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Youth and Adult Education in The Prison Context: Challenges, Limits, and Possibilities of a Brazilian Elementary School

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Abstract

This article aims to present youth and adult education in the prison context, evaluating its effectiveness in resocialization from the observation of the pedagogical-administrative management of an elementary education school located in a medium-security prison in the city of João Pessoa, state of Paraíba. The justification for this study is the belief that education opens the doors of knowledge, in which bridges are built for the critical development of human beings. The following question guided this research: What are the main challenges, limits, and possibilities of the administrative-pedagogical management of a school in a prison context for Youth and Adult Education deprived of freedom? This qualitative study relied on a five-question questionnaire addressed to its director. School in prison should be a place of freedom of thought and a place where the inmate would feel safe. The education role in the prison system is to rebuild the identity lost by the person deprived of freedom and to rescue their citizenship, thus making the prison environment less painful and a rightful place for those who are convicted.

Introduction

“It is said that no one truly knows a nation until one has been inside its jails. A nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens, but its lowest ones — and South Africa treated its imprisoned African citizens like animals.” (Nelson Mandela, 1994, p.115).

The 21st century is meaning many things concerning fundamental human rights, especially about the uncertainty of the certainty of the rapid changes we are witnessing in our daily lives. We are going through an obscure period of social relations, particularly caused by the health emergency that has plagued us for over a year. Seen through the eyes of Professor Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2020, p.5), there is no permanent crisis, it is “transient and constitutes the opportunity to be overcome and give rise to a better state of affairs”. The world is no longer linear, the future is plural and we will still have surprises that are avoidable or not. Bobbio (1992, p. 65, emphasis added) argues that “men are all equal, where 'equality' is understood to be equal in the enjoyment of freedom, in the sense that no individual can have more freedom than another”. However, if a person commits a criminal action, his punishment, in general, is to isolate him from the society of which he was previously a member. “Because of their condition as prisoners, their place in the social pyramid is reduced to the category of 'marginals', 'thugs', doubly

excluded, massacred, hated [...]” (Onofre, 2006, p.1, author's emphasis). The inmate loses his name, his history, and his citizenship, which Goffman (1974, p.24) ratifies with “[...] his self is systematically, though often unintentionally, mortified.”

The rights inherent to any human being, including the inmate, are evident in the UN *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which, in its art. VI, states that “Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law”; art. XXIII, “Everyone has the right to work [...]”; and art. XXVI, “Everyone has the right to education” (United Nations for Education, Science, and Culture, 1998, unpaginated). Our study deals with the person deprived of freedom. According to the first rule for the treatment of prisoners, within the minimum rules established by the Human Nations (*Nelson Mandela Rules*), “All prisoners must be treated with an inherent respect for the value and dignity of the human being” (Lanfredi, 2016, p. 21). In addition, prison administrations and other competent authorities must provide education, professional training, and work. Throughout the Brazilian Magna Carta, we emphasize the right to human dignity from the fundamental principles: in art. 5, of the individual and collective rights and duties, it establishes that we are all equal before the law, without distinction of any nature, the right to life and safety and, in art. 6, of social rights, education, work, and security. What we can verify is that the right to education remains with the imprisoned, in addition to what is foreseen in our Constitution, the Law of Directives and Bases of National Education (LDB), and the National Education Plan (PNE), besides other legal documents, which will be presented in the next section.

This study does not go into details about the remission of punishment by work or by reading itself; its purpose is to present youth and adult education in the prison context, especially in dealing with the pedagogical-administrative management of a basic education school located in a prison in the city of João Pessoa, state of Paraíba, focusing on its effectiveness in re-socialization. The justification for the specific look at educational management is because we believe that education opens the doors of knowledge, broadens horizons, creating unique and autonomous moments, where solid bridges are built for the development of the human being, a critical being and citizen. The relevance is presented in the very set of education in prison schools, which is aligned to the accomplishment of the objectives of Brazilian penal execution. Finally, the following question guided this research: *What are the main challenges, limits, and possibilities of the administrative-pedagogical management of a school in a prison context for Youth and Adult Education deprived of freedom?*

Method

This study has a qualitative scope, that is, the object of this research deals with the relationship between the prison inmate and the prison school, which aims to provide that, at the end of the inmate's term, he/she will be better prepared to return to the social environment and be recognized as a citizen, with all his/her rights, indistinctly. Following the research cycle described by Minayo (2001), we started with exploratory research in international and national legal documents, dealing with the topic of education and prison, in particular, the right of the convict to education and his remission. As a research instrument, a questionnaire with five open questions was also used. It was sent to the director of a school located in a medium-security prison in the city of Joao Pessoa, Paraíba. Taking advantage of the open dialogue with the respondent, several requests were made attached to the

questionnaire, to complement the constitutive documents of the administrative-pedagogical management of the school, such as the Pedagogical Political Project, the Education Strategies in Prisons Plan, the Curriculum Strategic Plan 2020 in the EJA modality and the Project Execution Report of the state school that is under study.

Theoretical Aspects of Prison Reality

The prison population in Brazil fell for the first time in the last five years, when it grew steadily, as can be seen in Figure 1. Current data point to a federal and state prison capacity of 440,530, a still worrisome deficit of 241,652 vacancies, a still very high incarceration rate, that is, two and a half times more than the world imprisons. Ireland (2011) assures that it is necessary to solve social and public safety problems. Our prison system, “due to lack of resources or adequate management, to the detriment of a contribution to a better society, ends up perpetuating an unequal and unfair social structure” (Correia, 2019, p.20).

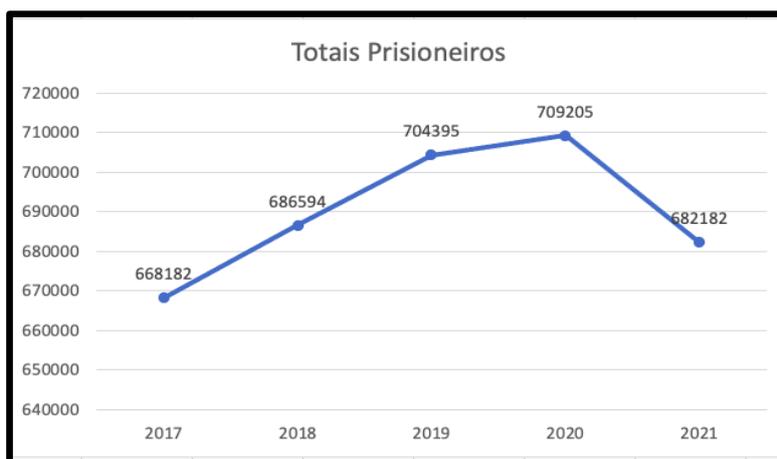


Figure 1. Prison Population (2017-2021)

Prison, as a total institution, is conceptualized "as a place of residence and work where a large number of similarly situated individuals, separated from the wider society for a considerable time, lead a closed and formally administrative life" (Goffman, 1974, p.11). Ireland (2011) argues that the prison is the environment of non-freedom, which removes the independence and autonomy of its inmates, which presents a climate of increasing inequalities, which generate exclusion and social marginality. Vieira (2020, p.22) points out that the Prison System is precarious, due to the lack of investments and negligence of the government, which propagates a “criminal society”, instead of restoring real freedom to the person who has served his sentence to society. It is important to explain that the Prison System refers to the "group of institutions and public policies that aim to fulfill what the Law recommends for the execution of sentences of confinement, detention or simple imprisonment" (Cordeiro, 2010 cited by Rodrigues, 2018, p.21). Onofre and Julião (2013, p.54) present a portrait of the prison system as follows: "[...] in the damp and dark cells, the voice of condemnation, of guilt, of inhumanity is repeated uninterruptedly," which comes in the direction of exclusion in all aspects, exclusion from school, from work, from social integration, from employment, from family ties and with an absence of relationships. Onofre (2006, p.3) when pointing out that the newly arrested, when taking off his clothes and putting on the uniform of the prison institution, starts to lose his previous identifications to subject himself to a prison culture; he loses his name and

presents himself now by a number, signifying the "mutilation of the self".

The best path to be followed by the inmates to build their identity and rescue their lost citizenship depends on public policies that make prison a place not necessarily painful, but a space of rights, with the removal of barriers that prevent them from remaining human. If we make a chain of strong links from the keywords of the read references, the final desired effect would be *resocialization* or *social reintegration*. So, at this point, the following question arises: what is *resocialization*? Leal (2019), tells us that it would be the readaptation of the prisoner to live in society, making that person able to return to social life, behaving following the legal norms. We cannot forget that Michel Foucault (1987, p.148), in his classic book *Vigil and Punish*, about the history of violence in prisons, makes it clear that "Individual correction must then carry out the process of requalifying the individual as a subject in law, by strengthening the systems of signs and representations that they make circulate". A counterpoint presented by Rodrigues (2018, p.23) regarding social relevance presents us that "[...] prison as a resocialization proposal is a fallacious action".

The Education of Youth and Adults in Prison

Ireland (2011) and Onofre and Julião (2013) present an interesting paradox in the relationship between education and prison. Education's fundamental principle is to be transformative, contributing to the full formation and freedom of the person; in the opposite sense, prison culture has the clear scope of removing the person from social life, keeping him away from society, molding him to prison. Rodrigues and Oliveira (2020) add that prison should be a place of oblivion and degradation for those who have been convicted, but that the school can mean a space to mitigate the damage caused by incarceration itself. The total prison population is 748,009 inmates (DEPEN, 2020a), of which about 62% are between 18 and 34 years old. There is the possibility of remission of the sentence, in general rules, for work, education, and reading. In the labor program, we have 144,211 prisoners, corresponding to about 19%; in the educational program, 123,652, which would be 16.5%; and in the remission through reading, a total of 26,862, which would mean 3.5%. We can see in Figure 2 that the majority of our prison population, 66%, is located, concerning the level of education, in elementary education, complete or incomplete.

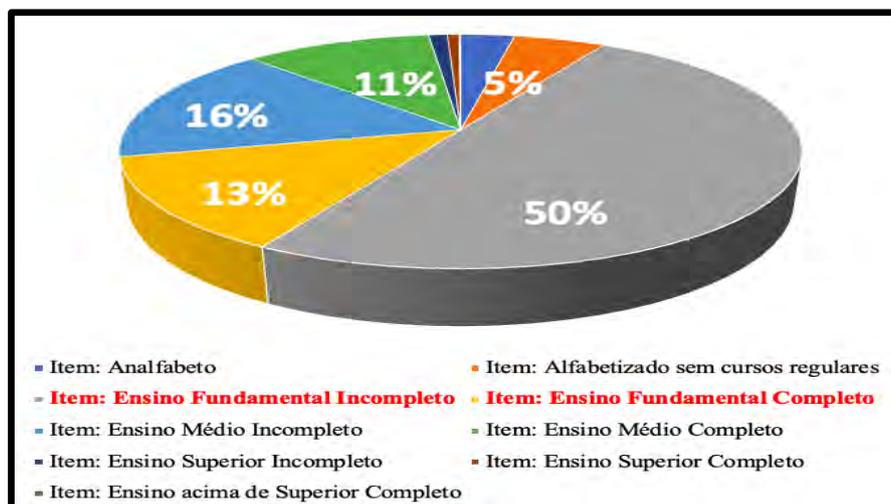


Figure 2. Number of Inmates by the Level of Education

The right to education in prison is based on the constitutional principle, contained in art. 208, as a duty of the State, with the guarantee of being mandatory and free from four to seventeen years of age, extended to all those who did not have access to it at their proper age. This author believes that there is no proper age to learn. Education "implies forming the citizen, affirming him in his condition as a subject and preparing him to act democratically in society" (Paro, 2010, p.28), making it clear that there is no beginning and end, but continuous training and at any time. The Law of Guidelines and Bases for National Education, in its art. 4, establishes that the State has to provide school education, which will be carried out through the guarantee of: "VII - provision of regular school education for young people and adults, with characteristics and modalities suited to their needs and availability, [...] ". The concept of Youth and Adult Education (EJA) is presented to us in Section V, art. 37, "[...] will be destined to those who did not have access or continuity of studies in elementary and secondary education at the proper age and will constitute an instrument for education and learning throughout life".

The current National Education Plan presents us with Goal 5 for EJA, highlighting in its strategy 17, that it should "Implement, in all prison units and establishments serving adolescents and young offenders, programs for youth and adult education at the basic and high school levels, as well as professional training [...]". An important point in this goal is the necessary production of didactic materials and appropriate pedagogical techniques and the specialization of its teaching staff. The Criminal Execution Law (LEP), from articles 17 to 21, deals with Educational Assistance, which comprises school instruction and professional training for prisoners and internees. Article 18-A stipulates that the education provided to inmates will be integrated into the state and municipal education system and will be maintained, administratively and financially, with the support of the Union, not only with the resources intended for education but by the state system of justice or prison administration. Article 21 also establishes that each prison institution should have a library, for the use of all categories of prisoners, with instructional, recreational, and educational books, an important issue that has not yet been addressed.

The original LEP only alluded to the remission of the penalty by work, a situation that was complemented with the advent of Law no. 12,433, of June 29, 2011, when it provided for the remission of part of the time of execution of the sentence by study or work. Article 126 of LEP had its wording changed to: "The convicted person serving the sentence in a closed or semi-open regime may remit, by work or study, part of the time of execution of the sentence. This text does not deal with the issue of remission of the sentence itself but goes on to present the advances that have been felt with norms related to the theme of prison education. The Figure 3 shows that over the years 2012 to 2019, there was a considerable evolution in the number and percentage of people involved in educational activities in the Brazilian prison system, from 47 thousand to 124 thousand, an increase of 276%. An issue that becomes relevant and can be a motivator, in principle, for this appreciable increase is the motivation for the remission of the sentence for studying; however, in a study carried out on EJA in the prison context in the Massif de Baturité, Ceará, the need for inmates to learn to read and write and continue their studies was also verified (Martins; Silveira & Costa, 2019).

The DEPEN Education, Culture and Sports Coordination (COECE) highlighted in Technical Note 14/2020 (DEPEN, 2020b) the goals that should be pursued for the next two years, to provide the desired quality in educational processes in prisons and for ex-prisoners. The main goals that are linked to the scope of this study are

preparation and launch of a national education policy in the prison system; promotion of actions and projects for classifying and defining the profile of the prisoner, to forward to educational activities in a rationalized manner; launch of an action/project to promote distance education in the prison system; launch of a proposal to expand the number of classrooms in prisons; inducement with the states to use Funpen resources, transferred via a fund to fund, for educational actions; and training and guidance of education professionals working in the prison system and professionals in the prison system to promote processes related to education.

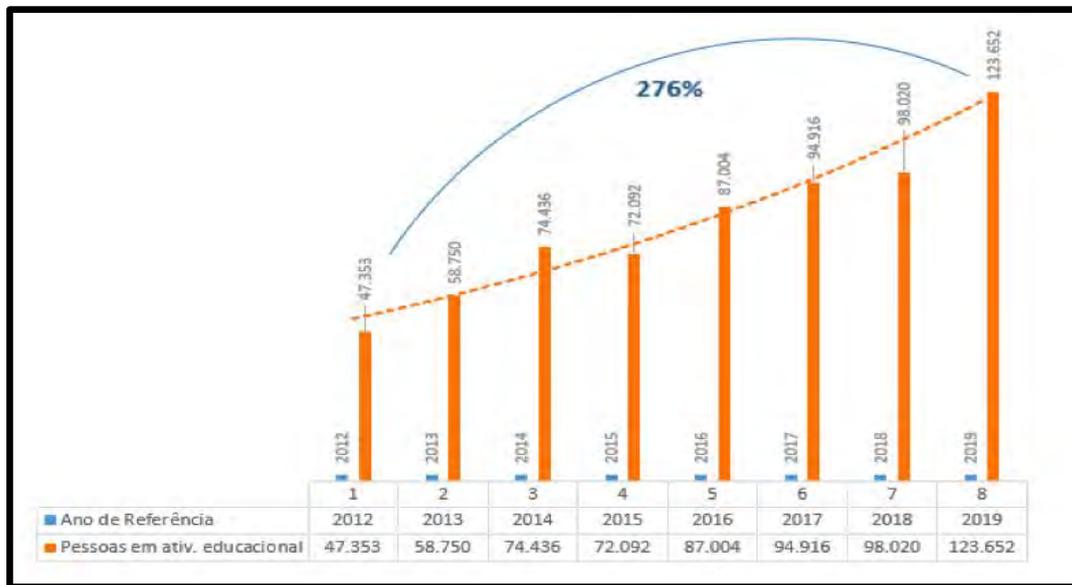


Figure 3. Inmates in Educational Activity (2012-2019)

Torres, Ireland, and Almeida (2021), in a study on the diagnosis of education policy in Brazilian prisons, established some sensitive points that must be observed by state managers, namely: (i) progressive plan of actions in formal education concerning education level; (ii) permanent actions also in the complementary treatment of formal school education; (iii) construction of pedagogical indicators; (iv) prioritization of spaces in prisons for an educational environment; (v) articulation and ongoing training of all those involved in educational practice, especially the body of security; and (vi) reading and writing programs and projects. These authors participated that the path towards the universalization of education in the Prison System needs more investment and encouragement by the Ministry of Justice itself. Martins, Silveira, and Costa (2019) giving voice to prison directors present one of the most felt obstacles in dealing with education in prisons, that is, the lack of an infrastructure to accommodate inmates in a room considered as a suitable environment for classes to take place. Cacicedo (2016, p.131) corroborates the cited authors about classrooms, adding that “[...] a similar problem exists concerning libraries, which, when they exist, are poorly adapted places and, often, no access for prisoners”. Onofre and Julião (2013), in addition to the sensitive points mentioned above, also add as obstacles: reduced number of hours devoted to schooling and the lack of specific training for educators to deal with the uniqueness of the prison environment.

Table 1 represents the negative situation regarding the construction of quality infrastructure for the development of healthy educational and learning processes, rather than adapted spaces. The best instrumental quality of an

educational environment meets what Santos and Durand (2014, p.150) argue as a positive factor, "The classroom was also the place free from surveillance and control and, therefore, constituted a privileged place for freedom of expression and thought."

Table 1. Prison Facilities by Educational Facilities

Education Module	Number of units	Percent of units	Number of rooms	Capacity per shift
Facilities with classrooms	947	65%	3,140	49,132
Facilities with a computer room	267	18%	255	2,492.
Facilities with meeting room with society/meeting room	355	24%	341	14,011
Facilities with libraries	796	55%	824	10,384
Institutions with a teacher's lounge	488	34%	490	4,182
Institutions with other educational spaces	23	2%	28	502
Institutions without an education module	384	26%		

What we can say is that the education of young people and adults deprived of freedom is not simply a benefit, but a right, including a constitutional one. The norms that deal with the subject are current and, to a certain extent, meet the schooling process of a portion of people considered to have a poor education. According to Foucault (1987, p.127), "[...] punishment transforms, modifies, establishes signs, organizes obstacles", but education could bring to the prison context the possibility of reducing the damage caused by imprisonment. Almeida (2009, p.16), in his field research in a prison school in Aparecida de Goiânia, could hear, from one of his inmates/students, a phrase that this author considers motivating for us to continue thinking and acting in favor of education in prisons: "I had to be arrested to value education, this is the best school I've ever attended, and it's very important in my life today".

Results and Discussion

This section aims to present the research scenario, the results analyzed in terms of the theoretical framework raised, and the responses to the questionnaire from the director of the state school, the subject of this study. The *Graciliano Ramos* State Elementary and Secondary Education School (EEEFM) was our study setting, located in a medium-security prison in the state of Paraíba, as already presented. To protect the confidentiality of the source, the name of the director will not be informed. Before we begin to present the educational unit and analyze the answers of the director, it is relevant to situate the state of Paraíba in the *ranking* prepared and constitutive of^{the} Technical Note n° 14/2020 DEPEN/MJ, with the purpose of "[...] indicating the evolution of the rates of prisoners involved in educational activities in state prison systems and federal prison system" (DEPEN, 2020b, p.1). The federal entity in question, Paraíba, from 2017 to 2019, rose from 10.13% to 13.72% and 17.15%, respectively, of its individuals deprived of freedom involved in educational activities. There is steady growth, ranking 10th in 2019, in the states and the Federal District. This auspicious result shows the state's concern for its inmates, evolving from the rhetoric that everyone has the right to education to the effective practice of this inalienable

right. Onofre (2006, p.10) points out that "[...] seeking a school to broaden knowledge is a way to resist the process of loss to which prison subjects the individual." Paulo Freire (2005, p.58), in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, makes it clear that "Nobody frees anybody, nobody frees himself alone: men free themselves in communion".

The EEEFM *Graciliano Ramos*

At the request of this author and with the consent of the director responsible for the State School, the *Pedagogical Political Project* (PPP) was received for analysis. The school in question, in the modality of Youth and Adult Education (EJA), articulated with technical professional education, offering high school technical education and professional qualification courses, is aimed at young people and adults deprived of freedom and in a semi-open regime. It is located in the capital of Paraíba, João Pessoa, in the Mangabeira neighborhood, inside a medium-security prison. The basic education unit was created by the state Executive Power through Decree No. 36,907, of September 15, 2016, linked to the secretariats of Education, Science and Technology (SEECT) and the State of Penitentiary Administration (SEAP) (Paraíba, 2016). Its institutional mission is:

[...] prepare by reeducating them as professional citizens with humanizing, conscious and autonomous training, promoting the exercise of citizenship, strengthening professionalization for the exercise of technical professions, with a perspective of development for social, inclusive, professional life, whose main focus is resocialization. (Paraíba, 2019, p.5)

The essential values for the exercise of transparent and democratic school management are presented in the PPP analyzed. The eight values in the order they were highlighted are: ethics, human development, innovation, quality and excellence, transparency, respect, social commitment and, finally, the professional qualification courses will adopt the nomenclature, workload, and descriptive profile presented in the PRONATEC guide of Initial and Continuing Formation (FIC) courses. This last value is in agreement, as provided for in the LEP, with the educational system of the federation and national unit.

Seven purposes of the school unit must be observed, two are in direct consonance with the objectives of this study. The purpose I makes it clear that it is to "Offer basic education in the modality EJA, professional and technological, primarily in the integrated form, training and qualifying citizens with a view to professional performance in the various sectors of the economy [...]". Another purpose, which has a strong connection with the theoretical framework raised in this study, is VI, "Stimulate the development of a critical and creative spirit" (Paraíba, 2019, p.6). Regarding the objectives proposed for this school, eleven of them were listed. The most outstanding for this author was:

- IV. Promote the integral and harmonious development of the personality, gradually and progressively, respecting the individualization of each inmate;
- V. Provide the physical, social, and emotional well-being of the inmate;
- VI. Allow the development of the inmate in the social environment in which he/she is inserted, in cooperation with the family and community;
- VII. Relate the general education of high school and professional training, aiming at the complete education of the student [...]. (Paraíba, 2019, p.7)

The technical courses offered, integrated into high school, and their respective hourly loads are shown in Table 2:

Table 2. Technical Courses Offered

Course	Technological Axis	Total Hourly Load
Cooking Technician	Tourism, hospitality and leisure	2,000
Bakery Technician	Food production	2,000

The main pedagogical guidelines offered for quality education are, in particular:

- (i) Participatory planning shared with the entire school team;
- (ii) Definition of skills and abilities to be worked on;
- (iii) Learning to learn, learning to live together;
- (iv) Selection and organization of content related to EJA;
- (v) Assessment and ongoing recovery; and
- (vi) Methodological procedures that enable creativity, criticality, the construction of knowledge, as well as man's awareness of his condition as a subject of social practices.

An interesting and well-participated point in the PPP is about the extra activities, as there is, in the educational unit in question, “[...] a special look at the needs arising from the Prison System in which the school is inserted, and taking into account that Education in Prisons seeks to dialogue [...] to offer a favorable environment for the realization of the class [...]” (Paraíba, 2019, p.12). This implies that the development of the curriculum should be centered on active practice, on a critical and dynamic view of the world, through content from the perspective of different sciences. In the end, the student who completes all subjects and presents a report of experience in cultural samples will obtain the diploma of completion of basic and secondary education in the professional qualification attended.

In recent news published in the newspaper *A União*, from João Pessoa, in the May 22, 2021 edition, it states that "Paraíba occupies the 1st place in inmates approved in Sisu". Continuing with the information, 35 inmates were selected in the state, more than double the result achieved by the second place in the *ranking*. Another highlight of the report was the record number of inmates enrolled in the 2020 edition of ENEM when 764 students deprived of their freedom participated in the exam (Almeida, 2021). Regarding the school unit being studied, its students moved to pedagogy and library science, both at the Federal University of Paraíba.

Analysis of Responses by the Educational Manager

The reason for choosing the director of a prison school as the subject of this study is because we believe that school leadership is an important and inherent characteristic of school management, through which he guides, mobilizes, and coordinates the work of the school community in its broad sense (internal and external), with the scope of continuous improvement of teaching and learning (Lück, 2011). While participating in an EJA seminar for persons deprived of liberty, we had the opportunity to meet the principal of the school being studied, who, upon being invited to participate in our study, readily accepted. Our data collection instrument, as mentioned in

the methodology, consisted of seven open questions. Therefore, the questions were listed with their respective answers, while at the same time analyzed with their direct quotes, if necessary.

What Is the Role of Education in Criminal Enforcement Policy?

The answer makes it clear that education in the context of criminal enforcement policy is much more than providing academic or even professional training to the inmate. It must commit, in the reinvention of the man/student/inmate, to rescue their self-esteem,

[...] to value respect for life, honest and worthy work, to listen to him, to consider his knowledge of the world, and, based on what he already brings of skills, to enhance them, so that he can trust himself more, and when he returns to society, become a better, productive, and happier person.

An interesting and little explored point in the literature on the subject is the situation of former inmates of the prison system. The school manager highlights that "the public policies of the Human and Social Development secretariats must continue to accompany them with social assistants and psychologists, as well as NGOs and pastorals". However, it is worth presenting an important action, also shared by the respondent, which begins with the following question: How to make them competitive? "The answer is in education", which reinforces our understanding and that of all the authors surveyed. França, Feliz, and Feitosa (2020) summarize that we are all human and that we were not born committing crimes, but we start the trajectory according to our life experiences and by choice. What is desired, therefore, is, according to the respondent,

Erase that labeling of oppressed minorities and make them lucid, conscientious, and clairvoyant to their mistakes; make them understand that they were wrong and that, by paying for it, they will not make those same or other mistakes again; let them know that they are responsible for their actions, that there are always serious consequences for what they do, and that all of this can be changed if they have focus, self-confidence, determination, common sense, resilience, and perseverance.

The director also mentioned two projects that are adopted and practiced in the school unit, such as the *Remission through Reading* by the Criminal Executions Court and the *Reading Club: Windows to the World* by UFPB, which "stimulate the reading habit and make them more reflective and critical. In this way, they may be able to self-evaluate, reflecting the motives and circumstances that led them to delinquency, and that they are perfectly capable of improving their future choices". A synthesis of this answer is corroborated by Rodrigues (2018, p.96), who argues that it is "[...] necessary to problematize the prison condition, equipping the inmate to initially overcome his condition of expropriated knowledge, understanding the relationship between education and its human emancipation".

What is the Biggest Challenge for An Intramural School?

The great challenge is to "prepare our students for reintegration into the job market, entrepreneurship, the arts, in short, in lawful production, and make them understand that there are countless possibilities to live well". A comment from the respondent becomes interesting when he recalls that, in our legal system of criminal

proceedings, there is no provision for life imprisonment, thus, "sooner or later, these people deprived of liberty will return to society, and our role as a school is to make them fit and motivated".

The respondent teacher-director adds that there are many challenges presented to our school, such as:

1. The planning of prison units with adequate physical structure;
2. Provide more structural support to the caregivers of these students (teachers, police officers, and correctional officers);
3. To the teachers who are on the face-to-face front line daily with these students, we need to support them with more teaching materials, textbooks, lockers, technological equipment, among others;
4. Acquire technological equipment for the school without violating safety standards;
5. Time to teach the contents during the week is very short, as we need not only to adapt and comply with the security standards required by the prison administration, but also to share our teaching time with visits, hearings, inspections, legal assistance, sunbathing, and health care. On top of that, we have to worry about strict discipline and security for the unit as a whole.
6. The continued training of professionals who see the benefits of "education inside the prison units" is very relevant; and
7. Rethinking the model and matrixes for EJA in the prison context, in order not to infantilize their situation of deprivation of freedom itself, but to give them direction and purpose in life through learning.

Anyway, there are many challenges. But, as already shown, the choice of police officers, agents, and education professionals, as well as their continuing education, must be particularly observed. Being operational is more than necessary, but being transformative is essential. A question presented by the director is in line with what several authors have written about the prison system and prisons, among them, we cite the current Julião (2016), Onofre (2006), Rodrigues and Oliveira (2020), Torres, Ireland, and Almeida (2021), or even the classics such as Goffman (1974) and Foucault (1987), which are part of our theoretical framework and who make it clear that the question that should be answered before thinking about what our biggest challenge is, would be: What is the true social function of prison?

How Many Students Study at Your School and The Total Number of Inmates?

There are currently 633 (six hundred and thirty-three) students enrolled in our school, with an addition of 390 (three hundred and ninety) involved in educational projects. We are present in 11 (eleven) prisons, in the municipalities of João Pessoa, Bayeux, Santa Rita, Cruz do Espírito Santo and Sapé. Thus, the universe of inmates in the state of Paraíba is around 10,240 (ten thousand, two hundred and forty) people.

The capital of João Pessoa, which is our area, concentrates the largest number, around 3,800 (three thousand and eight hundred). If we calculate the percentage of students registered regularly with the total number of inmates, among prisoners and those in the semi-open regime, we will reach 6.2%. If we return to the Technical Note no 14/2020 of DEPEN/MJ (DEPEN, 2020b), for December 2019 values, the EEEFM *Graciliano Ramos* alone would not be ranked last, three federative units stood out negatively by the involution or low rate of imprisoned persons

in educational activities, namely: Alagoas - 4.76%, Acre - 3.40% and Amapá - 2.84%.

Is The Curriculum the Same as That of The Extramural School?

Yes. The curricular requirements of our school follow the EJA guidelines for people deprived of freedom (PPL), which are the same as in other schools in the state of Paraíba. Our school is governed by the Common National Curricular Base (BNCC). Vieira (2020) shows us that basic education added to professional qualification becomes an important and essential element in guaranteeing the dignity of the person deprived of freedom.

In This Period of a Pandemic, How Was the Development of The Classes?

The in-person classes were suspended due to the ordinance of the Secretariat of Penitentiary Administration of Paraíba (SEAP/PB) and the SEECT/PB determinations. Thus, the way to continue the teaching-learning process was with the delivery of printed material - directed studies - in the prison units. The material is devised, carried out, and planned by the school teachers by areas of knowledge and following the classes in their respective cycles and bimesters. This educational material is distributed by the criminal police officers for our students to read and respond to. Then, this same material is collected to be corrected by the teachers. All these logistics, from printing to delivery and return, follow all the sanitary safety protocols due to the pandemic.

The Director sent us the *Execution Report of the Pedagogical Project Education in prisons: challenges and teaching-learning possibilities in the middle of a pandemic*. The main purpose of this work was to perform educational actions that were adequate to this pandemic situation, to continue performing pedagogical activities, without jeopardizing the school year. It is important to highlight the concern with the education of the semi-open regime inmate since by stopping the on-site classes, the tripod of education - teaching-learning-evaluation - was not interrupted.

Conclusion

Brazil has shown, in recent years, a small reduction in the expansion of the prison population. Attention to prisoners is extremely urgent, as they are also subjects of law. Overcrowding, all kinds of violence, lack of medical treatment, poor quality of meals and water consumed, vexatious searches, lack of legal assistance, and lack of work and resocialization programs must be mitigated. Depriving a human being of freedom is a very severe punishment. We were shown that education in prisons fulfills, in particular, two main roles: education itself and re-socialization.

When a person arrives at the prison, he no longer has his identity and becomes just another number in the prison system. The recovery of the person deprived of freedom as a citizen goes hand in hand with education, which must be, in particular, emancipating. The education of young people and adults deprived of their freedom has its characteristics, because, besides being people with diverse life experiences and ages, they live in a collective and inhospitable environment; at first, without hope of better days, imposing a rigid and true survival strategy to the

logic of prisons, a space that we can consider as a non-right. Several limits add up to the verified obstacles, in particular:

- (i) the lack of an adequate environment for classes, study spaces, and prison libraries;
- (ii) the reality that considers that security comes first and education comes second;
- (iii) spaces and times in the dilemma between work and classes;
- (iv) demotivated teachers in line with those involved in prison management;
- (v) lack of financial resources and pedagogical material.

The EEEFM being studied can be seen as an island of excellence in a sea of outrage and disrespect for the rights of people deprived of their freedom. With a considerable degree of certainty, if there is an increase in the participation of prisoners in education programs, attending classrooms, it is because the government has dignified and active public policies, which recognize education as a bridge that will connect the prisoner to their resocialization. The pedagogical and administrative organization of this school unit stands out when we are informed of the success of its students in accessing higher education, which is in line with an enormous possibility envisioned by education: the social growth of the subject through his improvement in training, increase in schooling and critical awareness.

We believe that the challenges presented are many and varied, from financial and human resources to a favorable environment for educational activity, but simply becoming accommodated should not be the solution sought. The constitutional right to basic education must be a banner to be raised by all of us. The limits are the same as we have experienced in Brazilian basic education, a considerable percentage of young people and adults do not have complete basic education, reading and writing must be achieved by all Brazilians. The possibilities are countless, but we believe that it is necessary to recognize the protagonism of imprisoned people, to improve their self-esteem and their belonging to society, to which, one day, sooner or later, they will return.

Returning to the epigraph that introduces this text, we come across the phrase of Nelson Mandela, a Nobel Peace Prize winner who spent 27 years of his life in prison, taken from his book *Long Walk to Freedom*, in which the word Nation is highlighted. Brazil will only be a great nation when we treat our incarcerated people with dignity: recognizing a collective living where rights are not denied, enabling full citizenship, and reintegrating them into society. This is accomplished by employing broad public policies in dealing with the education of young people and adults deprived of their freedom that are effective.

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