

The Student Assistance Policy and the inclusion of Proeja students

A Política de Assistência Estudantil e a inclusão dos estudantes do Proeja

La política de asistencia a los estudiantes y la inclusión de los estudiantes Proeja

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Highlights

Circumstances sometimes drive and sometimes restrict the materialization of the Student Assistance Policy.

The financial limitations of the Student Assistance Policy at Ifes are pointed out.

The article highlights the importance of student assistance for the permanence of Proeja students.

Abstract

The text analyzes how the student assistance policy contributes to the access, permanence and success of students of the National Program for the Integration of Professional Education with basic education in the modality of Youth and Adult Education (Proeja) by Instituto Federal do Espírito Santo (Ifes). Case Study method by Qualiquantitative Research were developed in this researching. It was listened many students and servers through interviews and questionnaires. It was subsidized by the productions in the area of education and public policies. The data point out the budget insufficiency for the implementing the public policy, however, it was inferred that it is a contributory contribution to the success of students.

[Resumo](#) | [Resumen](#)

Keywords

Student assistance. Proeja. School permanence.

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| Introduction

The neoliberal adjustment policy adopted by the Brazilian state since the 1990s and its emphatic implementation by Jair Bolsonaro's government, combined with the recent health, political and socioeconomic crises; has resulted in increased marginalization and social exclusion of the Brazilian population, which has led to increased demands for public policies, which have paradoxically become more restrictive as a result.

Regarding the definition of public policies, Teixeira (2002) describes that they are procedures that guide the relations between society and the State and that they are "[...] made explicit, systematized or formulated in documents [...] which guide actions that normally involve the use of public resources [...]" (Teixeira, 2002, p. 2). 2). The author also points out that within the scope of this concept, "[...] 'non-actions', omissions, must also be considered as forms of manifestation of policies, since they represent the options and orientations of those who hold public office" (Teixeira, 2002, p. 2). 2).

The constitution of public policies stems from the needs posed by social changes throughout history, which put pressure on the state and its institutions to act in the face of perceived problems. For a demand to enter the government's agenda and become public policy will depend on a number of factors, such as the historical and socio-economic moment and the political struggles of civil society. Therefore, the conjunctural framework can favor the emergence and expansion of policies or present an obstacle to their materialization and expansion.

An incursion into the history of student assistance revealed a series of laws that pointed to the need to guarantee access, retention, and success for social groups that were less favored by the educational environment, as well as the struggle of some institutions, such as the National Union of Students and the National Forum of Pro-Rectors for Community and Student Affairs, which advocated for the institutionalization of a public policy that would contribute to the retention of lower-income students in higher education. The struggle of these entities found greater resonance in the first term of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who, through Decree 7234/2010 (Brasil, 2010), elevated the National Student Assistance Program (PNAES) to the status of public policy.

As a result of this political action, normative documents were institutionalized that began to guide the actions of student assistance in the different federal educational institutions. At the Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Espírito Santo (Ifes), the normative document was entitled Student Assistance Policy (PAE), covering a set of actions aimed at democratizing access, permanence and success for students in situations of social vulnerability, preventing school retention and dropout (Ifes, 2011).

This policy, like the others, is influenced by the economic climate. One example of a troubled period that had a tremendous impact on the entire academic community

was the Bolsonaro administration, specifically in 2019. The reason is linked to the contingency of financial resources in the area of education, since Ifes *Campus* Vitória has had part of its income blocked and cannot supplement the student assistance budget, as was done in previous periods.

The impossibility of supplementing the budget has had a number of impacts on the PAE. When comparing the number of people served by the assistance programs in 2018, 1,431 students, with those of the following year, 1,180, it was found that 251 were no longer covered, which meant a drop of 17.5% in the scope of the programs. When comparing the number of people assisted in 2018 with those in 2022, with 1,303 students assisted, it is clear that this restriction still persists, since after 4 years the number of beneficiaries was 9.5% lower, which means 128 fewer students participating in the programs. This information shows that the budget shortfall persisted until the end of the Bolsonaro administration.

In addition to reducing the amount of assistance granted, Ifes *Campus* Vitória, through the Student Assistance Policy Management Commission (CGPAE), had to take other actions to adjust to the new budget reality, such as reducing the amounts of some assistance, not offering some programs, and reducing the *per capita* family income for access to programs. In the latter case, preference was given to a section of the academic community with a lower family income.

It is important to point out that all of these problems have a greater impact on the subjects of Youth and Adult Education (EJA) included in the National Program for the Integration of Professional Education with Basic Education in the Youth and Adult Education Modality (Proeja). They are the biggest beneficiaries of student assistance at the Ifes *Campus* Vitória, accounting for a third of all those assisted. This is because they are more susceptible to the various expressions of the social question (Brasil, 2007).

Faced with this reality, the text, the result of research carried out as part of the master's degree in professional and technological education in a network, analyzes how the student assistance policy contributes to the access, permanence, and success of EJA students enrolled in Proeja at the Ifes *Campus* Vitória. After this introduction, we discuss the precariousness of public policies with a focus on the PAE; we discuss Professional Education (EPT) in Brazil, emphasizing the social commitment of federal institutes (IFs), understanding the type of training attributed to it, the main challenges for integrated training in the Proeja offer, and, consequently, the importance of the PAE at Ifes *Campus* Vitória for this student group. Next, the methodological procedures are presented, followed by the analysis and discussion of the data, and finally, the final considerations.

Public funds and public policies in the sights of capital

States' tasks have changed throughout history as a result of the political development of societies and forms of government. After the Second World War, changes in the central capitalist countries marked the advance of the social

protection system. This was a period in which the working class mobilized to demand better living and working conditions, and the defenders of capital for its reproduction, since in periods of crisis, the rate of profit tends to decline. This situation led to the emergence of the so-called Social Welfare State in the countries at the center of capitalism.

This welfare state restricted the class struggle and constituted a "[...] form of sociability based on 'commitment' that implemented social gains and social security for workers in the central countries as long as the issue of socialism was relegated to the future" (Antunes, 2009, p. 40), sustained through the exploitation of workers in developing countries. Adopting Keynesian/Fordist policies was essential to establishing this welfare state (Antunes, 2009).

For the constitution of this welfare state model, the public fund became a central element, made up of taxes and contributions collected from both the working class and the owners of capital. Its resources became the subject of a dispute in which different forces in society tried to control them in order to serve their interests (Salvador, 2010). In this scenario, Brettas (2012) points out that tax collection is different in countries with high social inequality, such as Brazil, where most of the money is collected from workers. The portion paid by the owners of the modes of production, on the other hand, originates "[...] in labor and, therefore, in the surplus value extracted through the exploitation of the working class" (Brettas, 2012, p. 101).

The resources collected are returned through social and economic policies, so they can focus more on improving living conditions and income distribution for the working class or on guaranteeing conditions to counterbalance the downward trend in the rate of profit of the ruling class. Therefore, the destination of public funds will depend on the correlation of forces in society. In this understanding, Brettas (2012) explains that the state is not a neutral entity, and therefore, the management of public funds is linked to the interests of capital. Thus, "[...] as the state's role in guaranteeing the general conditions of capitalist production grows [...] the public fund increasingly becomes a fundamental link in the reproduction of the system" (Brettas, 2012, p. 102).

The late 1960s and early 1970s context called into question Keynesian politics, Fordist development, the welfare state, and the rights derived from the wage relationship. In ideological terms, liberalism emerged in a new form, which came to be called neoliberalism (Salvador, 2010). As a result, wages have been weakened, constituting, according to Castel (2001), the core of the new social question, which is the return of a broad vulnerability experienced by workers, affecting not only those most affected by precariousness, such as the unemployed, the unemployable, low-skilled workers, foreigners, in other words, those who experience the employment relationship as something unstable and insecure, as well as stable and skilled workers, who are not outside the logic of insecurity (Castel, 2001). One of the main effects of the new social question is exclusion:

[...] an absence of social relations, but a set of social relations particular to society as a whole. There is no one outside of society, but a set of positions whose relations with its center are more or less distended: former workers who have become permanently unemployed, young people who can't find work, poorly educated, poorly housed, poorly cared for, poorly considered populations, etc.

In this logic, Castel (2001) explains that there is no clear separation between exclusion and vulnerability. The excluded are mostly vulnerable people who were hanging on by a thread and have fallen. The author goes on to explain: "[...] But there is also a circulation between this zone of vulnerability and that of integration, a destabilization of the stable, qualified workers who become precarious, well-regarded executives who can become unemployed" (Castel, 2001, p. 569).

Brazil did not experience a welfare state like the central capitalist countries. Social protection along the lines of social democracy emerged belatedly through the 1988 Constitution, with an emphasis on social security, which consists of social assistance, health, and welfare policies.

In the years following the promulgation of the Constituição cidadã (Citizen's Constitution), a period in which the aim was to implement social security of a more universalist and progressive nature, the Brazilian state, influenced by capital, underwent a series of changes that reflected in the targeting and weakening of social policies, which was out of step with the constitutional precepts. These changes are related to the context of State Reform advocated by the Washington Consensus, i.e., the reform demanded by capitalism contributed, among other things, to preventing constitutional norms from materializing in social life. Parallel to this offensive, there was also a weakening of social movements, so that the resistance struggles against the reforms failed to change the correlation of forces at the time (Gohn, 2000), and did not hinder the process of dismantling social policies, which focused on social security policies.

This process of dismantling was slowed down during the Workers' Party (PT) administration from 2003 to 2016. Although, according to Rubim (2021), we have seen many actions aimed at meeting capital demands due to coalition politics, we cannot fail to recognize the many actions aimed at the most vulnerable strata. The 2016 coup, which installed Michel Temer as president in place of the legitimately elected Dilma Rousseff, marks a new moment in capital's offensive against the social rights enshrined in the Constitution (Leher, 2021). This reversed the downward trend in social inequalities that had been occurring in previous years, an effect of the major political change that institutionalized measures that limited inclusion actions, with the shrinking of public spending (Dweck et al., 2018).

As part of this movement, the Bolsonaro government has implemented radical neoliberal measures, such as the untying of funds earmarked for social areas in the legislation, as well as the almost absolute power to redefine the state (Leher, 2021). The austerity policies adopted by him and his predecessor, Michel Temer, have reduced public funding for social rights, invalidating the social contract established

in the 1988 Charter and thus favoring the commodification of social security services.

Salvador (2010) states that capital exerts pressure, especially on social security, which offers countless possibilities for profit. He adds that "[...] neoliberal proposals include the transfer of social protection from the state to the market, financial liberalization and the privatization of social security benefits" (Salvador, 2010, p. 606). Thus, the state's role is to regulate social issues and intervene to defend the interests of capital (Lima, 2004).

Neoliberal policies have had a strong impact on education. By not prioritizing intervention in the economy and preferring to use public resources for production to the detriment of social areas, this sector has lost resources, making it difficult to finance. The effects on education go beyond budget cuts, because according to Leher (2021), after the institutionalization of the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education - Law 9.394/1996 (Brazil, 1996), various normative apparatuses were put in place that have been modifying educational policy at all levels. These include measures that go beyond the educational sphere and favor the development of the private mercantile sector. They make it possible to exploit the work of teachers, further expanding the extraction of surplus value by capital (Leher, 2021).

| The Ifes Student Assistance Policy

The constitution of student assistance is related to the country's socio-political changes and their impact on the history of higher education in Brazil. From one-off initiatives and fragmented actions with scarce resources, its expansion and qualification were driven by the struggles of organized civil society, which gained greater legitimacy on the agenda of PT legislators and achieved the status of public policy with the institutionalization of the PNAES (Dutra; Santos, 2017).

The purpose of the PNAES is to increase the conditions of access to and permanence in higher education for young people. They are run by federal higher education institutions, including the Federal Institutes of Education, Science, and Technology, and must be implemented in conjunction with teaching, research, and extension activities (Brazil, 2010). The program covers different areas of human rights, encompassing actions that provide access to the pedagogical tools essential for a good education and good health conditions, as well as the provision of the minimum resources for students to survive, such as clothing, housing, food, transport, and financial resources (Vasconcelos, 2010).

Decree 7234/2010 was the starting point for drafting normative documents to regulate actions relating to student assistance in the IFs. In this movement, Ifes implemented its normative document - PAE, in 2011, which aims to contribute "[...] to equity in the training process of Ifes students" (Ifes, 2011, p. 15). The policy's target audience is students "regularly enrolled at Ifes, primarily in situations of social vulnerability" (Ifes, 2011, p. 15).

Ifes' PAE has two sets of programs: universal and specific. The programs belonging to the first group can be accessed by the entire student body, with the aim of fostering their all-round development. This group combines four programs: support for people with specific educational needs; incentives for cultural and leisure activities; educational actions and citizenship training; and biopsychosocial care. The second group, specific programs, is divided into primary and secondary care. The primary care programs aim to meet the basic needs of students so that they can remain at the institution. It is aimed primarily at students in situations of social vulnerability. Primary care includes the following programs: food assistance, transport assistance, housing assistance, financial assistance, didactic material, and uniform assistance. Furthermore, the monitoring assistance program also constitutes a specific program, however, of secondary care. Unlike the previous assistance, which required a socio-economic assessment, the monitoring assistance requires an academic assessment for the student to receive a monitoring scholarship.

Another important aspect to highlight in the Ifes PAE is the necessary integration "[...] with other public policies to contribute to the sustainability of the actions developed and the protagonism of the subjects served" (Ifes, 2011, p. 14). The *campuses* have relative autonomy in implementing the policy. The regulation provides for forming a management committee on each *campus* to manage, develop, evaluate, and monitor PAE actions.

| Vocational Education and Proeja: reflections on the education of workers

The educational trajectory in Brazil was based on the category of structural duality, since there was a clear distinction between the trajectories of those who would perform intellectual or instrumental functions (Kuenzer, 2009). From 2003 onwards, during President Lula's terms in office, investment was made in valuing EPT. Decree 5154/2004 (Brazil, 2004) brought the possibility of integrating secondary education with technical professional education at the secondary level.

Integrated education or integrated secondary education aims to overcome the fragmentation of knowledge based on the social division of labor, with the aim of making general education an integral part of EPT in all areas where professional qualifications are obtained. This means focusing on work as an educational principle, in the sense of overcoming the separation between manual and intellectual work and training workers to act as citizens and leaders (Ciavatta, 2005).

Another important measure to promote EPT was the enactment of Law 11892/2008, which gave rise to the Rede Federal de Educação Profissional, Científica e Tecnológica [Federal Network of Professional, Scientific and Technological Education] (RFEPCT) and created the IFs. In this law, Institutes were defined as higher education, basic, and professional education institutions, offering multiple curricula and operating on *multiple campuses*, specializing in providing EPT in

different forms of education, based on a combination of technical and technological knowledge and their teaching practices (Brazil, 2008).

The establishment of the RFEPCT "[...] was part of a set of regulatory measures aimed at implementing the Lula government's Education Development Plan [...], which had it as one of the most important educational components of the Growth Acceleration Plan (PAC)" (Otranto, 2011, p. 2). In this context, Lima Filho (2010) cites three government actions that gave greater solidity to the creation of the RFEPCT: the Professionalized Brazil Program, the Expansion Program of the Federal Professional Education Network, and Proeja (Lima Filho, 2010).

In this study, Proeja stands out, established by Decrees 5478/2005 (Brazil, 2005) and 5840/2006 (Brazil, 2006). At Ifes, the EJA program began in 2001 and currently offers 360 places per year through Proeja, distributed over the Integrated Technical courses in Tourism Guide, Metallurgy, Accommodation, and Work Safety.

Ramos (2010) problematizes some of the political and pedagogical implications of integrating EPT with EJA since, according to the author, the perspective of integration is a contradictory expression of a class society characterized by the denial of social rights. Firstly, the author mentions the possibility of associating the EJA with compensatory policies after the significant conceptual advances made. The other implication, which is associated with the first, "[...] is to inscribe the EJA in the myth of employability and professional/occupational reconversion caused by productive restructuring" (Ramos, 2010, p. 75).

Thus, the author ponders how work with meaning and economic purpose should be included in the EJA since this relationship is different for young people on the so-called regular education path, as well as for adults and the elderly. She argues that for young people "[...] the relationship between knowledge and productive activity is more immediate from a certain point in their school life" (Ramos, 2010, p.75). He also argues that when it comes to EJA subjects, whose school career has not had the same linearity:

[...] the relationship between education and work is much more immediate and contradictory. For them, the point of knowledge is not to first provide a general understanding of social life and then equip them for professional practice. In reality, access to or return to school is often motivated by the difficulties faced in the world of work, by the need to enter and remain in it. (Ramos, 2010, p. 76)

In relation to the right to EJA, Ramos (2010) explains that it would not be fair for people whose right to education was denied in the past to have to complete basic education first and then EPT. It is necessary to have a broad understanding of professionalization that takes into account both the economic, pedagogical, sociological, ethical-political and psychological aspects of this situation.

Another implication, according to the author, "[...] refers to the insertion of work as an educational principle in the EJA, considering the first meaning attributed to the concept of integrated education, that is, focused on the *omnilateral* formation of subjects" (Ramos, 2010, p. 77). Education based on the combination of work,

science, and culture contains ethical and political values, as well as historical and scientific content that characterizes human *praxis*. Educational provision in this direction would provide an understanding of the socio-productive dynamics of modern societies. It would enable workers to carry out productive, independent, and critical activities instead of mere education for insertion into the different areas of the productive sectors (Ramos, 2010).

The Proeja Base Document (Brazil, 2007) regards the category of work as an educational principle and highlights it as one of the guidelines that consolidate Proeja's foundations. The document stresses that:

[...] the link between middle school and the perspective of work is not based directly on the relationship with professional occupation, but on the understanding that men and women produce their human condition through work-transformative action in the world, of themselves, for themselves, and others. (Brazil, 2007, p. 38)

Still, on the subject of adult education, Freire's (2001) studies are inferred when he discusses the need for teachers to consider not only the didactic procedures and content to be taught but also the way in which certain learning must be linked to the students' daily lives because the content cannot be alien to these students' reality. This premise is the starting point for the act of teaching and learning.

Freire (1996) explains that in this dialectical process, given their essential differences, subjects learn by teaching and those who learn teach by learning. The author argues that the educator has the responsibility, in the movement of their teaching practice, to strengthen the student's ethical rigor, critical capacity, epistemological curiosity, and insubmission, thus differentiating themselves from the banking discourse, which only transfers content and perpetuates submission and exploitation.

In this educational process, we reaffirm the role played by Ifes' PAE, which, through specific programs such as the food assistance program and the didactic material assistance program, among other actions, constitute essential contributions to the education of these citizens, who have historically been excluded from access to free public education of socially recognized quality.

| Methodological procedures

A qualitative and quantitative case study was carried out (Lüdke; André, 2013). The target audience consisted of 13 Proeja students who received student assistance in 2020 and 10 civil servants from Ifes *Campus* Vitória: 3 Proeja coordinators and 7 CGPAE members. Documentary and bibliographic analysis, questionnaires, and interviews¹ were used to produce the data.

¹ The research project was submitted to the Ethics Committee for Research with Human Beings at Ifes by registering it on the Plataforma Brasil (Brazil Platform). It was approved without reservations, so this research complies with current ethical standards.

Because face-to-face teaching activities were suspended for the first half of 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and to protect the research subjects, the questionnaires and the Free and Informed Consent forms were sent via *Google Forms* after the subjects had accepted. The interviews were conducted using a *web* conferencing platform, and a topic guide ensured that the conversations went smoothly.

The data was analyzed using the content analysis technique. For Bardin (2016), the term content analysis characterizes a set of analysis techniques "[...] of communications aimed at obtaining, through systematic and objective procedures for describing the content of messages, indicators (quantitative or not) that allow the inference of knowledge related to the conditions of production/reception (inferred variables) of these messages" (Bardin, 2016, p. 48).

Bardin (2016) points out that the content analysis process is organized into three poles: 1. Pre-analysis; 2. Exploring the material; 3. Treatment of results, inference and interpretation. In the first phase, the material produced was read to learn its content, allowing impressions and orientations to invade it, constituting what Bardin (2016) calls floating reading. In the next stage, exploration of the material, the files were read numerous times to enable them to be broken down into smaller units, which consist "[...] essentially of coding, breaking down or enumerating operations, according to previously formulated rules" (Bardin, 2016, p. 131).

According to the author, coding is necessary to process the material produced. To do this, we used thematic analysis, which "[...] consists of discovering the 'nuclei of meaning' that make up the communication and whose presence, or frequency of appearance, can mean something for the chosen analytical objective" (Bardin, 1996, p. 135). After coding, the answers were grouped according to common characteristics, thus creating thematic categories.

| Entering the research field and systematizing the data produced

In the process of producing the data, we checked when the students found out about the PAE programs and, subsequently, whether this policy encouraged or would encourage them to enter the institution. It was found that six (46.15%) students knew about the PAE before entering Ifes, and that the possibility of benefiting from it encouraged them to choose the institution. Another six (46.15%) said that they found out about the programs after joining and felt that they would have been more encouraged if they had known about the policy before joining. One interviewee pointed out that she found out about the policy when she was already enrolled at Ifes and indicated that if she had known about it before, it wouldn't have influenced her entry.

These data indicate the policy's importance as a stimulant for access to Ifes since twelve students (92.3%) indicated this. They also suggest that, if well publicized, the policy can contribute to the entry of the most vulnerable groups into the institution. This policy is undoubtedly a driving force behind access to school. One participant

reported its importance for her academic career, evaluating it "[...] very positively, making me recommend the school even more" (Ana, 21, student).

The survey showed that students know little about the PAE because when they were told about the 10 programs that make it up, they were asked to indicate which ones they knew. It was noted that students are more familiar with the programs the *campus* has made available in recent years: food assistance, transport, and monitoring. The results confirm the need for greater internal dissemination of the PAE. In addition, greater external publicity is also important because, as noted, it has been pointed out as one of the motivating elements for workers to join the institute.

To access the PAE assistance programs, students must apply through the public notice. They were asked to list the process's positive and negative aspects, from the moment of registration to the final results of the calls for proposals. Regarding the positive points highlighted, the following excerpts stand out: "[...] I found the whole process simple and the staff were always very attentive" (Bruna, 23, student) and "[...] both when registering and at the end, there was a good explanation about it" (Ana, 21, student).

As positive points that favor access to assistance, the civil servants pointed to the routine dissemination of public notices; the availability of access to the team responsible for executing the notices, making it possible to resolve any doubts in the period that the students deem most opportune; knowledge about the specificities of the Proeja subjects and the differentiated assistance provided by the pedagogical management center during the registration period..

As for the negative aspects, only one student pointed out that "a lot of paperwork is required" (Lara, 23, student). The near absence of negative aspects emphasized may be related to the participants' success in the call for applications. The civil servants, on the other hand, highlighted some points that, in a way, make it difficult for students to join PAE programs, such as difficulties in accessing information and the Internet, documentary proof, the publicity process, and budgetary limitations. The latter was identified as the main obstacle by all 10 respondents. The second most cited situation was the difficulty of accessing information, highlighted by seven civil servants.

Regarding the last aspect, it was found that students have difficulties accessing the information released by the institution because they are unable to experience the academic environment like other students for various reasons: such as reconciling work activities (inside and outside the home) with academic ones; caring for the family; difficulty accessing the internet; as well as acquiring and handling technological devices and the difficulty of understanding information published by *Campus*. On this last point, the testimony of one of the coordinators should be highlighted:

The discourse of broad dissemination is based on the idea of universalism, that is, when information is disseminated similarly, based on the argument that everyone should have access to information. However, the fact that the

appropriation of this information does not occur in the same way is overlooked, especially for students with discontinuous school trajectories. (Eduardo, 44, coordinator)

The life stories of EJA students are marked by social inequalities that impact their schooling. According to Dubet (2004, p. 542), when these aspects are disregarded in school institutions, the "[...] meritocratic model of equal opportunities presupposes, to be fair, a perfectly equal and objective school offer, ignoring the social inequalities of the students".

Still on the subject of communication involving the Proeja subjects, it is worth highlighting the testimony of a female employee. According to her, in institutional communication:

[...] we still have a lot of mistakes, because the information doesn't arrive, you post information once on the website, once on social networks and you think that's enough, but that's not enough [...], not all students have the facility to access e-mail every day, enter a social network every day. [...] the student isn't looking at his cell phone all day, because sometimes he works and the company doesn't allow it, so we have to [...] try to reach the student in other ways and with clear, simple, and objective language. (Maria, 40, CGPAE member)

Therefore, the internal communication process needs to be improved urgently so that students can really take ownership of the information. Therefore, as Maria pointed out, public notices must be written in clear, simple, and objective language. The institutional website and social media are important sources for disseminating information, but they must be thought of in terms of the objective conditions of EJA students.

Regarding the need to overcome or minimize the bureaucratization of the access notice, one of those surveyed stated that it is essential to "[...] simplify the analysis processes related to bureaucratic issues, maintaining the necessary criteria and rigor" (Daniel, 42, member of CGPAE). It is worth noting that the PNAES does not provide a list of documents for the student's socio-economic assessment, nor the methodology to be used. Educational institutions enjoy a certain degree of autonomy in managing regulatory procedures, which allows for the institutionalization of less exclusionary ways of conducting the PAE.

It was also found that students' participation in student assistance programs ensured that they were able to stay at the institution, according to the following reports: "[...] the transportation voucher is extremely important to me, without it, I wouldn't be able to afford a ticket every day" (Ana, 21, student) and "[...] it's a great help because, as I live far away and spend a lot of time on *campus*, I could eat instead of thinking about leaving in the middle of class" (Márcia, 24, student).

Due to budget constraints, the institution has only provided transportation, food, and monitoring assistance in recent years. This has led many students to reallocate the assistance they receive to fill this gap. The money received ends up being used, as CGPAE member Maria points out, "[...] to buy school supplies, drawing materials, make a photocopy, so you see that the students end up using this resource to

maintain their school activities, since we are restricted to the Food and Transportation Allowance".

Despite the restriction on the supply of PAE programs, we agree with Vasconcelos (2010) when he states that student assistance, as a social right mechanism, is to provide the necessary means to overcome barriers and obstacles to good academic performance, thus reducing the percentage of failures, withdrawals and dropouts (Vasconcelos, 2010). As well as helping students to stay and succeed, student assistance has encouraged them to dedicate themselves more to their studies, as can be seen in the following excerpts: "[...] it encourages me to go to class, knowing that I'll get help with food and I won't have to take money out of my pocket for household bills" (Fernanda, 32, student); "[...] it was what encouraged me the most and helped me a lot during this pandemic" (Antônio, 40, student); "[...] it helps a lot and encourages [...] students to dedicate themselves" (José, 30, student).

Three CGPAE members and two coordinators mentioned the shortage of professionals as another factor limiting the PAE's actions. Due to the small number of staff working in student assistance, monitoring the students being assisted is hampered. Thus, specific programs are prioritized for implementation, while universal programs are in the background, except for the biopsychosocial care program. It is worth reiterating that universal programs cover not only students in situations of social vulnerability but the entire student population. Since they are not carried out, they corroborate the perception that the PAE brings together only actions to pass on financial resources, fueling the idea of bolstering student assistance.

The reality described is not exclusive to the *campus* under study, as Prada and Surdine (2018) showed us when they analyzed the execution of the PNAES in 38 federal institutes to identify the prioritized actions. They identified the implementation of selective programs to the detriment of universal ones, pointing out that this is due to the lack of material conditions for their implementation, such as the lack of professionals.

As part of the research, possible suggestions for improvements to the policy were also mapped out. The students made the following recommendations: greater agility in depositing assistance, readjusting the value of assistance, expanding the monitoring program, and greater attention by the institution to the particularities of working students and those who have children so that they remain at the institution.

The responses from civil servants were more varied: they signaled the expansion of the hours of service of the psychology and health sector; expansion of the staff of student assistance professionals; budget expansion; publication of an Easy Read version of the Public Notices, with translation into Libras; logistical and operational support to assist Proeja students who need to bring children to the classroom during study hours; reducing the bureaucracy of the selection process; improving the circulation of information; permanent inclusion of a benefit linked to digital inclusion; inclusion of benefits linked to daycare and participation in cultural and

sporting activities; creation of a specific assistance for Proeja, so that the student has an assistance not related to transportation or food.

| Conclusions

To conclude this text, we reiterate that public policy represents a process that aims to solve a public problem. However, the quality of this response depends on the correlation of forces present in society that put pressure on the state and its constituent institutions to meet their most diverse interests. The peculiarity of the PNAES shows how important civil society's articulation was for it to materialize as a public policy.

They pointed out how the changes brought about by capitalism affect social policies, especially education. They pointed out that President Jair Bolsonaro's government has intensified neoliberal measures to favor capital and the impacts of such activities on the specifics of the PAE developed at the Ifes *Campus* Vitória. It also highlighted some of the problems that are observed daily in implementing the policy in the *locus* under study.

PAE fulfills an important function, whether through assistance programs that directly contribute to ensuring that the student body's retention and success are not compromised by financial issues, or through its multidisciplinary team that addresses various other demands from students that may directly or indirectly interfere with the continuation of their schooling and professional training.

Therefore, we need to be continuously vigilant, as citizens, to guarantee and strengthen student assistance so that this policy is increasingly comprehensive, enabling Fernanda, Lara, Antônio and thousands of other workers to have the necessary conditions to continue and succeed in their schooling processes with a focus on integral human formation and the consequent realization of the right to public, free, secular, inclusive and socially recognized quality education for all.

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Resumo

O texto analisa como a Política de Assistência Estudantil contribui para o acesso, a permanência e o êxito dos/das estudantes do Programa Nacional de Integração da Educação Profissional com a Educação Básica na Modalidade de Educação de Jovens e Adultos (Proeja), do Instituto Federal do Espírito Santo (Ifes). Desenvolveu-se uma pesquisa quali-quantitativa do tipo Estudo de Caso fazendo a escuta com os/as discentes e servidores/as por meio de entrevistas e questionários. É subsidiada pelas produções da área da educação e das políticas públicas. Aponta-se a insuficiência orçamentária para a implementação da Política, entretanto, inferiu-se que é um aporte para o êxito discente.

Palavras-chave: Assistência estudantil. Proeja. Permanência escolar.

Resumen

El texto analiza cómo la Política de Asistencia al Estudiante contribuye al acceso, permanencia y éxito de los alumnos del Programa Nacional de Integración de la Educación Profesional con la Educación Básica en la Modalidad de Educación de Jóvenes y Adultos (Proeja) del Instituto Federal de Espírito Santo (Ifes). Se realizó

un estudio de caso cualitativo y cuantitativo, escuchando a los alumnos y al personal mediante entrevistas y cuestionarios. Está subvencionado por la producción en el ámbito de la educación y las políticas públicas. Se señaló la insuficiencia presupuestaria para su aplicación, pero se dedujo que contribuye al éxito de los alumnos.

Palabras clave: Asistencia a estudiantes. Proeja. Permanecer en la escuela.

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