

# Proeja students: routes denied to other possibilities<sup>1</sup>

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## *Estudantes do Proeja: de percursos negados a outras possibilidades*

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## *Estudiantes del Proeja: de percursos negados a otras posibilidades*

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### ABSTRACT

This academic paper is based on a research funded by *Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico* (2014-2015), aiming to know and understand the demographic, socioeconomic and educational profiles of students from *Programa Nacional de Integração da Educação Profissional com a Educação Básica na Modalidade de Educação de Jovens e Adultos* - Proeja [National Program for the Integration between Professional and Basic Education at the Youth and Adult Education Modality] from *Instituto Federal de Alagoas*, who are attending the Kitchen and Hospitality Technical Courses. In terms of methodology, a qualitative approach was assumed. The data were collected by interviews made with sixty-three students from both courses. Among other dimensions, the data have showed that the students are mostly from the interior of the State, what contributed to a social construction of an urban “sub-citizenship” and inside the Program, they experience new possibilities and perspectives of development in personal and professional

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life, fed by a sense of self appreciation. The data of this study corroborate to (re) think the public policies that can benefit the access and permanence of the young and adults to processes of the education and training, and simultaneously, advance of schooling and in the training of teachers who work with Youth and Adult Education (YAE).

*Keywords:* Proeja. Professional courses. Students' profiles.

## RESUMO

Este artigo tem por base uma pesquisa financiada pelo Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (2014-2015), tendo como objetivo conhecer e compreender os perfis demográficos, socioeconômicos e educacionais dos 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 de Alagoas, especificamente nos cursos Técnicos em Cozinha e Hospedagem. Metodologicamente assumiu-se uma abordagem qualiquantitativa. Os dados foram coletados por meio de entrevistas, realizadas com 63 estudantes de ambos os cursos. Entre outras dimensões, os dados mostraram que os estudantes são, na sua maioria, provenientes do interior do estado, tendo contribuído para construção social de uma subcidadania urbana, e no referido Programa, vivenciam novas possibilidades e perspectivas de crescimento na vida pessoal e profissional, realimentados por um sentimento de valorização de si. Os dados deste estudo contribuem para (re)pensar as políticas públicas que podem favorecer o acesso e a permanência dos jovens e adultos a processos de educação e formação e, concomitantemente, no avanço da escolarização e para a formação de professores que atuam na Educação de Jovens e Adultos (EJA).

*Palavras-chave:* Proeja. Cursos profissionais. Perfis dos estudantes.

## RESUMEN

Este artículo se basa en una investigación financiada por el *Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico* (2014-2015), con el objetivo de conocer y comprender los perfiles demográficos, socioeconómicos y educativos de los estudiantes del *Programa Nacional de Integração da Educação Profissional com a Educação Básica na Modalidade de Educação de Jovens e Adultos - Proeja* [Programa Nacional por la Integración de la Educación Profesional con la Educación Básica en la Modalidad de Jóvenes y Adultos], en el *Instituto Federal de Alagoas*, de los cursos Técnicos en Cocina y Hospedaje, y metodológicamente asumió en un enfoque cualitativo. Los datos fueron recolectados a través de entrevistas con 63 estudiantes de ambos los cursos. Entre otras dimensiones, los datos

mostraron que los estudiantes son, en su mayoría, provinciales del interior, habiendo contribuido a una construcción social de una “sub ciudadanía” urbana y en el Programa vivencian nuevas posibilidades y perspectivas y lógicas de vida personal y profesional realimentados por un sentimiento de valorización de sí. Los datos de este estudio corroboran para (re)pensar las políticas públicas que pueden favorecer el acceso y permanencia de los jóvenes y adultos a procesos de educación y formación y, concomitantemente, en el avance de escolarización y para la formación de profesores que actúan en la Educación de Jóvenes y Adultos (EJA).

*Palabras clave:* Proeja. Cursos profesionales. Perfiles de los estudiantes.

## Introduction

This academic paper is based on a research funded by the *Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico* (CNPq) (2014-2015), aiming to know and understand the demographic, socioeconomic and educational profiles of students from the *Programa Nacional de Integração da Educação Profissional com a Educação Básica na Modalidade de Educação de Jovens e Adultos* [National Program for the Integration between Professional and Basic Education at the Youth and Adult Education Modality] (Proeja) from *Instituto Federal de Alagoas* (IFAL), Marechal Deodoro campus, who are attending the Kitchen and Hospitality Technical Courses.

The research was quali-quantitative based, revealing to be, according to Serapioni (2000, p. 189), “[...] a strategic and rich way of doing analysis of the problems studied”. For data collection, we methodologically used the *Pesquisa Nacional por Amostras de Domicílios* [National Household Sample Survey] (PNAD) process published in 2013 (IBGE, 2013), although the risk in relation to the results, since it is about a declaratory act. To this end, we used the interview technique in the form of a questionnaire, with 63 participating students from both courses, which corresponds to 35% of the students in the courses in this period (2014-2015). The inclusion criteria used were: being duly registered in one of the courses and agreeing to participate in the research.

This text is organized in two sections. In the first, we emphasize the legal contexts of the Proeja in the national and local scenario, situating the Kitchen and Hospitality Technical Courses, and in the second section, we highlight what the data revealed in the demographic, socioeconomic, and educational spheres.

## **Proeja: Legal contexts – national and local**

### **National context**

Proeja was created under the Federal Institutions of Technological Education, by Decree nº 5.478 of June 24, 2005 (BRASIL, 2005a), and was replaced afterwards by Decree nº 5.840 of July 13, 2006 (BRASIL, 2006). The first one expressed the demand of young people and adults offering professional and technical high school education, attending an excluded public in federal educational institutions (BRASIL, 2005a)<sup>2</sup>.

The second decree presented extensions in relation to the first, to the extent that it established an articulation between basic education and high school, intending to raise the worker's schooling, and involving more institutions to offer the courses, removing the exclusivity of federal educational institutions when it states:

[...] Proeja may be adopted by public institutions of the state and municipal education systems and by national private entities of social service, learning and professional training linked to a trade union system ("S System") [...] (BRASIL, 2006, our translation).

In this legal context, Proeja was defined as a program of social inclusion that enables the professional education with the concept of integral formation of the citizen, which means it works scientific-technological and historical-social fundamentals, such as: work, science, technology and culture (IBGE, 2007), in young people and adults over 18 years old, with no maximum age limit, with non-linear school trajectories, with the intention of raising their educational levels.

This Program is presented as a challenge for the managers of the Federal Institutes and, concomitantly, for the teachers who will work in the courses to be implemented, considering that it required according to Balandier (1997, p. 235, our translation):

<sup>2</sup> Federal Education Network was constituted at the time by: Federal Technological Education Centers, Federal Technical Schools, Federal Agrotechnical Schools and Technical Schools Linked to Federal Universities (BRASIL, 2005a).

“[...] a new understanding of the unpredictable [to the Institutes], a description of the world where the consideration of dynamisms, movement, processes takes the lead over permanence, structures, and organizations.

In this scenario, the Proeja students are passengers in a highly technical institution like IFAL, bringing the different, as student-workers, who have a reading of the world, before the reading of the word (FREIRE, 1989), which we can characterize as figures of disorder in the school order (BALANDIER, 1997). In part, they are unaware of the criticism received for their condition as subjects who arrive at the Educational Institution without the same characteristics that are usually attributed to students in other educational modalities. It is noticed, however, that even in this condition, these subjects insist and persist until the completion of their studies, challenging the school management and teachers, causing a new vision/attitude towards young and adult subjects.

### **Local context – *Instituto Federal de Alagoas***

The process of deployment and implementation of Proeja in IFAL began with the publication of Ordinance nº 2.080/2005 (BRASIL, 2005b) – in compliance with a requirement of the federal government –, which established guidelines for the provision of technical courses and full-time high school, in the modality of youth and adult education. This ordinance defines that youth and adult education is intended for those who did not have access or continuity of studies in primary and secondary education at the “proper age” (SANTOS, 2014).

Since it is an innovation, in the same year of 2005, the Institute’s upper management appointed a committee of teachers and educators, aiming at planning the processes for deployment and implementation of Proeja courses that would meet the reality of Alagoas. The committee’s work, in 2006, were: the participation in several internal meetings and in several events supported by the *Secretaria de Educação Profissional e Tecnológica* [Secretariat of Professional and Technological Education] (Setec), from the *Ministério da Educação* [Ministry of Education] (MEC); establishment of partnerships, aiming at inter-institutional dialogues with researchers from other *Centros Federais de Educação Tecnológica* [Federal Centers of Technological Education] (CEFET).

In 2007, the committee started a more effective process that took place with the organization of a Pedagogical Day to present to the educational community of CEFET, of the state of Alagoas and to the leaders of the educational sector of the same state.

The arrival of Proeja and the licentiate degrees determined the change in the Educational Institution's name, becoming *Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia de Alagoas* (IFAL), by means of Law nº 11.892/2008 (BRASIL, 2008), of December 29th, 2008, sanctioned by President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. From that year on, we started offering courses in the Proeja modality, as shown in the chart below:

CHART 1 – IFAL'S YOUTH AND ADULT EDUCATION (YAE) COURSES

CAMPUS	COURSE	YEAR
Maceió	Integrated High School Technical Course in Handicraft	2008
Satuba	Technical Course in Informatics ( <i>Formação Inicial e Continuada</i> [Initial and Continuing Formation] – FIC)	2008
	Technical Course in Food Processing ( <i>Formação Inicial e Continuada</i> [Initial and Continuing Formation] – FIC)	2009
Palmeira dos Índios	Integrated High School Technical Course in Electrotechnics	2008
Marechal Deodoro	Integrated High School Technical Course in Hospitality	2008
	Integrated High School Technical Course in Kitchen	2011
Piranhas	Integrated High School Technical Course in Food	2016

SOURCE: Data collected by the authors (2020).

From the beginning of the courses offered in 2008 until 2020, the Marechal Deodoro Campus has the highest number of students in this modality, followed by the Piranhas Campus. The other locations (mentioned in Chart 1) did not reach the goal of offering the minimum of 10% of vacancies, as requested in the Decree that created the Program, while most of the locations remain absent in relation to this offer.

In the specific case of the Marechal Deodoro Campus, which was the locus of our study, the choice of offering Technical Courses in Kitchen and Hospitality is justified by the fact that the city of Marechal Deodoro is geographically located in Alagoas in a privileged way: on one side, it is bathed by the Manguaba Lagoon and on the other by the Atlantic Ocean, giving access to the *Francês* Beach, considered one of the most desirable beaches in Alagoas. In this context, tourism and gastronomy represent great sources of activities, demanding skilled professionals in the area.

This city has a strong tourist appeal, because of its name, which honors Manuel Deodoro da Fonseca, Brazil's first president (1889-1891). It is the second municipality in the economy of the state of Alagoas, standing out in: sugar cane for the production of sugar and alcohol and in the production of polyvinyl chloride (PVC), in the only chloro chemical pole installed in Alagoas. The tourism sector is configured as one of the main sources of income, it is mostly present in the village of Massagueira, the only gastronomic pole of the state. Besides the production of handicrafts in threads and straw, there are houses preserved by the national historical patrimony, churches and convents, and philharmonic orchestras, which traditionally make Marechal Deodoro a city of musicians.

## **Kitchen and Hospitality Technical Course**

The offer of the Technical Course in Hospitality began in 2008 and the Technical Course in Kitchen in 2011. Both have the objectives of making professional-citizens with a solid humanistic, scientific and technological base to exercise with competence and leadership the activities of planning, coordination, conduction and execution of functions inherent to the hosting and cooking services and to improve the fulfillment of local needs.

Access to the courses is via a selection process, for candidates aged 18 and over, who have completed the last stage of elementary school or who have not completed high school. The requirement in the Proeja modality is that the courses have a duration of three years, composed of 6 modules, each one corresponding to a school semester, with a minimum duration of 2,400 hours, of which 1,200 hours are for general education. The proposal is making a single pedagogical course, of basic and professional education, to certify the student at the end of the course.

We stress that the professional profile at the end of the course aims for graduates to have a comprehensive training, which, according to Viriato, Favoreto, and Klein (2012), is an opportunity to develop the universal potentialities of the human being, in other words, to provide competent socialization for social participation and qualification for work, from the perspective of the general conditions of existence. It is in this perspective that has been sustaining that Proeja is contrary to the logics and interests of capital, based on a comprehensive training, it acts as a principle the emancipation (MOURA, 2017; ZEN; OLIVEIRA, 2018) of the subjects in contexts of their daily action in society.

## **What the data revealed**

The data presented result from the analysis of 63 interviews, which correspond to 35% of the students enrolled in the Kitchen and Hospitality Technical Courses, and are structured in three dimensions of analysis: demographic, socioeconomic, and educational.

### **Demographic dimension**

In this dimension, 16 male students (25.4%) and 47 female students (74.6%) were interviewed, mostly from the countryside of the state of Alagoas. The predominance of women in the sample is coherent with the concentration of this gender in the two courses – Kitchen and Hospitality.

Even considering the difficulties that these women had to attend school at the proper age, above all, since they are early mothers and thus having taken on countless household tasks and childcare responsibilities, they have been occupying their space in Proeja. The reports of retaliation, domestic violence and emotional blackmail by their partners are constant, but not enough to make them abandon their studies again; on the contrary, this public joined the Proeja.

According to annual surveys (2008-2019) of the Marechal Deodoro Campus, this public is still the one with the highest dropout rate, either because of the need to provide resources for the family, or because they are tired at night, after working, or because they have no one to look after their children, who are often brought to the classroom. This situation has strengthened the need for treatment as an important item on the educational agenda, especially in the EJA.

Based on the fact that 86.7% of the students come from the countryside of the state of Alagoas, we can see that there is a strong rural exodus to the capital. This fact is quite common among these subjects, who move to urban centers, in this specific case, to Maceió or Marechal Deodoro (metropolitan region), in search of better conditions and new life perspectives, especially job possibilities. However, when they arrive in the big urban centers, the reality, once again, seems to frighten them, since they are once again facing the exclusion and denial they experienced in the rural centers, which fatally leads them to the outskirts of the city. Social policies for generating employment and income are still very distant from the rural areas.



It is in this sense that Silveira (2014, p. 18, our translation), states it is “a very common portrait in Brazilian urban peripheries, as well as its rural extension”, a scenario that the author characterizes as “peripheral modernization” to designate such a situation in Brazil that has contributed to the “[...] social construction of a sub-citizenship, when the freedman is left to his own fate”. In this specific case, the construction of an urban *sub-citizenship* in the capital of Alagoas State.

Regarding the predominant age of the interviewed students, the majority is between 26 and 33 years old (42.9%), followed by the ones between 19 and 25 years old (38.1%). The strong presence of adults is observed, this fact appears from the characteristics of YAE students in the urban area, which is made up of younger adults, adolescents, and a high number of women, unlike in the rural area, where men are the biggest school attenders.

Young people migrate to the evening hours, often unsuccessfully trying to develop paid activities during the day, whose opportunities are minimal, and always getting involved in the informal market, to supplement the family income. In the case of women, the tendency is to participate in domestic tasks and also some prefer to get married. This reality has been provoking, at certain moments, dropouts and the countless returns and stops – which became a common thing in this educational modality.

The most prevalent ethnic group declared among the students was brown (61.9%), followed by white (20.6%) and black (15.9%). Adding the percentages of those who declared themselves as brown and black, we arrive at a percentage of 77.8% of non-white students, which shows that people still hesitate to indicate their real ethnicity. We are facing a “black Projea”, which does not recognize its own identity. This is a situation that is supported by cultural references of denial and subalternation by society (BACKES, 2010; MADEIRA; GOMES, 2018) and, according to Carreira (2014), the history of YAE in Brazil is vigorously “connected to the historical impacts of racism” enhanced by this society and Brazilian education, based on a “[...] denial of the other, by not fully recognizing the human condition to those considered different because of certain physical characteristics or cultural heritage” (CARREIRA, 2014, p. 211, our translation).

This situation can reinforce the social marginality and exploitation of these subjects, denying them a dignified existence in society and, consequently, their descendants, creating a vicious cycle that has been perpetuated since the time of slavery until the 21st century, with rare exceptions. These data are confirmed by the PNAD (IBGE, 2019a), which revealed the unemployment rate among Brazilians who declare themselves white at 9.2%, while those declared black reached 14.9% and browns at 13.6%.

The most frequent marital status among students was single (61.3%); married people totaled 33.9% and separated or divorced people reached only 3.2%. The majority lives in a house or apartment (78.3%) and 13.3% declared they live in another situation (without giving details about it). Based on the data collected by this study, and despite the advances in the creation of housing programs created by the federal government, such as *Minha Casa Minha Vida* – during the Lula and Dilma administrations – we can observe that many people still do not have the dream of owning their own home. And, when they do, they live in poverty, unable to afford the most basic obligations, due to the absence of public policies related with this public. The number of people living in these houses varied between five people (27.4%) and more than six people (24.2%); only 3.2% of the respondents said they live alone.

And regarding the number of children, it is a fact that women with low education and low income usually have children when they are young, and most of the time they are born from unplanned pregnancies. Despite this fact, most students (27.4%) declared to have two children, since 21% had one child, 17% had three children, and 27.4% had no children. These data show a very significant reduction in the number of children. Thus, the data from this research confirms the findings of the Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger data, which was the *Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios* [National Household Sample Survey] – PNAD 2013 (IBGE, 2013), it points out that in the last 10 years, the number of children per family fell by 10.7%.

Among the poorest 20%, the drop in the same period was 15.7%. The largest reduction was identified among the poorest 20% living in the Northeast Region, 26.4%. Among the theses used to explain this drop, the ministry cites the prerequisites of the *Bolsa Família* Program that have ensured the attendance of these women in basic health units during prenatal care. This attendance frequency leads to improved access to information on birth control and the use of contraceptive methods (LABOISSIÈRE, 2015).

Based on this finding, the data can contribute to the deconstruction of certain myths created in Brazilian society regarding the *Bolsa Família* program, among many others, such as that families considered poor have more children, in the sense of enjoying a sum of monetary values continuously from government programs.

## Socioeconomic dimension

This dimension dealt with the occupation of the interviewed' parents. In this dimension, 56.5% from the Technical Course in Hospitality and 37.7% from the Kitchen Course informed that their parents worked in agriculture, fields, farms, or fishing. And 95.7% of the students or family members participated in the *Bolsa Família* Program and 62.9% had an income of up to one minimum wage; while 21% received up to 2 minimum wages and 11.3% received more than 2 minimum wages.

These data have similarity with those found in the research of Ricarte, Lira, and Moura (2010), conducted at the *Instituto Federal do Rio Grande do Norte*, with Proeja students who remained in the institution. The study showed that: 67.0% did not work, had no children and 53.3% had family income between 1 and 2 minimum wages.

These data also meet the *Pesquisa Nacional por Amostras de Domicílios* [National Continuous Household Sample Survey] (IBGE, 2019a) which pointed out that in Brazil, in the quarter relating to July, August and September 2019, an alarming population of 64.8 million people who make up the labor force in the country were without any occupation, a reality that affects Proeja students in the whole national territory (IBGE, 2019b). Regarding the 2.9 million people living in the Brazilian Northeast, according to PNAD data (IBGE, 2019a), they are in a situation of discouragement, with men accounting for an occupation rate of 71.2% and women for 45.5%. These data have repercussions on the situation of students at the Marechal Deodoro Campus, enrolled in the Proeja courses, which according to the institution 43.4% of students were in the situation “without work”, 15.1% “never worked” and 13.3% “never worked/still looking for a job” (INSTITUTO FEDERAL DE ALAGOAS, 2016).

It is in this scenario that, according to the PNAD (IBGE, 2019a), the quantity of workers with a signed work card in Brazil was 88.5 million (88.5%) against 11.5 million (11.5%) with no record in the work card, which leaves them on the margins of citizen labor rights. As for income, in the range of up to one minimum wage, women outnumber men, corresponding to 35.4%, and men to 34.3% (IBGE, 2019a). The opposite situation was found in the range of more than one to two minimum wages, where men accounted for 17.1% and women for 10.5% (IBGE, 2019a). The data showed that, nationally, when the income raises a little, women start to earn less than men. The unemployment rate among women was also higher, standing at 13.9% and men at 10.0% (IBGE, 2019a).

When asked about the age at which they started working, 38.9% said they had never worked while studying, 18.5% said they had started before they were 14, and 16.7% started after they were 18. The data showed that the insertion into the world of work represents a difficulty for these subjects. Although some of them had started working before the age of 14, which may fatally have kept them away from formal education, it can be seen that most of them have never worked while studying. Considering that all of them are adults over 18 years old, this fact represents a lack of opportunity, probably due to their low schooling level.

Another aspect studied showed that 82.1% of the interviewees were not qualified for their profession. This fact may have contributed to the low time of service presented, which results in the next numbers: 51.7% answered that they had less than a year of service time; 27.6% with more than four years; and 13.8% between one and two years.

The majority of young people and adults return to the classrooms aiming for schooling that will allow them to have a more qualified position, in terms of employability and salary. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the search for preparation for the world of work is imperative. Throughout life, we are awakened to become interested in a profession and, consequently, in work. Professional success includes individual merit (effort, investment in training) and knowing how to take advantage of opportunities, in other words, each individual can and should build their own story, but it is certain that success or failure in the world of work does not depend only on individual choices.

Each person's story is written within a wider social framework, in which social, cultural, political, and economic relations interfere all the time in the choices of the subjects. The paths taken to reach the world of work are traced within a field of possibilities, specific to the context in which one lives (MÉNDEZ, 2013) and reconstructs the life narratives of each one.

## **Educational dimension**

In this dimension, the students were asked about the age at which they stopped attending school, within the proper age scope, the age group with the highest concentration was between 15 and 18 years old (41.5%), followed by children between 10 and 14 years old (22.6%), and only one student revealed that he had never attended a *proper* school. 27.1% of these students spent more than 11 years to finish elementary school (corresponding to the time from first to eighth grade), and 16.9% needed 10 years, and the same percentage (16.9%) spent the regular time of eight years.

The interviewees, when asked why they stopped attending school *at the proper age*, 15.2% reported work as the reason, another 36.4% cited marriage and to give birth to children. Other less frequent reasons were 7.85% of those who said they did not like to study or had no interest; 3.04% reported that the school they attended was *bad*; 1.45% respectively referred that there was not family support and that they suffered discrimination at school or that there was not school close to home, and finally 33.20% did not answer.

The comeback to school was related to the *desire to “be someone” and have more opportunities* (25.6%); 23.2% cited they returned to get the first job, and 23.2% would like to get a better job. To acquire more knowledge and stay updated was the option chosen by 11.11%. Only 8.14% had as an objective the *Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio* [National High School Exam] (ENEM), to attend college; 3.38% correspond to those who said they wanted to improve their job position, take a professional course, or did not answer.

We inferred that certain particular situations in the daily life of the subjects direct them to interrupt their studies, and that in this specific case, where the majority of those surveyed were female, two factors were determinant: *marriage and giving birth*.

It is also something that Silveira (2014) states when he presents that a significant part of this population experiences an “anticipation of the transition to adulthood, beginning their working life and responsibilities with children and family, and, in addition, they have their schooling path interrupted without completing elementary school” (SILVEIRA, 2014, p. 20-21, our translation). According to Klinski (2009, p. 132, our translation) this path interconnects very early the school lives of these subjects in “[...] the same profile as the YAE student”.

The diversity of the answers makes it explicit that the interruption of studies is not determined by an isolated factor, but by a set of articulated factors, which culminate in an expulsion, much more than in a dropout from school contexts. The students were also asked about what changed in their lives after entering IFAL/Proeja. In this aspect, 58.3% recognized that they increased their understanding, acquired more information and considered themselves better prepared to face the labor market, while 25% improved their self-esteem and personal satisfaction.

It is clear from this data that the professional courses are offering opportunities for personal development to young people and adults, as they begin to see in themselves other possibilities, other perspectives in life, both professional and personal. This fact is essential for these subjects who, according to Silveira (2014), come from economically disadvantaged classes and congregate in their lives school paths of continued failure, reinforcing feelings of incapacity, devaluation, naturalized guilt for their failure and lack of interest in school.

The data show that the students of the Technical Course in Kitchen and Hospitality begin to outline and resignify other possible narratives of life, through the “feeling of value that accompanies this perception that we have of ourselves [...] the [self-esteem] that is the response on the affective plane of a process originated on the cognitive plane” (MOYSES, 2001, p. 18, our translation). It is the evaluation of what we know about ourselves: *Do I like to be this way or not?* In other words, young people and adults who had their lives marked by the denial of the learning, of the access to school, start to build more positive and valued concepts of themselves at IFAL/Proeja. According to Klinski (2009, p. 135), the subjects start by having the “right to dream”, in these specific cases, to dream at Proeja is to dream about other possibilities, perspectives and logics of life.

Thus, it is considered that the educational processes and, in this specific case, through Proeja, have assumed a relevant role in the reconstruction of the identity processes of young people and adults. It is in this sense that Cavalcante and Marinho (2019) maintain that the contexts of education and training can constitute a power in the reconstruction and valorization of personal and cultural identities of children, youth, and adults who have historically been wronged, weakened, and inferiorized.

Still referring to the educational dimension and according to the data surveyed, most fathers and mothers (55.9% and 48.33%) of the students, respectively, never studied; around 23% completed only the initial years of elementary school and the rest, approximately 25%, reported other conditions.

From the interviewee’s point of view, the conditions that the school should offer to the student who works would be, in first place: (33.3%) a flexible timetable and in second place (20.4%) a grade recovery program. Other alternatives were mentioned by 46.3%, such as more dynamic classes with differentiated didactics and a smaller extra-class workload. In our understanding, the flexible timetable would allow the possible conciliation of study and work, and would be the possibility to fit time to go to school in the rhythm of life.

From the data, we deduce that the school organization is still far from the lives of the YAE students, not only in terms of flexible schedules, but also in terms of evaluation processes. We are talking about evaluation processes that exclude students. Evaluation, at the service of selection, contributes little or nothing to effective learning processes. In addition, there is the difficulty of developing a timetable that fits with the time of the subjects’ lives. In other words, we search for a curriculum that can enhance learning in which young people and adults identify with, within a dialogue of knowledge exchange,

as Silva and Vasconcelos (2017, p. 110, our translation) present us in their study: “[...] the majority of students want a school where reciprocal growth is possible, respect for the student and his/her knowledge”.

In this way it is clear that, in the midst of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the school organization has not yet managed to welcome each subject. We want to state that we are still far from guaranteeing the rights of these subjects of differentiated support that can contribute significantly to new perspectives and actions in the life of each one (MARINHO, 2012). Many school contexts are still a corollary of social and personal inequalities that persist over time and send children, youth and adults to constant daily exclusion.

However, even with all the gaps that may exist in the education provided by the Marechal Deodoro Campus, it seems to be able to awaken a new expectation of life in the subjects of YAE. This situation is in accordance with what Klinski (2009) stressed in her study, and that in a certain way Proeja is serving the people it is intended for. In this sense, together with Tavares Jr., Chein and Freguglia (2014, p. 71, our translation), we believe that the “inequalities inherited from social origin have full conditions to be mitigated, annulled or even reversed, once that the institutions (schools) are organized” with these goals and obligations, in this specific case, with the subjects that arrive and get involved in the Proeja pathway.

In general, we considered positive the school results of the interviewed students. From the 63 participants, 42 (60%) stayed until the end of the course, having also been approved in all semesters. The remaining students either dropped out or locked the semester for future return. This study pointed out the need for another investigation about the insertion of graduated students in the labor market, which is still in progress.

## **Final considerations**

The study that this article refers to is intended to know and understand the profiles of the Proeja students at the Marechal Deodoro/AL campus in the demographic, socioeconomic and educational dimensions.

Among other dimensions, the study revealed that Proeja in IFAL has been constituting a power to overcome the daily lives of young people and adults marked by exclusion. In Proeja, students have had the opportunity to redefine their perspectives and logics of personal and professional life, nourished by a feeling of self-worth.

In this sense, knowing and understanding the profiles of Proeja students through this study, specifically from the Technical courses in Kitchen and Hospitality, was of great relevance, to the extent that the data analyzed brought together practical and essential applications for purposes of diagnosis, planning and evaluation of educational projects of training, valuing the characteristics of the group in focus. It is also worth mentioning the importance of this study, since it provides more knowledge about this public, specifically, to rethink the construction of spaces and training projects that can give more qualified answers to the students since Proeja is becoming a challenging proposal for the institutions and for the trainees and trainers.

This study also opened space for a reflection on the training of teachers who work in Youth and Adult Education (YAE), which is still centered in the “instrumentalization of teaching” (CARVALHO, 2018), and constitutes a systemic process of exclusion in the learning of the subjects who try daily to achieve success in their life projects.

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