

Education support personnel: an integral part of the educational process





Lärarförbundet

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Texts prepared by the researcher Juan Arancibia for Education International's Regional Office in Latin America based on the survey conducted to member organisations throughout the region.



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Contents

Abstract	5
Introduction	7
Some contributions to understand the sector of professional, technical and administrative staff in education	11
A look into the future of professional, technical, and administrative staff in education	17
New perceptions: the role of the school	21
Conclusions	27
Bibliography	31

ANNEX **33**

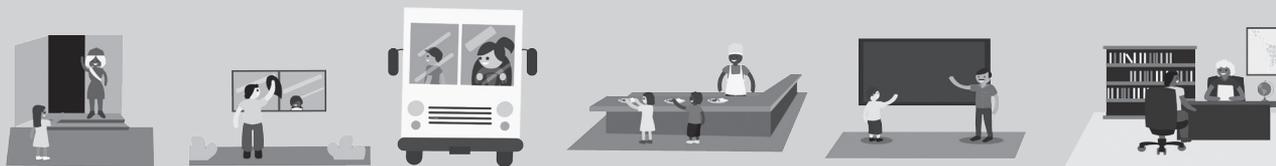
History and the construction of identity Commitments and expectations

João Antonio Cabral De Monlevade

[A historical itinerary of the presence of non-teaching staff in Brazilian schools from the days of Jesuit education to the present.]



Abstract



Public education is a system that encompasses the educational institution proper and the entire community, the families and their social environment, beyond the four walls of the classroom. For that reason, at Education International, we understand education as a dynamic process, where non-teaching workers are an integral part of the education system.

We all assume a role in education, especially in the public sphere where the right to quality education for all is guaranteed, irrespective of the socio-economic status. This applies to all levels of education: primary and secondary, higher education, vocational training and childhood education.

The professional, technical and administrative staff in education form part of the education environment, through their work – cleaning, gardening, administration, counselling, transport, nutrition, etc. – but also through their conduct and the inter-personal relationships they establish with the entire educational community.

In this respect, an education trade union cannot obviate the entire educational process and leave outside out, technical and administrative staff of education, since that would be fragmenting education and limiting the action of its trade union work. Through the process already initiated to include non-teaching staff in its trade union work, Education International is trying to bring this holistic outlook on education at all levels.

The text which we submit for discussion below was drawn up by the researcher Juan Arancibia, who sent a questionnaire to the affiliated

organisations and conducted interviews with them. The questionnaire was answered by 14 organisations, making it possible to gauge the situation of non-teaching workers in its entirety in the structure and organisation of education trade unions in Latin America.

Although it is not an exhaustive or definitive research study, this material should serve as a primary reflection and analysis and enable us to draw lines for future action in our trade unions. It is an initial working document to elicit contributions and suggestions and to stimulate the discussion about a topical issue of great importance for the future.

Our organisations have long understood the need to proceed by including non-teaching staff, and have responded accordingly.

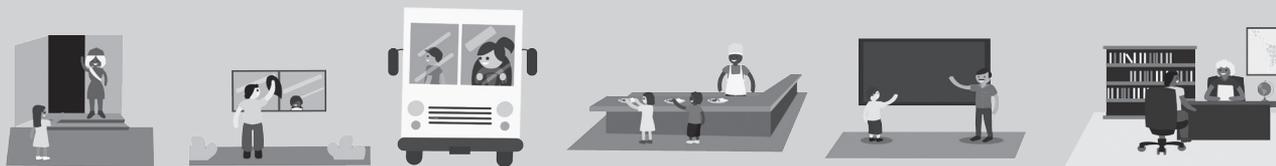
It is nonetheless necessary to generate new internal working methods and policies to systematise those processes and give them the requisite dimension in our organisations.

Education International for Latin America is firmly committed to public education and its workers. We are accordingly expanding this accompanying work to non-teaching staff in all branches and at all levels.

Let us continue with the discussion and the contributions and try to open new lines of trade union work and action for all of us who are part of public education.



Introduction



Traditional education and the traditional education institution, which is its corollary, have seen education as a process that occurs in the classroom and perhaps in other areas such as the courtyard or the library, but in the latter areas more as a disciplinary attitude than an educational topic. This perception has been transposed to the view and image of the different stakeholders of the educational institution and the way in which a definition of tasks, roles and social statuses has taken shape, so that relations inside the school are compartmentalised and not exempt of class discrimination. This fixing of roles and statuses has even had an influence on the organisations that structure the different workers of the school, and as a result, there is a general trend of having organisations of teachers, auxiliary staff and other workers of education separately, or when there is a single organisation of workers, the presence of those

usually referred to as non-teaching staff is not very clear, or is directly diluted.

The purpose of this work is to consider a different perception of the educational task and the role of workers who participate in the school and in the education system as a whole. Our starting premise is that the educational task goes far beyond the classroom and in that precept, we perceive the school as a total and integral educational area, and all those who work in it are educators, which does not mean that they are all teachers. Furthermore, the families and the environment have a responsibility in the education process, since they are part of the educational community.

Our starting point is public education, because it is the single form of ownership, organisation and perception where good education or “quality” education can be guar-

anteed, since it is the only one capable of providing education with fairness and quality, i.e. education for effective quality, solidarity and individual and collective growth, perceived and processed not as the sum of isolated and individual successes, but as a social process that respects and values the differences, but builds and boosts them collectively and socially.

The observation of different processes of crisis that occur in present-day society, with different forms and at different paces in each society, but which have a common origin in the characteristics of the globalised capitalist modernisation process, and have been exacerbated in recent decades with the advent of the trans-nationalised global phase of capitalism, also acts as motivation for these discussions which we hope will lead us to more accurate and more democratic perceptions of the educational process. We are referring for instance to the environmental crisis, the crisis in public security, the crisis of inequality and exclusion, the crisis of political systems and politics, etc.

Education workers are part of the single educational area, with their work of teaching, psycho-pedagogical orientation, library, ICTs, cleaning, gardening, administration, counselling, transport, nutri-

tion, security, etc., but also with their conduct in the inter-personal relationships which they establish with the entire educational community.

In light of the foregoing, an education trade union cannot obviate the entire educational process and leave out professional, technical and administrative staff of education, since that would be fragmenting education and limiting the action of its trade union work. Through the process already initiated to include non-teaching staff in its trade union work, Education International's Regional Office in Latin America (known by the Spanish acronym "IEAL") is trying to bring this holistic outlook on education at all levels.

This text collects the provisional conclusions of the work meeting on the topic of non-teaching staff in the education sector, held by the IEAL in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on 4 and 5 September 2010, convened with the support of the CNTE/Brazil.

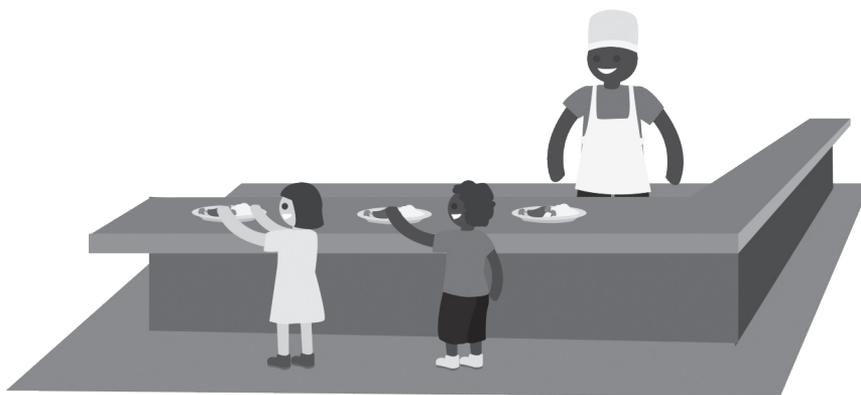
The sources of information of this research study have enabled us to understand in a general manner the situation of education workers whom we shall henceforth refer to as professional, technical and administrative staff, in the structure and organisation of the edu-

cation trade unions in Latin America. The preliminary document was presented at the work meeting on the topic of non-teaching staff in the education sector, held by the IEAL in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on 4 and 5 September 2014. The preliminary version has undergone changes since that event.

This document is the result of a research study that is neither exhaustive nor definitive in that it does not provide all the necessary knowledge, and will therefore be continued. It should serve us, and indeed already has been used, to initiate processes of reflection and analysis, in particular in order to bolster lines of action in progress and to define strategies for future action in our trade unions. Some of our organisations understood the need of this perception and of this work long ago. It is none-

theless necessary to generate new internal working methods and policies to systematise those processes and give them the requisite dimension in our organisations within the framework of the Latin American Educational Movement.

Education International's Regional Office in Latin America is firmly committed to public education and its workers. We are accordingly expanding this accompanying work to professional, technical and administrative staff in education in all branches and at all levels.



Some contributions to understand the sector of professional, technical and administrative staff in education



The employment and organisational situation of education workers who are professional, technical and administrative staff, in particular those who work in the education system, is an issue that is generally little known and little developed by the organisations of teachers, even when they define themselves as being of mixed nature, i.e. that they cover teachers as well as professional, technical and administrative staff. This has been the case historically and could continue to be so with organisational and political costs on the rise. There is a set of problems, however, some historical, other emerging, which preclude continuity, and on the contrary press for a change in behaviour. It has thus occurred in the not too distant past with the issue of female workers in education, gender equality and the educational ins-

titutions, and with the indigenous population and education workers of that origin.

As already mentioned, the questionnaire was answered by an important core group of organisations (14), but it is not completely exhaustive in its scope, since it does not encompass all the countries nor all the organisations, for different reasons. The following organisations answered the questionnaire:

CTERA (Argentina); CNTE (Brazil); CTEUB (Bolivia); FECODE (Colombia); CPC (Chile); ANDE (Costa Rica); ANDES 21 de junio (El Salvador); STEG (Guatemala); the affiliates of Honduras; CGTEN-ANDEN (Nicaragua); SUTEP (Peru); UNESN (Paraguay); ADP (Dominican Republic); FUM-TEP (Uruguay); FEV (Venezuela).

Before delving more extensively into the topic of professional, technical and administrative staff and their organisation and training, it is appropriate to comment on the results of the questionnaire sent and answered by a core group of organisations of education workers in different Latin American countries. The information obtained through the questionnaire provided certain clues of the situation while other aspects were left unanswered. Where there were trade unions of professional, technical and administrative

staff separate from teachers or professors, there was no full information on their names and other useful information for the work to be carried out in the future, or only acronyms were included.

In those cases where there is direct affiliation, the questionnaire did not provide sufficient information on the process, in particular statistics on its absolute (number of members and total percentage) and relative presence (quality), for example specific structure for work and/or presence in na-

Organisational situation of professional, technical and administrative staff in education

Direct affiliation (are mixed)	Direct affiliation (have affiliated trade unions of non-teaching staff)	No direct affiliation (nor affiliated trade unions)
CTERA, Argentina: Only two provincial trade unions of CTERA have direct affiliation Are there non-teaching trade unions?	CNTE, Brazil: 31 state trade unions are affiliated directly; has affiliated traded unions of non-teaching staff	CPC, Chile: The trade unions of non-teaching staff are separate. They meet in the National Council of Education
CTEUB, Bolivia Are there trade unions of non-teaching staff?	FUM-TEP, Uruguay: Direct affiliation; has an affiliated trade union.	FECODE, Colombia: Is in a transition process. There are trade unions of non-teaching staff
CGTEN-ANDEN, Nicaragua Are there trade unions of non-teaching staff?		ANDE, Costa Rica: No direct affiliation. There are others with affiliation: SEC, APSE, ANEP
UNE-SN, Paraguay Are there trade unions of non-teaching staff?		ANDES 21 de junio, El Salvador. Are there trade unions of non-teaching staff?
STEG, Guatemala Are there trade unions of non-teaching staff?		Honduras: There is no direct affiliation; there are no trade unions
		SUTEP, Peru: There are separate trade unions
		ADP, Dominican Republic: There are no trade unions of non-teaching staff.
		FEV Venezuela: Are there trade unions of non-teaching staff?

tional, municipal, departmental, provincial and state bodies. Even if it was reported generically that the demands of the professional, technical and administrative staff were taken into account in collective bargaining, the organisational and programmatic strategies to that end were not explained sufficiently.

On the other hand, in the majority of cases, the professional, technical and administrative staff are contracted by the national ministries or departments of education, except in countries where there are marked decentralisation and/or privatisation processes, such as Brazil, Chile and Honduras. Furthermore, the way to outsourcing is opening up.

In most of the schools, workers who do not carry out teaching tasks have jobs in the administration, cleaning, nutrition, security, management, etc. Bigger institutions may have librarians, computer technicians, psychologists, counsellors, etc. In a general manner and, depending on the different countries, they may be categorised as professional, technical, administrative or support staff.

The main demands of those workers have to do with wages and wage scales, working conditions and contracting, for example the

elimination of subcontracting where it exists, health insurance and pensions. Another important point about the demands concerns technical and vocational training.

The questionnaire revealed a number of unforeseen conceptual problems. The use of the term "funcionario" (staff) which is not unequivocal or unambiguous, i.e. it can be understood as referring to more than one work-related figure, and the fact that it occurs in more than one way, or the fact that it occurred in countries like Honduras, where staff is used to refer to a qualified teacher who provides his services at the different levels of management and administration of the institution and the administration of public education. There was a lack of clarity in the case of Venezuela as well, since the Federation of Venezuelan Educators (FEV) told us that if staff members perform teaching duties they are considered as teachers, but there is a difference in terms of salary; it could be a situation similar to that in Honduras. In light of the foregoing, and based on discussions at the aforementioned meeting in Sao Paulo, we opted to call them professional, technical and administrative staff in education, but to consider them all as educators. The discussion clearly showed that it was very

difficult to arrive at a unique and indisputable term.

The questionnaire also showed that there was confusion about the existence of an administrative or staff career, there were answers that indicated where one studied to become a staff member, which was a correct form of understanding the question, for instance an administrative career in universities, but the question was also whether there was something similar to a teaching career for staff members, not through studies, but through a work or academic trajectory, normally governed by a Teacher's Status, i.e., is there something similar to a teacher's status for staff members? In a general manner, the conclusion is that in the great majority of the countries, there is no career that comprises professional, technical and administrative staff.

Furthermore, the question about the occupational categories of staff members presented problems, as the questions pertained for one to visible tasks that are carried out and not to the formal, occupation, official and legal categorisation. The visible tasks are very similar in all countries, and did not even require a question in the questionnaire.

On the other hand, in a general

manner, at an official level and in most education trade unions, workers called professional, technical and administrative staff are considered as supporting personnel in the educational process and not a part thereof. This corresponds to the historical perception of teachers and their organisations by society, and even those involved dwelled on this point. The change in the way of looking at this issue is recent and not generalised. In some organisations affiliated with Education International, professional, technical and administrative staff are taken into account as an integral part of the educational process. Nevertheless, it must be borne in mind that switching from the traditional generic perception of support personnel to being seen as educators, will require a cultural battle within the confines of the school, the educational community and quite a number of teachers' organisations, including those in whose ranks they are already affiliated.

It is important to point out that the questionnaire focused basically on the situation of professional, technical and administrative staff, who have been generically known as non-teaching staff and who are present in educational institutions, since they are in direct contact with the students and their families, and for the time being,

in this first undertaking, were not so much interested in those who work in education administrative bodies at the different political and administrative levels. There are usually trade unions of ministries at those levels, for instance, but they were not our primary focus of interest in the questionnaire and the comments that follow.

According to the survey, professional, technical and administrative staff seem to be in a more precarious situation than teachers, and naturally in a worse economic condition and status, inside and outside the institution.

A look into the future of professional, technical, and administrative staff in education



Context

Society, the educational institution, and educators are confronted with growing problems resulting from the organisation and functioning of the capitalist system in its globalised, neoliberal phase, but also due to an imbalance between the characteristics of scientific and technical developments and the forms of the teaching and learning process, as well as the characteristics that education is assuming in present-day society. As we know, the educational institution is not the only area in which education takes place, and it may even be on the way out as the dominant locus, before others such as the media of communication, the Internet and networking in general.

The rationale of the current capitalistic society generates and fuels

processes that we can consider to be perverse and contradictory. There is an attempt to include the largest number of young people and adolescents in classrooms at all educational levels, but the opportunities for inclusion, employment and adequate income for graduates are increasingly more scarce and precarious. Young, educated adults are hardest hit by unemployment in the world today in all countries, which shows with clarity that we are dealing with a systemic problem and not with particular national realities, even if this is felt more acutely in certain countries (such as Spain). The massification of education in the 20th century which provided social mobility for all, is gradually being dispelled, and education is ceasing to be the vehicle that would enable the poor and excluded to get out of their situation, but is increasingly tending to reproduce the social segmentation

or, to be more precise, the class division of society.

Occupational, social and economic exclusion in the middle of educational inclusion is eroding the appeal of education as a vehicle for social mobility and of the school as its instrument. Getting an education does not guarantee, as in the past, finding a decent job (as the ILO calls it). What we do see, is the more the economic problems of families and individuals grow, the more such people tend to drop out of school as sizeable segments of young people lose interest in education. Women and young people constitute an important part of the millions of underemployed and informal workers throughout the world. At the same time that young people are included in education, they are excluded from good jobs and adequate salaries. Furthermore, they are bombarded by merciless propaganda to get on the consumer bandwagon, generating an insoluble contradiction within the system. You have to consume, because if you do not consume, you are nothing, you do not exist, but you do not have the income to do it; this contradiction is a source of frustration and more. In many countries it is the origin and explanation of a growing "reservist army" for organised crime. The number of NEETs, i.e. a generation between children and young

people, not in Education, Employment and Training, is growing.

Dropping out of school is also explained by the fact that the school is not managing to compete with, on the one hand, and to introduce, on the other, adequately the use of information technologies in the educational process. In a world of images, the school remains focused on the verbal and written dimensions. Children and young people have growing access to information outside the classroom, in the margin of books, and the old instruments of educational socialisation such as the family, the community, the school, churches, etc., are waging a losing battle.

But there is more. Socialisation is changing and suffering from deterioration processes to the extent that children and young people are subjected to information technology, the net, the mobile phone, replacing direct contact, impoverishing social relations and making it difficult to create a community (even though there are examples for its use for social mobilisation).

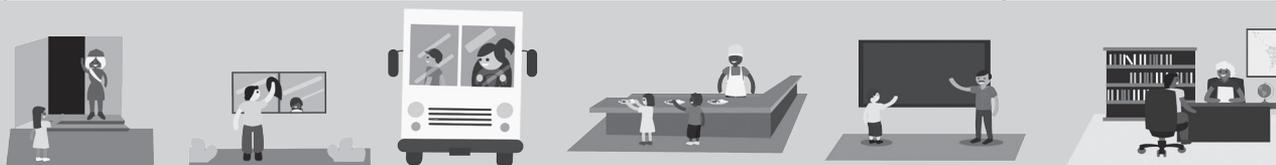
The irrational and multimodal violence of the present-day capitalist society is penetrating the school to a growing degree. Its fashionable expression is bullying, but this occurs not only in the classroom or the schoolyard, but forces its way

into the life of children and young people through the Internet and the mobile phone. Bullying is not a brand new problem, but it is acquiring growing dimensions and having alarming results.

The world is now going through increasingly more recurrent crises that are more difficult to get out of each time, particularly owing to inequality which continues to grow and curbs the dynamism

of the economies, especially those of what are known as “developed” countries, but in the entire system also. In conjunction with the economic crisis there is also a crisis of civilisation, with the destruction of the environment as one of the most delicate and critical aspects. The hegemonic capital and major powers have up to now refused to recognise the full scope of the problem, but it keeps growing and humanity as a whole is starting to foot the bill.

New perceptions: the role of the school



The school has to be reconsidered as an integral, total space, and not only as a structure with multiple classrooms. It is far more. The four classroom walls seem to constrain and limit instead of protecting it, and the classroom does not seem to be the only appropriate space for the new times and needs. We need a school that assumes the educational task fully and that is why it is important and eventually indispensable to recover the educational process for all stakeholders. So all the people who work and are part of education must be seen as and must be effectively turned into educators. It is not only the teacher in the classroom who educates. All education workers present in the school must do so, and this includes students as being part of this task. It is necessary to reaffirm that seeing all education workers as educators does not mean that

they will all be teachers, as teaching is a vocational route entailing a teaching and learning process. The educational task is not only teaching and does not occur only in the classroom.

Seeing professional, technical and administrative staff as educators requires breaking down historical prejudices and discrimination that have been present and acted in a naturalised way without being questioned. This occurs also in our own organisations, many of which have not always been able to think in terms of that dimension, i.e. the dimension of education workers and not only teaching staff, teachers and professors. The names of the organisation reveal the history. It suffices to go over them on the Latin American landscape to see it, and it is necessary to make clear that it is not a criticism, but a measure of the insufficiencies that

appear with greater force today and are not limited to the educational, social, ideological and political domain. Some organisations have nonetheless already started to work fully with all education workers, irrespective of whether they are teachers or not.

Tackling violence, drug addiction, the destruction of the environment, dropping out of school, lack of discipline and lack of interest in school, is the joint task of all those who work in the school, especially when advancing more or less rapidly towards full or extended school days, or however it is called in the different countries. All the foregoing is consequently also a task for the entire educational community, in which families have a fundamental role to play.

The proposal is to breach the historical division of educational work, the specialisations that fragment it, the discriminations that marginalize, the ad hoc responsibilities of each stakeholder, and to think of a new educational effort that is being built on shared tasks and responsibilities, to build a common core of capabilities and responsibilities, but also of status, validation and legitimacy, that of education workers. For this to be possible, it is necessary to generate spaces for participation and democratisation and to develop

training schemes and skills that make it viable and real.

The task must begin with the organisations, those which are mixed, i.e. which accept education workers as members without distinction. They have to create and strengthen spaces for inclusion of and participation by all persons who work in the school, particularly those whom we have up to now referred to as (non-teaching) staff, for lack of a term that defines them for what they are, and not for what they are not. These persons must have, not only an opportunity to include their demands, but also to be part of the decision-making spaces and the steering mechanisms at all levels, and not as has been usually the case up to now, to be represented by teachers in negotiations with official and organisational bodies (for example, with the ministries or in the IEAL).

Where professional, technical and administrative staff are organised, but separated from teachers, it is necessary to pursue a pressing task of alliances and joint struggles to move forward, if possible, towards full unity and merger.

This is a new situation and task, but fortunately, we are not starting from scratch. The CNTE in Brazil in particular has made significant progress and contributions, some

already enshrined in legislation. Thus, for the CNTE, an “educator is any worker responsible for the educational process” (Excepted from “Profuncionario. Curso técnico de formación para los funcionarios de la educación. Orientaciones generales”. 3rd updated and revised edition, 2008. Prepared by the University of Brasilia (UNB) and by the Ministry of Education in line with the discussion that the CNTE has pursued for many years).

Brazil’s stated goal in the National Education Plan (PNE 208) is: “10.3.26. Create, within two years, medium-level training courses for support staff in administrative areas, multimedia, school infrastructure maintenance, even nutrition at school, and in the medium term, for other areas as will be required in the field” (p. 22).

Roberto Leão, president of the CNTE asked: “Who are the education professionals?” and replied:

“Up to 6 August 2009, education professionals were by law only those who had teacher training (teachers, school directors, supervisors, counsellors, etc.). As of that day, with the ratification by President Lula of Act no. 12.014 of 2009 (which originated as a bill by Senator Fátima Cleide [PT/RO], a school staff member and former director of the CNTE), all those

who act in the school, and not only teachers, can be considered as education professionals, since they were authorised in accordance with the 21st professional area (professional area of school support services, created by Resolution 5/2005 of the Primary Education Chamber of the National Education Council)” (Fernandes Dourado, 2009, p.313).

He continued:

“This law is important because it recognises that education is provided not only in the classroom, but also in other spaces where knowledge and fundamental values for civil training are transmitted. In our perception, all those who act within the school have an important role in training students, independently of the function they perform. By a happy coincidence, the school where I teach, bears the name of a school staff member, an inspector, called Neves Prado Monteiro. I have the privilege of having been one of the students under her. She treated us with justice, always with a word of caring support, at the same time that she showed us the path of responsibility with gentle energy. She was a great educator” (Fernandes Dourado, 2009, p.314-15).

Senator Fátima Cleide tells us that what Act 12.014/2009 proposes is:

“the inclusion, as education professionals, of workers who have a technical or higher diploma in an educational or related area. It does not suffice to work in a school, but to have the necessary training to understand the educational processes and to exercise the function of each one efficiently.”

This act is undeniably a substantial step forward, but also raises the challenge of putting it in practice, at least for the category of technical staff, each of the workers at the school, and ensure that they have the necessary training to understand the educational approach to their activities and those of the institution as a whole.

This point of view, this perception, goes much farther than that demanded. It is a new perception of what we are and what we have to do, and in order to move forward, it is worth to bring to the discussion the following verbatim quotations of Francisco das Chagas Firmino do Nascimento:

“Because of the complexity of the political, economic, social and cultural aspects of society, the public school is assuming a new profile. A school centred on the teaching and learning relationship turns out to be insufficient for contemporary education. The intentionality and systematisation of knowledge

that circulate in the school space will always have their importance in the institution. The preparation for the work will not cease to be a fundamental element inside the school. But our own market requires other elements of workers beyond the technical capacity. The accession to and continuity in the world of work now require other elements, such as the capacity to communicate, harmony in a group, the capacity to take initiative – elements that are not found in the traditional school...

These issues affect attitudes as important as education. In this respect, the action of the education workers attains a dimension that transcends teaching as mere socialisation and updating of knowledge already produced. The action of educators now has to take account of other dimensions where the spaces of participation, reflection, training and action for a world that is constantly changing and full of uncertainties are moving centre stage in the public school...

These emblematic situations occur in locations that show us four other areas where significant actions can be featured in the school of today: infrastructure; the environment; nutrition; and teaching multimedia.

As such, those four areas are understood and used as areas for educational work, but also as areas that build knowledge, values, culture and attitudes, and coordinated with the classroom, they can make a major contribution to redefining the role of the school by modernising the perspective of how to respond to contemporary demands” (Firmino do Nascimento, 2009, p. 378-79).

Some of these ideas have been taken up and elaborated by Professor João Monlevade of the CNTE, who drew up the research proposal and the initial questions of the aforementioned questionnaire. In this respect, it is important to cite some of the ideas of professor Monlevade, who says:

“The development of the role of the schools in Latin-American societies, motivated thus by the uni-

versalisation of access, as well as by the extension of the school day, authorises us to consider a radical change, more or less assimilated by public policies in accordance with the countries and the conditions of the schools. They are no longer areas of pure instruction, but increasingly more integral education agency. Thus, someone who prepares and distributes food to the students does not do it only in order to satisfy their hunger, but develops nutritional education practices. The same can be said about those in charge of the preservation and cleanliness of the grounds and other areas of the school – previously subordinate staff for a “dirty job” (formerly done by slaves) -- are now agents and proponents of environmental education, integrated in the school curriculum. The staff traditionally presented as “secretaries” of the schools, are being involved

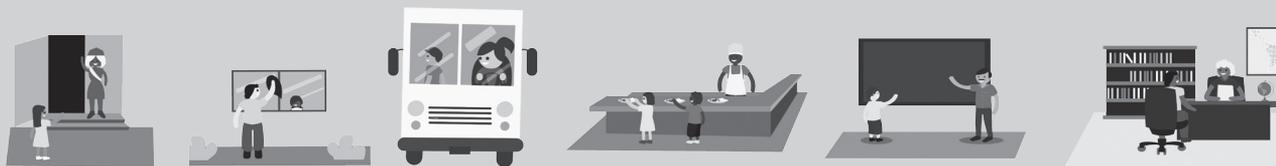


more and more in the educational communication, not only because of the development of education technologies, but also because of a considerable increase in their schooling” (Monlevade, 2013, page. 1).

A federal programme of technical and educational training has been developed in Brazil based on the possibilities provided by the aforementioned act. This programme offers professional, technical and

administrative staff four qualifications: school nutrition technician; school infrastructure technician; school secretaryship technician, and educational multimedia technician. For those who will perform these tasks in the future, there are medium-level and higher courses available in the Federal Institutes of Education, Science and Technology (former technical schools), in the aforementioned areas of specialisation and in others as well.

Conclusions



- The questionnaire was geared basically to gauging the organisational situation of professional, technical and administrative staff in education and the perspective of teachers' organisations on this matter. The results proved very relevant, but did not provide all the information needed to draw sufficiently solid and definitive conclusions. Consequently, these conclusions do not have definitive meaning and are far from exhausting the informative and conceptual theme. In the immediate future, it is necessary to continue to move forward resolutely in both directions.
- It can nonetheless be said that conceptual and organisational advancements are lacking for the affiliation of the professional, technical and administrative staff, but that this deficit can be overcome with the development of a multi-dimensional action programme by Education International for Latin America and the affiliated organisations.
- The idea that professional, technical and administrative staff are only support personnel and do not participate directly in the educational task has prevailed in society and in the very field of education (and the organisations are not completely on the margin of this view).
- The foregoing has led to the conceptual and de facto exclusion of such workers from the discussion. Similarly, the development and implementation of educational plans and programmes in educational institutions likewise been marginalised.
- The changes and crises that are taking place at a systemic level in education and the school require a rethinking, from the

conceptual and political point of view, of education perceived as a task of teachers in the classroom and the institution as a sum of classrooms, so that we can come to see education and the school as a process and as an entity that develops the educational task through its spaces, stakeholders and tasks, i.e. as a whole.

- If, given the new realities, the institution is the educational space as a whole, and having lived through an environment of exclusion and, up to a certain degree, of discrimination of stakeholders, overcoming this situation is not merely an intellectual act of good faith, but requires changes in perceptions and attitudes on the one hand, and training on the other. This means that in order for all to be in a condition to educate, the perception of the school has to be changed (teaching sector, parents, students, authorities) for one, but also the perception of the professional, technical and administrative staff who must assume their role as educators too.
- To get professional, technical and administrative staff to assume their role as educators, more intense training courses must be developed and at a higher le-

vel in their respective tasks, but also relevant training processes in their new educational tasks. The schoolyard, the sport centres, the library, media rooms, sanitary facilities and canteens have to be turned into educational spaces that strengthen and supplement the classroom, which they obviously do not replace.

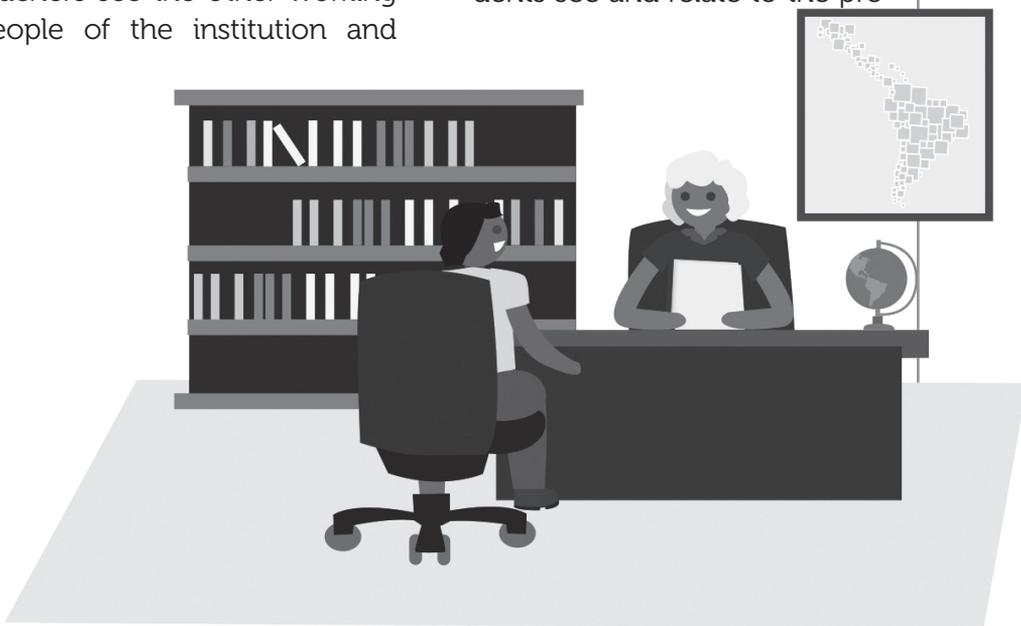
- To make progress on these new perceptions and actions, Education International's Regional Committee in Latin America suggests that priority tasks must be developed for discussion, training and the transformation of the organisational perception and culture, to generate appropriate concepts and conditions for this new perception of education, the institution and the stakeholders.

Strategic elements required to give continuity to the work on professional, technical and administrative staff

The answers given to the questionnaire that was sent to the organisations, left a situation of incomplete quantitative information. This situation should be rectified in order to continue the work with informational certainty. But there

are other fields of knowledge that will be strictly necessary to move forward in the organisation, inclusion and equality task ahead of us in order to transform the institution as a whole and its tasks into a teaching area and all its workers into educators. Thus:

- It is necessary to strengthen the key ideas theoretically and conceptually: the educational institution as total space for education and the definition of all workers of the institution as educators.
- To make progress in the construction of the educational institution as a total space for education and all the workers as educators, it will be necessary to know, in a broad sense, how the teachers see the other working people of the institution and
- how the professional, technical and administrative staff see the teaching sector. This has to do with subjective attitudes constructed over time. It also represents a methodological issue as to how we are to proceed to obtain that information.
- In order to have a solid point of support for the political and educational process of turning the professional, technical and administrative staff into educators, it will be important to know the educational level and the technical and vocational preparation of workers whom up to know we had called non-teaching staff;
- It will also be necessary to have information about how the students see and relate to the pro-



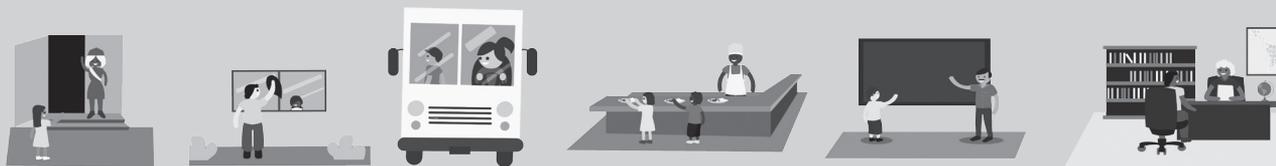
fessional, technical and administrative staff of the institution and how the parents see this sector.

On the other hand, it is necessary to develop work strategies from Education International's Regional Office in Latin America on the subject, for instance:

- Help to train trade union activists in the concepts that are being constructed and adopted as policies;
- Carry out awareness raising campaigns in teachers' organisations to change attitudes about professional, technical and administrative staff and to put a stop to the subordination to which the latter have been subjected;
- Encourage the development of spaces into organisational, decision-making and action structures for the inclusion of professional, technical and administrative staff, etc. with fairness;
- Stimulate the dialogue and formation of strategic alliances between the organisations of teachers and of professional, technical and administrative staff;
- Hold events of Education International for Latin America with the mixed participation of teachers and professional, technical and administrative staff;
- Include professional, technical and administrative staff in the Latin American Educational Movement and all the relevant activities and spaces required for the full incorporation of said workers;
- Affiliate in Education International organisations that unite professional, technical and administrative staff in education, as well as organisations affiliated with the professional, technical and administrative staff in education who are also part of the integral educational system as we see in Education International;
- Redefine education and the educational system as well as every school or educational institution, with the participation of professional, technical and administrative staff.

The task that has to be undertaken is of enormous importance and may require greater effort and resources than those for the inclusion of women or sexual diversity in trade union organisations and policies.

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History and construction of identity

Commitments and expectations

João Antonio Cabral De Monlevade*

Abstract

The article traces the historical itinerary of the presence of non-teaching workers in Brazilian schools from the days of Jesuit education to the present, and broaches influential features for the construction of the new (school and legal) identity of education professionals, alongside teachers and educators.

Keywords: School staff. History of Brazilian education. Professional recognition. Professionalisation. Professional identity.

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Introduction

I have been working on the research and explanation of the historical premises that provide an answer to the question of the book *¿Funcionarios de Escuelas Públicas: Educadores Profesionales o Servidores Descartables?* [Public School Staff: Professional Educators or Disposable Servants?]. Being involved in the struggle of staff members, I participated in the historical construction of their identity, as citizens and managers, that they always were, and mainly as professional educators, which many are and many want to be, and are sorely lacking in society.

This text resumes succinctly the thread of such research, focused on the conceptual construction of the identity of staff members.

The working brother in Jesuit colleges

Unlike what happened in the Spanish colonies of America, where the schools, colleges and even universities emerged in the beginning of the 16th century, formal education in Brazil was established only as of 1550, when the *Colegio de los Niños de Jesús* [College of the Children of Jesus] opened its doors in Salvador, Bahia.

“Who were the educators? Contrary also to the widespread belief and to what has been written on the matter, the Jesuits who came with the first governor general, Tomé de Souza, were not only teacher priests. The six clergymen led by the priest Manoel da Nóbrega, included two “Working brothers” Diogo Jacome and Vicente Rodrigues (LEITE, 1938).

The work of catechism and edu-

cation of the followers of Ignatius of Loyola was much more complex than the task of teaching and distributing the sacraments. The College functioned as a boarding school, which entailed a wide variety of spaces, with the respective non-teaching functions: kitchen, refectory, sickbay, laundry, church, sacristy, vegetable garden, orchard, etc. And, mainly, the colleges and schools which multiplied on the coast and inland of the Colony, required a material infrastructure for their maintenance and development. They could entrust the duties of administrators of ranches, pilots of vessels, architects of monumental buildings, painters and sculptors of places of prayer to slaves, like those who were working in fisheries, and in rural cultures and industries.

In this way, the communities around the colleges and schools of the Society of Jesus consisted of two categories of clergymen: those who were devoted to the "spiritual" concerns (scholars, undergoing training, or professed presbyters) and working brothers, who dealt with the "temporal" concerns.

The monumental work of Serafim Leite (1938), who wrote the *Historia de la Compañía de Jesús en Brasil* [History of the Society of Jesus] in fifteen volumes, contains a wealth of information on the wor-

king brothers, without whom, he recognises, it would be impossible to make progress in Jesuit education. The working brothers were not seen as lacking humanistic and scientific training, because they had not studied philosophy and theology. One of the first working brothers, Luís da Grã, was the architect of colleges and churches that have defied the test of time through the centuries. The plans for his structures served as prototypes for dozens of buildings in the colonial era. Another common function that the working brothers performed was that of languages, or interpreters. As they were not overburdened with classes, masses and sermons, as they did not exercise the repressive power and as they saw to material tasks, the working brothers were more efficient in learning the language of the networks, and were thus able to win them over with greater ease.

In schools, in addition to attending to the material part of the spaces, they also dedicated themselves to certain educational actions as librarians, inspectors, scribes of school evaluations, as well as coaches of lessons and literacy teachers.

When the Jesuits were expelled from Brazil in 1759, the educational system which provided for this complementarity between teaching work proper and more edu-

cational work carried out by the working brothers, who were also responsible for the material infrastructure of schools and colleges, collapsed.

From that point on, the Jesuit teacher was replaced by Diocesan clergymen or other congregations or by lay teachers. The working brothers were not replaced, except by slaves for the less qualified tasks.

The assisting slave of the royal classes and lyceums

Very little research has been done on the personnel that constituted the teaching body during the period of the “royal classes” (1772-1834).

The reductionist vision of school education scholars, who can only perceive teachers and students in schools, makes them invisible. The reality, however, is that other workers have always been present.

Once the Jesuits were expelled, the schools were turned into monasteries or convents of other religious orders and the Diocesan seminaries prospered. The royal classes were created as of 1772 at the initiative of the Marquess of Pombal. They were classes in literacy or more advanced subjects which were held in the rooms of public buildings, sacristies

of churches or in the homes of the teachers themselves. At the time of these five different spaces, domestic or Church slaves were on hand, not for educational purposes, but in order to provide more material support. “Who cleaned the classroom after the lessons? Who maintained the supply of water for drinking and for washing the hands of teachers and students? Who prowled the classroom to prevent unauthorised persons from entering and to check the exit of students? Who carried out the external mandates of the teachers? The mute and invisible answer, which made an efficient contribution to maintaining the status quo in the school space and in the social time was: slaves, as can be gauged by reading the classic work of Gilberto Freyre (FREYRE, 2005).

It is not by chance that the buildings exclusive for school purposes – with libraries, baths, telescopes and other equipment characteristic of the Jesuit colleges – disappeared from the colonial landscape and started to reappear only in the second half of the 19th century, when some provinces of the empire decided to build their own premises for their lyceums. The much celebrated management of D. João VI, who had founded higher education courses in the Court, left no trace of a school building. The legal courses of Sao Paulo and

Olinda, in 1827, were held in Franciscan convents. For the purposes of the history of school staff, the development is recorded in documents and in literature as in the novel *El Ateneo* [The Athenaeum] (POMPÉIA, 2008), concerning the inspectors of students present in public and private colleges, more among boarding schools than day schools. Some of those were recruited from among slaves, even though they had been freed.

It is well established: those who have lived with Jesuit colleges could not fail to note and to admire the presence of other educators, in addition to teacher priests, clergymen who were devoted to school education like the teachers. There was an identity of working brother together with the identity of Jesuit education, whether he was a cowherd, market gardener or vessel pilot. Already in the subsequent period, the mental association of others who worked in school, was with slaves. Their identity was based on that of Negroes, marginalized from the national culture. The invisibility was reinforced by the non-value. However important their role may have been in the transmission of values, in the education of the society, in the legitimacy and reproduction of the slave-based mode of production, the era negated this function, which is so evident nowadays.

But the slave order also collapsed. Immigrants arrived and with them, wage labour. Cities grew and the Republic came into being. There would be no more school slaves from that moment on. However, the subordinate nature of non-teaching staff would continue into the 20th century in Brazil.

The bureaucratic support in republican schools

The first normal course for teaching training was introduced in 1834, in Niterói (MOACYR, 1936). That is so, but where and under what conditions? For decades, the provincial lyceums, which offered secondary education courses held in rooms in public or church buildings, maintained some dozen students in teacher-training courses. But as was recorded subsequently, the school staff are the result of the complexity of the school and educational space. Classrooms generate only teachers and students. Other spaces are necessary – administration, secretariat, library, laboratory, kitchens, refectories, sports fields – for non-teaching functions to emerge and get institutionalised in schools.

Significantly, this occurred in Brazil only as of the Proclamation of the Republic and the separation of church and State. In primary school, school groups came into being in

the urban teaching networks of all the states. In secondary education, state colleges and teacher-training schools, or institutions of education, sprouted as if by magic, first in the capitals and largest cities, then, after 1930, in most municipalities. Let us take the state of Sao Paulo as a significant example. In addition to the majestic building of the Caetano de Campos Teacher-Training School, on the Plaza de la República, in the capital, monumental buildings were built in Campinas, Piracicaba, Itapeitinga, Guaratinguetá, Pirassununga, Casa Blanca, Botucatu, Franca, Jaú, Taubaté and other cities inland. Something similar occurred in other states, like Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais and Rio Grande del Sur. The federal network assumes the professional education offer, endowing each capital with a school of "arts and crafts." No wonder that, in the 1910s and 1920s, innovative legislation was enacted on the "administrative staff" of schools, in addition to teachers and directors. There was a recognition of the need for regulations and official journals for the positions of custodians, attendants, secretaries, archivists, inspectors, waiters, servants (maintenance and cleaning staff), and auxiliary staff for libraries and laboratories.

To provide such "staff" – a word that was adopted to designate non-teaching personnel, albeit not exclusively – they were either appointed

by "free designation" or through public competitions, in the same way as was done with teachers. In other words, even if there was admission through political appointment, legal framework was built to organise and provide such staff, including through the orientation of the Federal government, at the time that education fell under the purview of Internal Affairs, or in the Vargas period, with Gustavo Capanema in the Ministry of Education and Health. At the time of the Sampaio Dória reform, in the city of Sao Paulo, in 1920 Oscar Thompson recommended the expansion of the definitions of "teacher and administrative staff," distinguishing them from the managers of the system: "inspectors and educational counsellors" (ANTUNHA, 1976, p. 154).

The large mass of enrolment from 1886 to 1946 was in primary education, where the figure of the qualified teacher pontificated, with the intention of projecting a shadow that made other education workers invisible. All the speeches on public education recommended the value of the teachers, through salary enhancement, or the advancement in the level of training, which the Manifesto of the Pioneers had already advocated and which was honed further in the universities, as Anísio Teixeira tried in the Federal District. At that time, the number of non-teaching staff in most primary

schools was significant, with the exception of school groups, where the size of the buildings or the multiplicity of places started to require more conservation and cleaning workers. From 1946 on, the demands of these positions and school nutrition would accelerate the change in the profile of most school staff.

Clientelistic staff in the democratisation of access

For the purposes of this text, we refer to the "era of democratisation of access to school," the period from 1946 to 1986, when three movements converged: urbanisation, acceleration of the flow of students and production of human, material and financial resources in the area of education. This is where the explosion in primary public education comes from.

With urbanisation, demand for schooling increased rapidly, not only in primary school, but before (pre-school) and after (secondary schools and colleges). The creation of vacancies in public and private secondary school, leads to the acceleration of the flow of students, in spite of the entrance exams to secondary school which have been in force since 1971. The training of thousands of teachers in teacher-training and degree courses, the expansion of the raising of taxes linked to the maintenance and de-

velopment of education, in particular the Participation Funds of States and Municipalities, as well as the industrialisation of school structures propitiate the resources that multiply access to schools by children and adolescents. To summarise, from 1946 to 1985, enrolment in public school rose from 8 to 35 million. The coverage from 4 to 17 years of age has gone up from 30% to 70% of the population.

This growth does not represent only a quantitative change. It produces a qualitative transformation. Children from low-income families, which now live mainly in medium-sized and large cities, do not access only school as they move up in 1st and 2nd grade. The school has willy-nilly ceased to be an agency for pure instruction and teaching, to share with families and other agencies of society the duty to educate, which is certainly broader and more complex. In these four decades, there has been a massive entry of two fundamental figures for our study: cooks and "cleaning agents."

To get an idea of the situation, it is estimated that the number of staff went up during that period from one hundred thousand to eight hundred thousand, where nutrition and cleaning have accounted for 80% of the new jobs. At this time, these jobs do not require schooling or specific skills. They are con-

sidered by society as an extension of domestic female chores. From this, it was but a step to the generalisation of the "clientelistic" access. The low wages – many times below the minimum wage -- enabled governors, mayors and members of parliament to cultivate real stables of low-skill jobs in schools, which were multiplied in state and municipal networks, thanks to the irrigation of the proposals of the FPE, FPM and Education Salary. This restored a historical continuum between slave labour and "support services" in education, which had been interrupted up to a certain point by the imposition of allocation according to merit between 1889 and 1945. It is not necessary to say that many of these underemployment posts were exchanged for votes by the staff and their families in municipal and state elections, in favour of their "employers."

The invisibility of the staff is exacerbated. One of the most eminent scholars of Brazilian education, M.B. Lourenço Filho, author of many works on school policy and administration, in his book entitled *Organización y Administración Escolar* [School Organisation and Administration], a real bible of education studies during that period, running to more than three hundred pages, in spite of recognising the existence of "other professionals," focuses only on analysing the role of directors

and teachers, as if the multiple tasks performed by the "others" were erased (LOURENÇO FILHO, 1966).

The publications of the period reflected the general "blindness" to what was happening at school where the number of staff grew more than the number of teachers. In the 177 pages of a book on the history of primary education by Mato Grosso, Gervásio Leite (1971) does not mention a single time any educator other than the teacher, the director and the inspector.

Anísio Teixeira himself, who valued the presence of "non-teaching activities" in school, to the point of allocating them three times the physical area compared with the "classrooms" in the construction of the Carneiro Ribeiro Institute, in Salvador, has teacher training and practice as the focus for investment in both his first book *La educación para la Democracia* [Education for Democracy] as in his debut study entitled *Educación No es Privilegio* [Education is not a Privilege] (TEIXEIRA, 1997, 2007).

It is no wonder then, that in this period, which seems to extend to the present day, there was a migration of recycled teachers for secretariats, libraries and educational support positions or transferred to bureaucratic functions for various reasons. A similar movement led part of the

teaching personnel with managerial duties in schools, in municipal, regional and state bodies, under the name of education specialists – enshrined in Act no. 5.692 of 1971 – to take part in education courses with non-teaching qualifications. In the aforementioned text (MONLEVADE, 1995) they are referred to as “white-collar workers.” A hierarchy was thus created among non-teaching staff, with specialists at the top; those working in secretariats and libraries in the middle, and staff for school nutrition, cleaning and security at the bottom – the latter being the victims of clientelism and consensual devaluation.

The trends of this period contributed sharply to the devaluation of all education workers. If there was a movement for teacher training at a higher level of schooling, it was offset in negative terms by the precarisation of the courses for teachers, education and degrees. We are witnessing the gradual proletarianisation of all education, given the social origin of teachers, now stemming from the working classes and by virtue of the new weight of the category of “non-teaching” staff. With the exception of security, a task exercised by men, there was a major feminisation movement of education workers, including because of the greater importance that child education was deemed to have. These observations help to delineate

the identity traits of school staff, on the eve of their affirmation as educators and workers, which occurred between 1986 and 2002.

The fight for identity as salaried educator

At the end of the preceding period, which coincides with the rise in inflation and the mobilisation of workers in an attempt to secure the purchasing power of their salaries, teachers and staff were also engaged in strong movements, with demands and strikes. Public teachers, prohibited by the constitution from getting unionised, proceeded to give a trade union character to their associations. Victims of greater oppression, school staff started to “take shelter” in teachers’ associations, some with new names: Union of Education Workers of Minas Gerais, Matto Grosso Association of Education Professionals, to give but two examples. Or they proceeded to form their own organisations, as was the case in Sao Paulo (Afuse), Paraná and the Federal District (SAE).

Their leaders, in addition to fighting for better salaries and working conditions, proceeded to assert themselves nationally with the other workers, in trade union (Enclat, Conclat) and political terms: Party of Workers. When the new Constitution was promulgated on

5 October 1988, staff members were granted the right to unionise, which accelerated the unification of educators' trade unions in the states and at the national level.

The process by which the *Confederação de Profesores do Brasil* (CPB) [Confederation of Teachers of Brazil] was turned into the *Confederação Nacional de los Trabajadores en Educación* (CNTE) [National Confederation of Education Workers] occurred between 1989 and 1990. For the unification negotiations, in addition to the federations of educational counsellors and supervisors, staff members were represented by the *Comisión Nacional de Representantes de los Funcionarios de Escuela* (Conarfe) [National Committee of School Staff Representatives].

A joint, transition committee was set up at the CPB Congress in Campinas (1989). The CNTE was established at the Aracaju Congress, and non-teaching staff were advised to join the state trade unions of public basic education workers on a massive scale, and to unify the entities where there was a specific staff trade union. And that is what happened in Paraná.

In addition to welcoming staff on its board, in 1995 the CNTE organised the Department of School Staff (DEFE), which is responsible

for pursuing the struggles of the category at the national level.

Three priorities were set at first: unionisation of the staff in the basic entities; unification of the struggles; and professionalisation of the staff in medium-level technical courses. These priorities were summarised in the rallying cry "staff are educators too," which was encouraged inside the schools and the broader settings of the community and society.

Recent evaluations by the staff themselves show that they are overcoming their invisibility inside the schools. The same is not the case for the subordinate nature of their work and the recognition of their educational role. We are here entering in the discussion of a fundamental aspect of their identity as citizens, namely: "education professionals".

The construction of the profile of education professionals

In 1995, at a plenary session of the Federal Senate where the bill concerning guidelines and bases for national education (LDB) was debated, the staff suffered a defeat: an article in which they were recognised as "education professionals" alongside teachers and educators, was removed from the text.

The formal argument used, in spite of being moulded by another pre-conception, was based on the premise that teachers and educators had training with specific qualification for an educational task, while staff did not have a title, but were referred to as simply “working in the school. Like lay teachers, they were auxiliaries, with a category of education workers at most.

The subsequent struggle and victories arose from that defeat and other challenges. In 1996, in the Federal District, and in 1998, in Acre, medium-level vocational courses were provided to train technicians in various “non-teaching” areas of basic education: school administration, educational multimedia, infrastructure maintenance. Their curricula were reflected in a professionalisation programme already in progress in the state network of Mato Grosso (Blue Macaw Project) and in the municipal network of Cuiabá.

In 1997, commenced another battle in the National Education Council for the professionalisation of staff and the development of guidelines for the career plans of educators against the background of the establishment of the Fondo de Mantenimiento y Desarrollo de la Enseñanza Fundamental y de Valorización del Magisterio (FUNDEF) [Maintenance and Development

Fund for Fundamental Education and the Valorisation of the Teaching Profession]. The argument that it was necessary to include the staff in the state and municipal career plans for education was defeated, not only by not considering them as “education professionals,” but also in accordance with a public service policy whereby, as such staff are not considered as workers of educational activities, their tasks could be subcontracted. It was assumed that the staff were in the very line of fire between two political visions, one materialised by the society project based on human rights, and the other by the neoliberal cycle of the time, dominated by the values of global competitiveness, under the framework of the conservative modernisation of the capitalist mode of production. Only a federal government in the hands of progressive forces and popular appeal could tip the balance for a vision of the school that educates and “professional educators,” overcoming the school that simply teaches, where professional teachers are “helped” by other workers.

With the election of President Lula and the presence of former trade unionists in the Ministry of Education, as well as progressive leaders in the Lower House and in the Federal Senate, objective conditions were created to overcome the institutional barriers and to complete

the identity of staff as educators, professionals and managers.

The first step was taken in the Secretariat of Basic Education of the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), with the endorsement of the Chamber of Basic education of the National Education Council (CNE). In 2005, Horácio Reis and Francisco das Chagas Fernandes, the latter secretary of basic education of the MEC and member of the CNE, both former directors of the CNTE, and with the endorsement of the Confederation, proceeded to introduce in the list of Medium-Level Professional Education Areas that of the qualification of staff in technical courses of 1200 hours. This facilitated the 2006 offer of distance courses for on-the-job training for staff in six states: Pernambuco, Piauí, Tocantins, Paraná, Mato Grosso do Sul and Goiás. This initiated the Pro funcionario [Pro staff] pilot project which was extended in subsequent years to another twelve states and has already provided training to nearly 25 thousand staff in four qualifications:

- a) School Nutrition Technician;
- b) Educational Multimedia Technician;
- c) Environment and School Infrastructure Maintenance Technician;
- d) School Management Technician.

The four qualifications are developed in three blocks of activities: one educational, one technical and the other Supervised Professional Practice. The first two have writ-

ten modules for specialists, who were recruited by the University of Brasilia (UnB). The successive print runs have already attained more than a million copies. In spite of not having achieved the initial quantitative objective, the "Pro funcionario" [Pro staff] project has been consolidated as one of the programmes most in demand and well assessed by the MEC. There are currently efforts to create first and medium-level on-site courses for young people and adults. The most propitious environment is that of the Federal Institutes of Education, Science and Technology (former CEFET), which will have more than 300 campuses by the end of 2010. But there is no reason why they cannot be offered by the state networks, preferably combined with the medium-level teacher training courses, given the educational nature of the courses.

The second step was to insert the possibility of the professionalisation of non-teaching staff in the text of the LDB, recovering the loss of 2005 and institutionalising the concept of "education professionals," which includes and at the same time transcends the category of teachers. After extensive deliberations, President Lula ratified Bill no. nº 507 (BRAZIL, 2003), introduced by Senator Fátima Cleide, who had started her career and struggle as a school staff member. It is Act

nº 12.014, of 6 August 2009 (BRAZIL, 2009a).

In addition to the recognised professionalism in Article 61 of the LDB (BRAZIL, 1996) and the prospect of balanced training at the medium and higher level, there are other steps that have to be taken. The first is to devise unified career plans with the other educators, in federal, state and municipal education networks, in the terms of Article 206 of the Constitution (BRAZIL, 1988). Not everybody accepts that a teacher and a staff member, even if professionally qualified with the same work load, should earn the same initial salary or, at least, benefit from the policy for the same National Professional Wage Scale.

The guidelines for the career plans, just as the law that is being debated in the National Congress as a Resolution of the CNE, under elaboration in the Chamber of Basic Education, must from now on refer by virtue of Act nº 12.014, of 2009 (BRAZIL, 2009a), to the three segments of education professionals: teachers, educators and staff qualified at the medium and higher level. This is not a trivial question and a hard struggle is looming. Only one of the components of the valorisation of professionals is being considered: the composition of the work day.

Society has assimilated sufficiently already the idea that a teacher needs remunerated time, not only to teach, but also to prepare the classes, evaluate the work of students, study, and participate in the activities of the school and the community. And the staff? Should the forty hours of the work week of the school nutrition technician be put in exclusively in the kitchen and the refectory? Are the forty hours of the school management technician limited to space and duties of the secretariat? I do not think so. Thus, as the task of the teacher is not only to teach (since the law guarantees part of his workload for other educating tasks), the task of the former “cook” and the current “school nutrition technician” and the future “nutrition education technologist” is not only to prepare meals and distribute them to students. It is her job as a “staff member,” like the job of a geography teacher is to teach geography. But, as an “education professional,” as an educator and manager, she needs remunerated time to participate in other personal and collective activities of the school, indicated in the educational policy project, as well as for study and integration in the internal and external community. The same reasoning applies for the other staff members. At the end of 2009, Bill nº 560 (BRAZIL, 2009b), introduced by Senator Osvaldo Sobrinho was adopted in the Federal

Senate, ensuring that at least one third of the hourly workload of all education professionals is devoted to such "meta-functions," – something that would have been unthinkable not long ago for school staff. The bill is bound to raise questions and doubts that will be turned into new challenges to be overcome.

Towards a new identity

We cannot think that the war is won. Public school staff in Brazil now number one million two hundred thousand. Those who can be considered education professionals – working permanently in schools and qualified according to Resolution nº 5, of 2005, of CEB/CNE (BRAZIL, 2005) – today amount to 40,000 thousand and will scarcely reach 100,000 by the end of 2010. Society has still not accepted that such staff are professional educators, and not helpers of teachers or support personnel in the schools. In spite of being admitted as members on school councils, thanks to the efforts of the trade unions from 1988 to date, their role as managers is still very fragile. Their influence on decisions and educational proposals is exerted through insubordination. In private schools, in spite of social recognition by students and the families, staff are almost always under-appreciated in labour relations. But when they want

to advance in higher studies, there are no full technological studies or programmes geared to their qualification at medium level and their technical functions in schools and the bodies of education systems.

The greater struggle is therefore waged in the daily action and in the head of the staff themselves. The development of schooling and work techniques in kitchens and canteens, in secretariats, in custodian's lodges (many times turned into guard houses), in the school space as a field for the development of new technologies, can deter the real movement of professionalisation of staff members as educators.

It is not merely a matter of multiplying the qualifications of the cook, of integrating the cleaning staff in the world of chemical hygiene, of computerising the actions of secretariat and library, to modernise the security systems. To secure the identity of educators, the techniques and technologies in educational multimedia, in nutrition, school infrastructure and management, a commitment to the political and educational project of the school and to the democratic management of the education system is required, in order to participate in continuing training, in the daily work for planning and the collective evaluation of the school space and time.

All this is part of the current history and the future of professional, technical and administrative staff in education as well as the construction of their identity, which we have attempted to delineate in this text so that there can be consciousness, struggle and hope.

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Education International is a global union federation representing 30 million educators around the world. EI's Regional Office in Latin America develops a range of different projects and activities with member affiliates from over 19 countries to strengthen unions' strategies, proposals and mobilisations to protect quality public education around the world.

Public education is a system that encompasses the educational institution proper and the entire community, the families and their social environment, beyond the four walls of the classroom. For that reason, at Education International, we understand education as a dynamic process, where the education support personnel is an integral part of the education system.

In this respect, education trade unions cannot obviate the entire educational process and leave outside out, technical and administrative staff of education, since that would be fragmenting education and limiting the action of its trade union work. Through the process already initiated to include non-teaching staff in its trade union work, Education International is trying to bring this holistic outlook on education at all levels.

The researcher Juan Arancibia, who sent a questionnaire to the affiliated organisations and conducted interviews with them, drew up the text, which we submit for discussion. The questionnaire was answered by 14 organisations, making it possible to gauge the situation of non-teaching workers in its entirety in the structure and organisation of education trade unions in Latin America.



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