

A new scenario of backwardness and destruction in middle education training in Brazil

A setback in the configuration of the public policy for education and health in Brazil – and, thus, of the health education field – is the backdrop of this issue of *Trabalho, Educação e Saúde*.

In this regard, emphasis is on Provisional Measure 746, popularly known as the ‘Middle Level PM’ – the content of which consists in amending the current Law of Directives and Bases (LDB), established under Act No. 9394, enacted in 1996, and of the Fund for the Maintenance of the Development of Basic Education and Valuing of Education Professionals (Fundeb), created by Act No. 11,494, of 2007 – and Constitution Amendment Proposal No. 55 (PEC 55), definitively passed by Congress on December 13 last year, aiming to instruct the New Tax System under the scope of the Tax and Social Security Budgets of the Union for 20 fiscal years.

Considering, in particular, the editorial expertise areas that guide *Trabalho, Educação e Saúde*, we cannot shy away from registering the dramatically negative impact the proposals will have, especially when looked at from the viewpoint of the national scene.

The Middle Level PM – published without having gone through an extensive, capillary and democratic discussion process with society and, in particular, educators – points to a set of changes that will produce an educational reality that opposes not only the social horizon of unitary and holistic human training, but also the historic achievement of free public education for the Brazilian nation.

Our criticism is based on the vast literature there is on the relationship between labor and education, produced by the Brazilian university, and on the complex history of public policies aimed at training young people in Brazil; it is also supported by the robust set of discussions and national initiatives aimed at qualified and socially relevant training of health workers over the years.

It is inevitable to note that such studies, analyses, and research projects have been getting, in *Trabalho, Educação e Saúde*, from its first edition, prime editorial space for publicity and circulation – constituting, in short, the very reason for the journal’s existence.

In this sense, we can say that the middle level of training now in force in the country – as a result of achievements made by workers and of successive contradictory nation projects – is based on assumptions such as its nature as basic, universal education, its relationship (and not subsumption) with training for work, and its unitary nature.

Here, we do not intend to ignore the fact that these assumptions have not yet been fully implemented; moreover, much of the intellectual production published by *Trabalho, Educação e Saúde* points precisely to the limits imposed on achieving universal, unitary, and holistic training in sociability marked by inequality. However, after discarding the mysticism or illusions surrounding the subject, it is undeniable that the legislation that currently governs this level – and that the PM reforms – seeks to bar structural educational duality: a duality that ultimately legitimizes and sustains the perspective that education must be differentiated and generate unique categories of citizens.

Thus, it is precisely these partial achievements expressed in the current configuration of the middle level of training consolidated by the Brazilian government to date that the deleterious effects of the proposed change now underway affect.

In this regard, we highlight a few major issues featured in the PM that has been issued, such as the fragmentation of part of what currently comprises the training in “training itineraries” (cf. introduction to article 36); the student’s vulnerability when faced with the submission of a significant part of the hour load to the immediate and volatile needs of the market, and even when confronted with exploitation as deregulated labor (cf. paragraph 17 of article 36); the lack of obligations, by all schools comprising the public network, of offering the set of training areas (cf. paragraph 1 of article 36); the limitation of the National Common Curricular Base (cf. paragraph 6 of article 36) hour load to a mere 1,200 hours, and the decrease in the minimum professional requirements to work as an educator, possibly allowing “professionals without recognized erudition and qualification” (paragraph IV of article 61) to work as educators.

These are a few of the elements of the severe state of impoverishment the PM in question proposes for this level of education. In practice, two types of middle education will be implemented, thus consolidating the structural duality above, through the full embodiment of human training by the drifts of the so-called ‘labor market,’ in addition to the entrepreneurship and privatization of education. By establishing training itineraries under the proposed terms and submitting a significant portion of qualification to training, among other things, we can say that, ultimately, PM 746 points to questions on whether the middle level is a right *per se* – as an inherent component of basic and universal education – although, formally, it maintains this level of education as such.

Although our main considerations here have focused on PM 746, we could not end this editorial without reiterating that the discussion on education – i.e., the middle level of education in health in Brazil – is also determined by its forms of funding and allocation of public resources – precisely the subject of the PEC 55. In short, the two combined measures, PM 746 and PEC 55, converge to produce a serious setback for the education of young people and workers in Brazil.

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ERRATA: As for the editorial DOI number 10.1590/1981-7746-sol00033, published at the journal *Trabalho, Educação e Saúde*, 15(1):7-8, page 8:

Where it reads:

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It should read:

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