*.

\* The previous Population Census was used.

\*\* Data regarding the Population Censuses of 1890 and 1920 were found in the Population Census of 1940.

Table 1 - Brazil: constitutional text and illiterate population

The Constitution of 1824 guaranteed “free primary education for all citizens” (BRASIL, 1824). The first general census in the Brazilian territory happens 48 years after this constitution was promulgated. In this census it is possible to assess that illiteracy prevailed in the Brazilian population, since 82.24% of free population was illiterate. Among slave population, only 0.09% could read and write. When considering the population between six and 16 years of age, only 21.44% attended educational establishments (BRASIL, 1874).

The constitutional text of 1891 neither gives much attention to education nor guarantees it as a citizen right. The main element about the public education occurs in the sphere of management, with the decentralization of executive powers. The management of primary education was in charge of states and municipalities, while the Union was responsible for last years and higher education (BRASIL, 1891). The channelling of basic education to municipalities and states gave them a peripheral status in the national political agenda, due to the centralization of public resources in the federal level and the disparities of tax collection in regional level, as shown by Villela (2007), when noted that the South region collection between 1854 and 1889 was in average the double of the one from the North region. The link between income and education oriented the sociopolitical exclusion of the lower classes, as evidenced in the second paragraph of the article 70, which doesn't allow beggars and illiterate people to vote (BRASIL, 1891).

In the 1930s, the Constitutions of 1934 and 1937 are promulgated. Both present education as a right of all citizens, however the State is only obliged to provide the primary formation. It is possible to notice, in this period, the coordination with the economic sectors, such as, for example, the requirement for economic industries and unions to create apprenticeship schools for the children of workers within their sphere of competence (BRASIL, 1937). In return, the federal government pursued to subsidize these activities. Fávero and Freitas (2011) indicated the State action in the development of professional education, observing that:

In the same period, the federal government still encouraged the creation, in 1946, of the Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Industrial - Senai (SENAI or National Service for Industrial Training) and right after the Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Comercial (SENAI or National Service For Commercial Education), linked to the Ministry of Labour, Industry and Commerce, aiming at the professional training in collaboration with industrial and commercial sectors (p. 369).

On the one hand, the constitutional texts of 1946 and 1967 also guarantee free primary education. On the other hand, the following phases of formation would only be a State responsibility when proved the family's insufficient financial conditions. The constitution of 1967, in turn, also includes the necessity of proving the effective progress, prioritizing the concession of scholarships (BRASIL, 1967).

Finally, the Constitution of 1988 establishes the universal coverage of the basic education, being the State role to provide every educational level.

It is clear, therefore, that only the constitutional text of 1891 didn't ensure primary education as a right of Brazilian citizens. This is such an indicative fact once, during the twentieth century, illiteracy rates were significant, as shown in Table 2.

Year	Total		White		Black		Yellow	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
1940	41,12	32,79	49,74	41,02	21,05	14,51	64,37	48,17
1950	44,12	37,51	53,89	46,80	24,49	18,76	75,84	66,85
1960	55,77	50,68	64,22	59,17	34,75	29,78	85,54	77,66
1970	62,32	58,72	73,08	69,64	45,68	41,53	87,23	82,67
1980	69,74	68,62	80,42	78,40	57,05	54,34	90,18	86,74
1991	75,16	76,35	84,41	84,15	65,41	65,13	93,24	91,36
2000	82,62	83,90	90,61	90,52	73,71	74,00	96,10	94,70

Source: IBGE (1940, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1991, 2000).

Table 2 - Brazil: literacy rate of the population with 5 or more years of age according to sex and race

Until the 1980s, women represented the major proportion among the illiterate. Considering the color or race variable, it is possible to perceive that in every population census the black population achieved the lowest literacy rates. Ferraro and Kreidlow (2004) noted how educational policies contributed to the increase of social inequality in Brazil, reverberating in the rise of "prejudice and discrimination" (p. 180).

Confronting illiteracy needed to consider the demands for education of population beyond school age. In the 1960s, the Movimento Brasileiro de Alfabetização (MOBRAL or Brazilian Literacy Movement) stands out. Oliveira (1989) analyzes the journey of implementation of this program observing that MOBRAL emerged, therefore, as a government response "to the wishes of the population and to the requirements of economic development. A certain pressure from international organizations, certainly, also contributed to this" (p. 222). Paiva (1981) discussed the implementation of MOBRAL based on the conception of the technical mistake, which neglected the scientific community by means of an authoritarian regime. Among the criticism from the scientific community, it is possible to highlight the primacy of a technicist educational model, which didn't enable the student's comprehension in time and in space.

When the military regime ends, the political narrative related to education resumes the social discourse. At the launch of the program Educação para Todos (Education for All), president José Sarney emphasizes the need of the universal coverage of education, saying that this is the most fruitful way to the development of social mobility. The comprehension of social inequality as an obstacle for the effectiveness of the program is noticeable, in his words:

Especially due to the poverty situation of our people, the supply of school lunch during the school year and the distribution of textbook and materials in public schools are indispensable requirements to the achievement of this goal. (SARNEY, 1985, p. 118)

The promulgated Constitution of 1988, in its article 6, addresses education as a citizen right, emphasizing it in article 205 as "a right of everyone and duty of the State", concluding in item I of paragraph 2 from the article 207 that "compulsory and free basic education from 4 (four) to 17 (seventeen) years of age, also guaranteeing its free offer to everyone who didn't attend to it in proper age" (BRASIL, 1988). Early 1990s were represented by instability in the economic sphere, which generically resulted in the exclusion of EJA from the political debate. In the first positioning of the president Itamar Franco, it is possible to notice that the center of the educational field is young people: "When we talk about knowledge and youth, it is natural to associate to our concern the education problem" (FRANCO, 1992, p. 42).

After the Plano Real (Real Plan) impact in the Brazilian economic system, the government of

Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1994-2002) moved forward regarding to EJA, especially in his second term. In his government's proposal, entitled *Avança, Brasil* (Forward Brazil), EJA is treated as an elementary tool in the fight against the Brazilian historic debt to specific population groups, pointing out that:

Youth and adults education must be basically oriented to the rescue of the social debt when it comes to teaching, without losing sight of its essential role as a continuous education process, especially to those who weren't able to attend the regular education levels in proper age. (CARDOSO, 2008, p. 78)

The document presents eight goals for the development of EJA<sup>2</sup>. Three central points that directed the federal government's actions can be highlighted. The first one refers to the decentralization of actions, in which the Union has a central role in the funding while states and municipalities must manage establishments, enrollments and professionals. The second one involves the expansion of the educational system related to EJA, doubling the offer in a four-year interval. Finally, the third point emphasizes the coordination with the professional education (Idem).

In the government of president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2002-2010), FUNDEB's implementation contributes to a significant increase of decentralized resources with states and municipalities (BRASIL, 2007). The territorial capilarity of resources helped the spatial difusion of EJA in many different municipalities of the Brazilian territory.

In 2006, with the Programa Nacional de Integração da Educação Profissional com a Educação Básica na Modalidade de Educação de Jovens e Adultos (PROEJA or Program for the Integration of Professional Education and Basic Education for Young People and Adults), it is possible to observe the integration of EJA with the job market. The main guideline consists in the articulation of professional knowledge with the national curricular basis. This proposal became a challenge, according to Coelho and Gonçalves (2012), when they share the not very successful experience of implementation in Campus Florianópolis of Instituto Federal de Santa Catarina (Federal Institute of Santa Catarina). In contrast, Moura and Henrique (2012) indicate the need for distinct educational networks intergovernability, reminding the socioeconomic importance that PROEJA may represent in the Brazilian territory.

## REGIONAL DISPARITIES: INCOME AND EDUCATION

Social inequality in Brazil is a broadly addressed subject in economic and social literature. Authors such as Ianni (1989), Furtado (2003) and Rocha (2000) analyzed in different periods the regionalization of income inequality in the Brazilian territory. Arrais (2019, p. 2) understands income inequality as “the mother of all inequalities, since it's income that allows the consumption of goods and services that influence social mobility of individuals”. The deepening of social inequality in the country is present in the contemporaneity, as:

In Brazil, household surveys reveal that the richest 10 percent received a little more than 40 percent of the total yield in 2015, but, when considering all forms of yield – not only the yield informed in the surveys –, revised estimates suggest that the top 10 percent, in fact, earned more than 55 percent of the total yield. (ONU, 2019, p. 107)

Among 189 countries analyzed in the 2019 Human Development Report, the average level of education of Brazilian population corresponded to the 115th position. Comparing to the German population (greatest average), the indicator corresponded to 55.32%. Considering Latin American examples, Brazil presents shorter schooling when compared to Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Panama, Costa Rica, Cuba and Mexico (ONU, 2019).

In Brazil, the relation between income inequality and education opportunities is clear. When considering population over 15 years of age, uneducated or having incomplete primary education, it can be seen that, in the year 2010, 41.78% earned up to one minimum wage. This indicator becomes more representative when directed to North and Northeast regions, which present 60.29% and 62.11% respectively. In contrast, when considering the same population group with complete college education,

only 4.01% of population fitted. Regarding the population group that earns more than 10 minimum wages, 64.20% had concluded college, standing out the Center-West and the Southeast region, with 64.14% and 66.50% respectively (IBGE, 2010).

Just as income, Brazilian educational inequalities present intensified indicators, especially when cases from North and Northeast regions are observed, according to Ribeiro (2011, p. 55):

Individuals who were born in the South region (Southeast and South) are 1.4 times more likely to complete the 4 initial years of basic education and 1.6 times more likely to enter university than those who were born in the North Region (North, Northeast and Center-West).

Table 3 addresses general elements of basic education, in which the regionalized indicators reflect a dynamic that is similar to the one mentioned by Ribeiro (2011).

Brazilian Major Region	Rate of illiteracy		Average number of years of study	Conclusion of the compulsory primary education (25 years or more)	School attendance (from 15 to 17 years)
	Between 15 and 60 years	60 years or more			
North	7,98	27,02	8,7	43,6	61,9
Northeast	13,87	36,87	7,9	38,9	61,3
Southeast	3,47	10,33	10	53,6	76,4
South	3,63	10,80	9,5	45,7	71,5
Central West	5,4	18,27	9,6	48,7	71,6

Table 3 - Major Regions of Brazil: general information about the primary education in 2018. Source: IBGE (2018).

Access and attendance to educational establishments occur disparately in the Brazilian territory. The northeastern population, for example, studies an average of 2.1 years less than the one from the southeast. Regarding to the illiteracy rate, the lowest incidence occurs in the population group between 15 and 60 years of age, being 3.01 times lower when compared to the population over 60 years of age. Both cases have in common the regionalization of the educational vulnerability. The Southeast region presented the best indicators, 3.47% and 10.33% respectively. In contrast, North (7.98% and 27.02%) and Northeast (13.87% and 36.87%) regions had the worst results. In short, considering the average of the population groups, in the Northeast the illiteracy rate is 3.68 times greater than in the Southeast, while in the North it corresponds to 2.54 (IBGE, 2018).

The highest percentage of people over 25 years of age who completed at least the basic education is also concentrated in the Southeast. The discrepancy between this region and the Northeast, again with the worst results, was 14.7%. The amplitude between the other regions is relatively low, as the example of the 2.1% between results from the North and the South regions. Finally, the liquid attendance to educational establishments also has the regional tendencies presented before. The percentage difference between the Southeast indicator is 15.1% higher than the Northeast one and 14.5% in relation to the North one (IBGE, 2018).

Among other factors, the literature indicates the excess of school absences as a relevant element to the comprehension of school dropout, according to what was observed in the analyses of Leon and Menezes Filho (2002) and Silva Filho and Araújo (2007). The first mentioned study noted the relationship between income and school attendance, attesting that this factor directly interferes in the youth advance to other levels of education. The second one considered many different social aspects which interfere in school attendance and performance, such as use and marketing of drugs, prostitution, among others.

Figure 1 presents the result of basic education non-completion in Brazilian municipalities and the number of common classrooms related to EJA in states. In 197 municipalities, more than 90% of the population haven't completed the basic education. It can be noted that most of them are located in the North and Northeast regions, with the exception of 30. Notably, Chaves/PA, Casserengue/PB and Monte Alegre dos Campos/RS can be highlighted, since they presented rates of 96.71%, 94.90% and 94.72%,

respectively. These municipalities have in common high rate of rural population, Monte Alegre dos Campos/RS and Chaves/PA had 79.21% and 88.05% respectively (IBGE, 2020). The regionality of educational inequalities can also be observed in other education levels. On average, the population that lives in the Southeast has 1.94 times more opportunities of access to college education than the Northeastern and 1.80 times more than the inhabitants of the North region (IBGE, 2010).

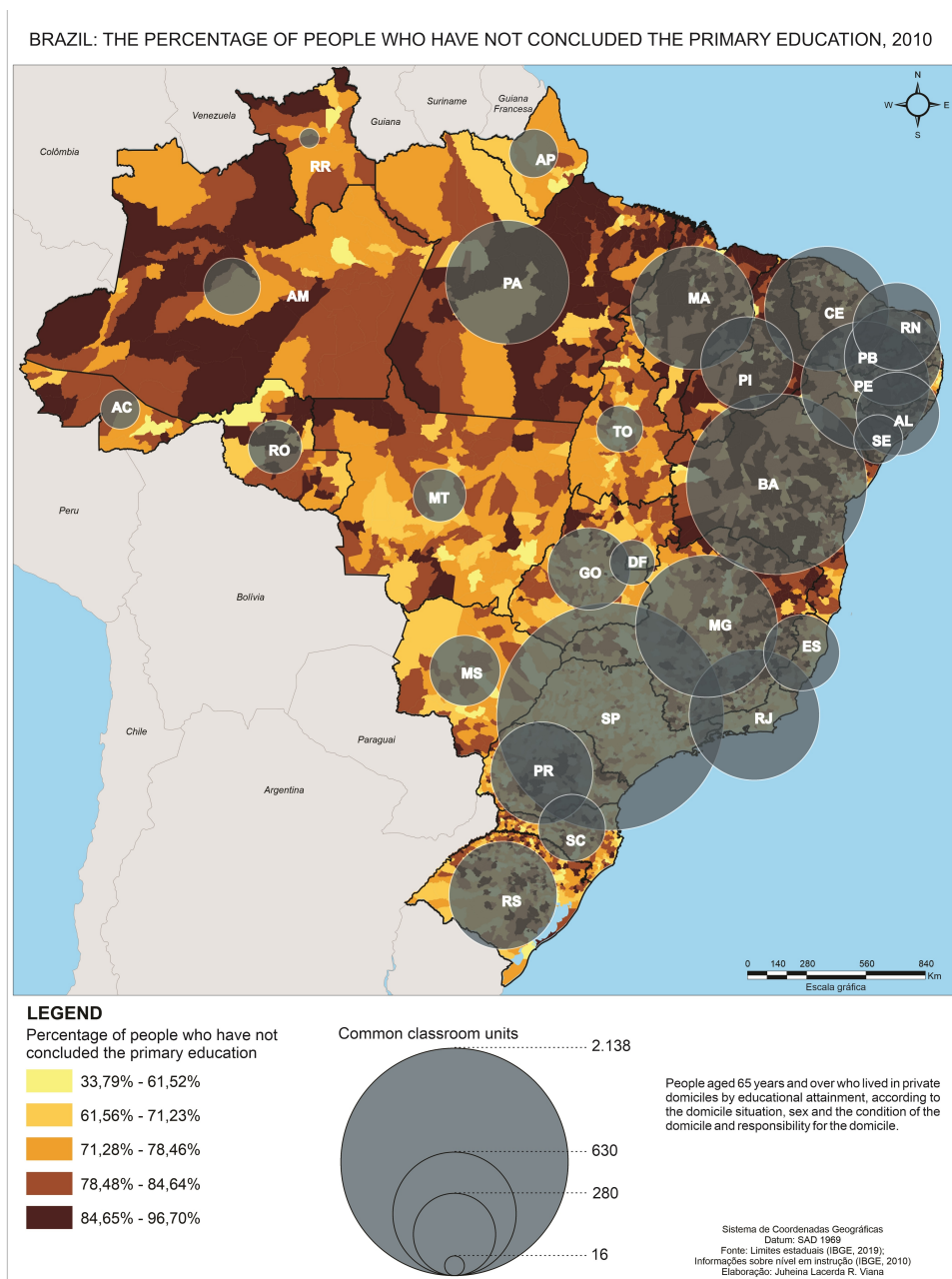


Figure 1 - People aged 65 years and over without completing primary education and Youth and Adult Education classroom per State, 2010. Source: IBGE (2010); INEP (2010).

Federation units that concentrated more classrooms related to EJA were São Paulo and Bahia, with 18.44% and 11.65% respectively. In contrast, Roraima (0.14%) and Acre (0.55%) presented the lowest participation. When comparing the value with the population of the Federation unit, North and Northeast regions gain representativity, considering that, among states with the lowest Population/classroom rates, nine are located in those regions. The highest rates were 33.775/1 in Santa Catarina and 30.996/1 in the Federal District (IBGE, 2010; INEP, 2010).

After analyzing the extreme poverty indicators in Brazil, Alencar (2020) noted the higher

proportional rate in rural areas, focusing North and Northeast regions. As mentioned by the author, “the cases of the municipalities Itamarati/AM, Santa Isabel do Rio Negro/AM and Santa Rosa dos Purus/AC are emblematic for this assertion, since in all of them the percentage of people in extreme poverty living in rural areas is above 80%” (p. 66).

The spatial dimension of educational inequalities integrates income spatiality, having more impact in the human development of the population in rural areas. Molina and Freitas observe the precariousness of access and attendance in educational establishments located in the rural zone, according to the authors:

Among serious deficiencies, it is possible to highlight: the illiteracy rate of population of 15 or more years of age, which represents a level of 23.3% in the rural area, three times greater than that of urban area, which represents 7.6%; the average education of the population of 15 or more years of age, who lives in the rural area, is 4.5 years, while in the urban area, same age group, it represents 7.8 years; extremely poor operating conditions of basic education schools, because 75% of students are assisted in schools without library, 98% in schools without science lab, 92% in schools without internet access (p. 19).

The authors observe the discrepancy of education opportunities of people who live in rural areas, which reverberates in low attendance and low success rates at school. In contrast, when they analyze the municipalities with best rates regarding to the basic education completion, the presence of state capitals and municipalities that belong to metropolitan regions and medium-sized cities is common.

Among the 100 municipalities with the lowest incidence of basic education non-completion, it is possible to notice the prevalence of municipalities from the South and Southeast regions of the country. Among them, only 12 were located in the North or Northeast, with the exception of Olinda/PE, Madre de Deus/BA, Parnamirim/RN and Paço Lumiar/MA, the others referred to state capitals (IBGE, 2010).

Table 4 presents the 10 municipalities with the lowest basic education completion rates.

Municipality	Estimated Population	Rural Population	Families		
			Situation of extreme poverty	Situation of poverty	Low-income
Chaves (PA)	23,717	88	2,996	606	309
Casserengue (PB)	7,468	51	1,376	34	182
Monte Alegre dos Campos (RS)	3,226	79	129	49	71
São Francisco de Assis do Piauí (PI)	5,755	74	1,329	21	182
Doutor Ulysses (PR)	5,580	84	691	184	236
Aroeiras do Itaim (PI)	2,551	90	537	26	30
Marajá do Sena (MA)	7,792	86	1,343	109	166
Manari (PE)	21,434	79	4,109	50	333
Fernando Falcão (MA)	10,360	84	1,909	141	272
Itapicuru (BA)	35,576	79	7,018	549	748

Table 4 - Municipalities with lower indices of conclusion of the primary education: demographic and social information. Source: IBGE (2010); IBGE (2019); MDS (2020).

It can be observed that the selected municipalities share some demographic and social characteristics. The first one consists in the prevalence of municipalities with low demographic patterns, 70% of them have less than 10,361 inhabitants (IBGE, 2019). The second refers to the prevalence of rural above the urban population in all cases. Except for Casserengue/PB, all the other municipalities have an equal or greater percentage of 74% inhabitants in the field (IBGE, 2010). Finally, the representation of social vulnerability in these municipalities is evident.

In case of making the simple multiplication exercise considering the number of families in extreme poverty and the average Brazilian household composition, it can be observed that, in six cases, more than half of the population live with up to R\$ 89.00 per month, as the example of Aroeiras do



Itaim/PI, where 69.47% live in extreme poverty conditions (MDS, 2020).

## THE CAPILARITY TERRITORIAL OF THE YOUTH AND ADULT EDUCATION IN BRAZIL TODAY

The Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional (LDB, or National Law of Directives and Bases for Education) says that the EJA is a right of young people or adults who did not have access to or could not conclude the primary and secondary education at the right age (SENADO FEDERAL, 2017, p. 7). In Brazil, 70,274,377 inhabitants have not completed primary education, with 77.04% declaring themselves illiterate or with incomplete primary education (IBGE, 2010). The scenario presented reinforces the relevance of EJA in governments' strategies to the struggle against social inequalities in Brazil.

The Plano Nacional de Educação (PNE, or National Plano of Education), in force from 2014 until 2024, has as a goal to eradicate absolute illiteracy by the end of its implementation. In 2015, the goal was to reduce the illiteracy rates to 6.5%, a fact that did not occur, considering the register of 8%. The EJA assumed a prominent role in the PNE because was considered a strategic instrument in the combat against illiteracy. Actions such as the availability of opportunities, financial assistance through direct income transfer and service offering for prisoners in the prison system are included in goal nine of the PNE (BRASIL, 2014).

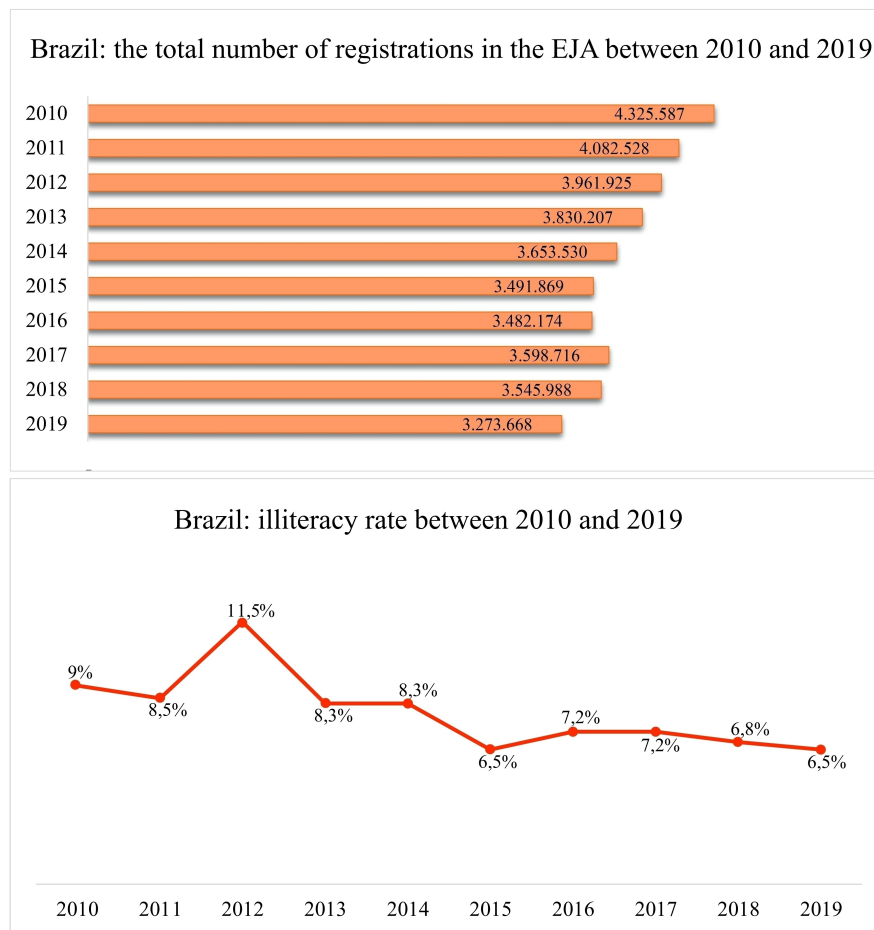


Figure 2 - Brazil: illiteracy rate and registrations in the EJA from 2010 to 2019. Source: INEP (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019); IBGE, (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019)

Figure 2 summarizes the relationship between the illiteracy rate and the number of registrations in

EJA from 2010 to 2019. During this period, the illiteracy rate fell from 9% to 6.8%. There is also a 24.22% decrease in the number of registrations made at EJA.

Considering the regional scale, the Southeast region had the greatest proportional and absolute regression, with a decrease of 34.25% of registrations, representing 513,246 registered students. In relation to the proportional value, the North region stands out, with registration involution of 34.03%. On the other hand, the South and Northeast regions have the lowest proportional rates of registration reduction, 13.43% and 15.19% respectively. It can also be noted that, in 2019, the Northeast presented 3.54 times more students registered than the South region.

Considering the location, the urban area decreased 24.96% and the rural 19.45%. With regard to the gender of the students, the number of women registered grew by 37.35%, while that of men decreased by 60.74% (INEP, 2010, 2019). The indicators focused on the Brazilian regions reveal the weakening of government investments related to EJA, as shown in Table 5.

Brazilian Major Region	2010				2019			
	Registrations	Teachers	Teachers / Student	Educational establishments	Registrations	Teachers	Teachers / Student	Educational establishments
North	525.687	29.973	17,54	5.500	346.815	25.865	13,41	3.737
Northeast	1.577.831	96.416	16,36	20.819	1.338.224	90.304	14,82	15.103
Southeast	1.498.409	95.478	15,69	9.524	985.163	74.929	13,15	6.522
South	432.118	25.549	16,91	2.810	378.387	25.079	15,09	2.833
Central West	291.542	18.880	15,44	1.789	225.079	17.426	12,92	1.568

Table 5 - Major Regions of Brazil: the indicators related to EJA (from 2010 to 2019). Source: INEP (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019).

The Southeast and North regions registered higher registrations involutions, with 24, 25% and 24.03% respectively. In contrast, the South and Northeast regions showed decreases of 12.43% and 15.19% respectively. In all these regions of Brazil, the number of professors working at EJA fell. The most significant impacts occurred in the Southeast (21.52%) and North (13.71%). On the other hand, the South and Northeast regions recorded rates of 1.84% and 6.44% respectively. Proportionately, it is noticeable that the decrease in the number of registrations overlaps that of teachers, considering that in all regions the number of teachers/students has decreased. Moreover, when considering the presence of educational establishments linked to EJA, it shall be noticed that, except for the South region, which had an increase of 23 establishments, the others showed a reduction (INEP, 2010, 2019).

The indicators presented in Table 5 show socio-political dynamics that relate the importance of EJA in localities with a higher incidence of social vulnerability, highlighting:

- 1) The relevance of strengthening of EJA in the South region, which in 2019 represented the second-lowest illiteracy rate, coming close to the indicators of the Southeast;
- 2) The importance of EJA in the Northeast region, in which the reduction of the register of registrations was proportionally lower than the loss of educational establishments and teachers;
- 3) In the North region, the involution of registrations is significantly close to the regression of teachers and educational establishments.

In 2019, 3,273,668 registrations were made at EJA, with 59.19% linked to primary education and 40.81% to secondary education. The age groups with the greatest representations in relation to the total are "over 40 years old" (22.19%) and "between 20 and 24 years old (19.98%)". The access to EJA is predominantly urban, with 86.71% of the overall value (INEP, 2019).

The educational establishments linked to EJA meet the demands of basic education, corresponding to 81.90% of the total, 60.93% of which are located in urban areas. In secondary education, the concentration of educational establishments is even more noticeable, with only 8.99% of establishments serving rural areas. The importance of the public sector in providing education to young people and adults is positive, since 63.45% of the educational establishments are managed by the public

administration. In primary education, the municipal network form the majority of the educational establishments (72.23%); in secondary education, the state network is responsible for managing 88.88% of establishments (INEP, 2019).

EJA teachers' profile is predominantly composed of professionals between 30 and 54 years old since 76.25% are in this age group. Regarding gender, women occupy 63.70% of jobs. The employment relationships are mainly composed of public servants or for temporary contracts. The first corresponds to 60.85% of the records, while the second to 38.47%. The teaching staff is composed of licensed professionals (56.78%) and /or specialized (29.33%). Only 2.99% of teachers are masters and 0.43% are doctors. In addition, the occurrence of mid-level professionals (6.37%) and fundamental (0.10%) teaching classes at EJA is noteworthy (INEP, 2019)

The verticalization of the analysis in the municipalities indicates the heterogeneity of the information when considering the intraregional scale. Figure 3 shows the spatial arrangement of registrations, teachers and educational establishments related to EJA in Brazilian municipalities.

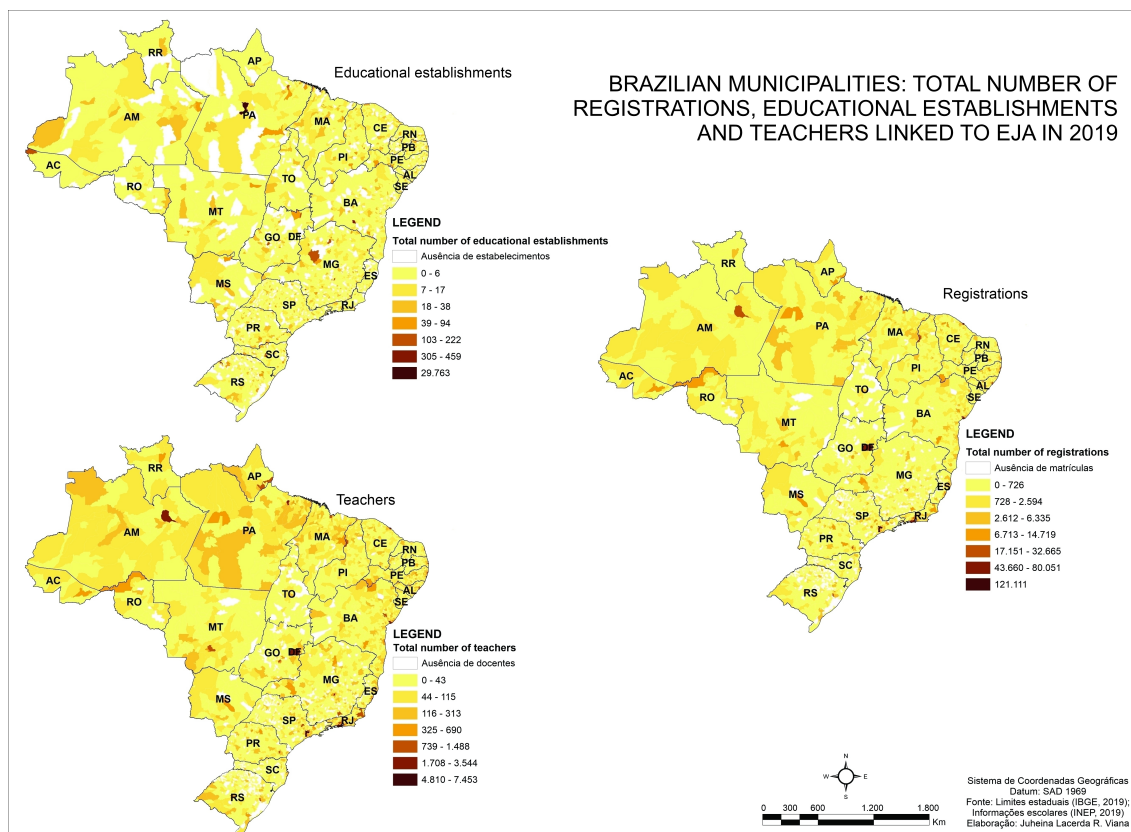


Figure 3 - Brazilian municipalities: registrations, educational establishments and teachers linked to EJA in 2019. Source: INEP, 2019.

The mapping conducted in Figure 3 denotes the importance of EJA in areas with high indicators of non-conclusion of primary education (see Figure 1), such as the northeastern semi-arid and the northern region of Minas Gerais. Considering the Brazilian municipalities, in 751 municipalities there were no activities related to EJA. In general, the low number of registrations predominates. In 995 municipalities between 2 and 50 registrations were registered, and in 627 between 51 and 100. In 11.65% of Brazilian municipalities, more than 1,000 registrations were made, totaling 649 cases. The 10 municipalities with the highest absolute values represented 15.05% of the total; in common among them is the fact that they are all state capitals (INEP, 2019).

In 3,730 Brazilian municipalities, there was not even one educational establishment located in rural areas, while in urban areas there were 751 cases. The administrative management shows the presence of the State in the provision of EJA, mainly through federative units and municipalities. In Brazil, the offer of EJA under federal government administration occurs in only 175 municipalities,

totaling 208 educational establishments. The private network of schools is present in 1,178 municipalities, concentrated predominantly in state capitals, such as Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Fortaleza, which together represent 8.71% of the national total (INEP, 2019).

EJA teachers work predominantly in the public school systems, representing 94.38% of the cases. In 4,691 Brazilian municipalities, it was not recorded at least one public servant or employed on temporary contracts. The training of teachers showed great diversity, including professionals who had completed only the fundamental level (333 cases) or the master's degree (10,371 cases) and the doctorate (1,522 cases) (INEP, 2019). The localization of professional action with higher or lower academic qualifications has a strict relation with the demographic and economic profiles of the municipalities. In this way, the 10 municipalities with the highest number of teachers with primary education are located in the North and Northeast regions.

## CONCLUSIONS

In different public policy contexts, the socio-historical trajectory of EJA in Brazil has a strict relation with social inequality, which manifests itself in aspects such as income, gender, color and region. The theme of access to education for the out-of-school age population appeared in constitutional texts, political speeches and official documents, however, the actions that addressed the demands of this group were rare. The EJA receives the status of national project, represented in programs in actions, after the promulgation of the Constituição Federal de 1988 (Constitution of Brazil). However, only from the final years of the 1990s, does it gain more prominence.

Indicators related to social inequality point to the Northeast and North regions as the most vulnerable, in terms of both income and educational rates, especially when considering the rural areas of the municipalities, in which inhabitants living in poverty or extreme poverty. Therefore, it is clear that the relation among the place of residence, unequal access to income, disposition of professionals, and educational establishments structure the territoriality of the non-conclusion of primary education in Brazil.

The spatialization of EJA equipment, professionals and students is not present in a significant part of Brazilian municipalities, with the greatest incidence being registered in urban areas. The quantitative of registrations between 2010 and 2019 suffered involution in all regions of the country. It was noted that in the Southeast region (with lower rates of non-conclusion of course), the regression of registrations was more significant, while in the Northeast, in 2019, it was the region that polarized the register of students linked to EJA, with 40.88 % (INEP, 2019). Although programs and actions (mainly from the federal government) have been developed in the last decades reflecting on the expansion of EJA, there is a growing demand for education targeted at young people and adults, as observed in the indicators of non-conclusion of primary education and the illiteracy rate. In this sense, three socio-territorial aspects have to be taken into the political agenda related to EJA:

- The greatest incidence of social vulnerability in rural areas of the municipalities enabling the implementation of strategies that consider structural issues present in the daily life of the Brazilian rural population, such as the obstacles encountered for doing everyday displacements.

- The relationship between social vulnerability and non-conclusion of primary education. Comparing the income profile of the federal government's Cadastro Único (Single Registry) with educational indicators, enabling the implementation of strategy 9.4. PNE, which aims to "create additional benefits in the national income transfer program for youth and adults who attend literacy courses" (BRASIL, 2014).

- The importance of EJA to combat illiteracy in Brazil with consideration for policies toward the localities that presented in recent years the greatest involution in the registration framework. The direction of financial resources is essential for such action, considering that EJA is the level of education with the lowest collection in the FUNDEB.

In short, the debate related to the access of the out-of-school age population to primary education equipment should not be limited to the number of registrations and the provision of equipment/professionals. The discussion must permeate proposals relating to the permanence and educational success of the target audience. This requires an integrated analysis of the different realities

of the Brazilian population. It is possible that, with the articulation between the actions of the educational system and social protection, Nastácio's dream of becoming a doctor would not be so utopian.

## NOTE

1 - The weighting factor of EJA enrollments refers to 0.70, being the lowest distribution rate (BRASIL, 2007).

2- Goals for youth and adult education: • increase resources passed to states, municipalities and non-governmental entities to youth and adult education programs, in order to offer, until 2022, education equivalent to the four initial grades of primary education to at least three million young people and adults from fifteen to thirty years of age; • support the supply of courses equivalent to the four final grades of primary education to the population from fifteen to thirty years of age with educational level equivalent to the four initial grades; • develop teaching and didactic resources to youth and adult education in order to support and improve the programs efficacy; • stimulate the supply of distance education programs, encouraging its utilization in the courses to young people and adults; • stimulate the combination of primary education for youth and adults with professional education basic courses; • duplicate, in four years, the service capacity of high school supplementary courses; • promote the supply of continuous education courses in higher education institutions for adults, with or without previous higher education level; • increase the cooperation with the program Comunidade Solidária (“Solidarity Community”) for the youth literacy in municipalities with high illiteracy rates (CARDOSO, 2008, p. 78).

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