

**DOSSIER**

*Childhood(s), social movements and the city: curriculum(s) and teacher training*

**Education in territories and policies for childhoods:  
The case of the educating neighborhood (Heliópolis - SP)****Educação em territórios e políticas para as infâncias:  
O caso do bairro Educador (Heliópolis - SP)**

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**ABSTRACT**

The article presents the result of a qualitative research with the objective of understanding and giving visibility to the experience of the Educating Neighborhood and the influence of the União de Moradores de Heliópolis and Adjacências/SP (Union of Residents' Associations of Heliópolis and Adjacencies/SP - UNAS) in Public Policies for childhoods in that territory. Through participant research, with observations and records, in addition to conducting focus groups with educators and community leaders in the region, we sought to conduct a survey *with* "unevenly done" (Arroyo, 2010) subjects of that territory. The findings of focus groups with community leaders involved in childhood-oriented actions in the region indicate that the Educating Neighborhood is the result of a collective construction of integral and intersectoral education, forged in curriculum transformations and in the relationships articulated in the territory of a local municipal public school, combined with resistance and struggles for housing and for basic decent life conditions, with joint and coordinated actions conceived in the territory to be part of the Public Policies, from the local to the global, shedding light on the right to education (and to the city) as inseparable perspectives.

**Keywords:** Public Policies for Childhoods. Right to Education. Educating Neighborhood. Education in Territories. Heliópolis-SP.

**RESUMO**

O artigo apresenta resultado de pesquisa qualitativa com o objetivo de compreender e dar visibilidade à experiência do Bairro Educador e a incidência da União de Núcleos de Associações de Moradores de Heliópolis e Adjacências/SP (UNAS) nas Políticas Públicas para as infâncias naquele território. Por meio de pesquisa participante, com observações e registros, além de realização de grupos focais com educadores e lideranças comunitárias da região, buscou-se realizar uma pesquisa com os sujeitos "feito desiguais" (Arroyo, 2010) daquele território. Os achados dos grupos focais com lideranças comunitárias da região envolvidas com ações voltadas às infâncias indicam que o Bairro Educador é fruto de construção coletiva de educação integral e intersectorial, forjado nas transformações curriculares e nas relações articuladas no território de uma escola pública municipal local, aliado às resistências e lutas por moradia e por condições básicas e dignas de vida, com ações conjuntas e coordenadas gestadas do território para as Políticas Públicas, do local para o global, jogando luzes sobre o direito à educação (e à cidade) como perspectivas indissociáveis.

**Palavras-chave:** Políticas Públicas para as Infâncias. Direito à Educação. Bairro Educador. Educação em Territórios. Heliópolis-SP.

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## Introduction

The article aims to discuss the Educating Neighborhood in Heliópolis/SP through the eyes of community leaders, as individuals organized around improving the living conditions of children and adolescents in that location, bringing the result of a research that aimed to understand the role and the influences of the Union of Residents' Associations of Heliópolis and Adjacencies/SP (UNAS) and the local collective strategy of the Educating Neighborhood as a collaborative network in Heliópolis territory, contributing to the incidence of Public Policies for childhoods in the region, from the second half of the 1990s, highlighting the relationships of political subjects and institutions related to childcare in Heliópolis. By childhoods, in the plural form, we mean the age period from zero to twelve years old and the different ways of living the times of being a child (Gomes, 2021; 2018).

Brazil presents a paradox. On the one hand, economic inequalities that persist over time, as is the Brazilian case, generally translate into social inequalities with a direct attack against justice and equality revealing gaps in institutions responsible for regulating social life (Piketty, 2014). Characterized as a place of inequitable distribution of wealth, in which a large part of the population has little, and a large part remains with much, the country was woven in this historical condition, which carries deep structural traces from its colonial and enslaved origin, with the preservation of prejudices, racisms, social class, gender, sex differences, etc.

On the other hand, the country is considered the eighth economy in the world and, at the same time, one of the most significant cases of unequal wealth distribution. Inequality, as well as poverty and wealth, are characteristics of ways of thinking and planning society, which forms of organization of the State, and governmental actions materialize and are implemented through Public Policies.

Heliópolis, a neighborhood with a large population density, with more than 200,000 inhabitants, with an area of approximately one million square meters, is located in the southwestern area of the municipality of São Paulo, eight kilometers away from the central region. The neighborhood lives the historical determinations of the context of inequalities that rule in the country, in a diverse and multifaceted reality mediated by everyday contradictions.

Since the 1960s/70s, Heliópolis has suffered the effects of unplanned urbanization and the exodus of people from different regions of the country, seeking better living conditions in large cities. Alongside inequality and poverty, reflections of the consumerist and competitive way of life of the capitalist system of neoliberal rationality in which the logic of the market, for a few, obscures and hinders the logic of law (for all) revealed by the form of the corporate state (Dardot; Laval, 2016).

Notwithstanding this condition, the emerging of possibilities for a collective and solidary life in that territory can be noticed. They are built by different political actors and local institutions, which show the importance of such organizations for overcoming the undignified and brutalized conditions of life. Thus, greater intervention of the State is sought in the protection and feasibility of rights, especially childhood rights, as humanizing processes.

Emancipatory urban social movements located in regions with high rates of violence – considered, within the scope of this research, as organized subjects and not as an object or a problem

of Policies – start to demand new functions in and relations with the State, governments, and Public Policies. Strategies such as the Educating Neighborhood or Educational Territories, operating through collaboration networks in territories, which have Education, especially educational units, such as community leadership centers, are presented as innovative alternatives in the democratic process of differentiated production of Public Policies, in general, and Public Policies for children, in particular.

By innovation in Education, we mean the breaking of theoretical and practical paradigms. Differentiating from ‘new’ – which is one-off and surface changes that can be easily replaced –, the sense of innovation is a broad concept that breaks dichotomies, reinvent realities, for the sake of an unwavering commitment to emancipatory and transformative processes, in a coordinated and collaborative manner, education-oriented (systemic and holistic) and intended to integrate the experiences lived at a given location or institution, with the social problems that affect everyone (Carbonell, 2002; Leite, 2012).

It is in this context that the role of UNAS is made clear as a social movement and that, through the Educating Neighborhood, has a strong incidence in Policies for childhoods. For the purpose of this article, we will discuss the interviews organized in the form of focus groups with community leaders involved with the Educating Neighborhood, and with local childhood projects and actions.

The twelve subjects interviewed were indicated by UNAS and the coordinators of the Centro Educacional Unificado Arlete Persolli (Arlete Persolli Unified Educational Center - CEU - a local educational complex that aggregates daycare centers, schools and provides different cultural and leisure activities), as they are representatives of the history and dynamics experienced by childhoods in that reality and who, as community leaders, could indicate important elements of how UNAS and the Educating Neighborhood affected/affect and influenced/influence Public Policies for childhoods, at the local level (Heliópolis), with the majority of the group consisting of women over thirty years old, with a balanced group in terms of race (white, black and brown-skinned people).

The Educating Neighborhood in Heliópolis is a collective strategy of social, educational, and cultural actions that begins with the opening of the Municipal Elementary School (EMEF) Presidente Campos Salles to the participation of the local territory. The initiative becomes stronger by demanding and influencing Public Policies for childhoods, establishing a strategy that contributes to reverse the predominant logic in Public Policies and definitions that come from decision-makers, offices (government), to the population.

Heliópolis, with the Educating Neighborhood, strengthened the perspective that the organized population would assume the responsibilities of proposing and monitoring Public Policies for the childhoods of that territory. Childhoods that do not fit into a single project or institution, but require an organization articulated with families, local population, and institutions responsible for protecting, promoting, and securing rights.

The Heliópolis favela, as residents prefer to call it, was created in that place in the early 1970s after the transfer of 80 families in a process of scattering the population of favelas in São Paulo led by the Municipal Department of Social Assistance (at the time). Nowadays Heliópolis is considered the second largest favela in the country - the first being the Rocinha favela, in Rio de Janeiro - without having yet solved, legally and definitively, the housing land tenure situation; most of these houses were built in the form of self-constructions and joint efforts.

The sense of territory, as Santos (2000) conceives, outweighs the idea of geographic location, and considers the power relations concentrated therein and the acknowledgement of the subjects in the geographic space. In the case of this investigation, it is important to highlight the relations of the “unevenly done” subjects (Arroyo, 2010) with the public powers and institutions of that location, resulting, among other aspects, from the appropriation of the political space by these subjects.

In the case of educational territory, Singer (2018) highlights four interconnected characteristics so that a territory is understood as educational territory: i) must be the result of participation by all agents in the territory; ii) the territory is part of the school curriculum; iii) educational opportunities are multiplied from the educational territory; iv) being an articulating environment of various social sectors (education, health, culture, social assistance, etc.).

With the purpose of understanding the genesis, limits and possibilities of the Educating Neighborhood in Heliópolis from the perspective of the right to education and to the city, we got in the field, submerged in the idiosyncrasies of the reality of Heliópolis and the subjects who built and build the Educating Neighborhood on a daily basis, seeking, in the contradictions and complexity present there, elements for reflection on the influence of UNAS and the Educating Neighborhood in the incidence for the production of Public Policies for childhoods.

## The methodological options of the study

The survey is defined as a participant research (Brandão, 2006) because the researcher has active participation in the research process and, above all, the interaction of the participants, throughout the investigation process, contact with reality and the need to know it better collectively, considering reality as an educational and formative process for all subjects who take part in it, since the research process decisions were made *with* and not *about* the subjects.

The achievements of Heliópolis territory in relation to rights, especially the children and adolescent rights, boosted the creation of the Centro Educacional Unificado Arlete Persolli (Arlete Persolli Unified Educational Center - CEU - formerly, Centro de Convivência – Community Center) in 2015, as an affirmation of a local Public Policy that had different partners, internal and external to the territory, having been designed by/ and organized with the participation of the local population. Naming CEU Heliópolis after Arlete Persoli results from honoring the late former manager of the Community Center, as recognition for her commitment and dedication to the achievement of the right to Education, throughout her career path.

The technique used in the research was participant observation in meetings and training actions, in general, of UNAS and Educating Neighborhood during 18 months (2018 to 2019). For the purpose of this article, we present and problematize only the data from the focus groups.

Twelve Community leaders took part in the focus groups. These leaders were linked to actions and projects in the child/adolescent care field in Heliópolis, eight women and four men, from 25 to 67 years old, organized into four groups in an intergenerational way. The script of the focus groups was anchored in the purposes and objectives of the research and in the contexts that were read and problematized throughout the investigation, together with the theoretical references

chosen to support the analysis. Before the focus groups were held, there were meetings with the potential subjects participating in the groups to evaluate the topics of interest, the subjects able to talk about the history of UNAS, the Educating Neighborhood, and the role of these political actors in the incidence for the production of Public Policies for childhoods in the region.

In this first conversation, we identified 18 subjects who had taken part in and still were part of the history of Heliópolis and the Educational actions that led to the creation and development of UNAS as a solid and critical social organization that, above all, acts in defense of the strategy of the Educating Neighborhood. Following the meeting, we committed ourselves to making contacts with such subjects, intermediated by the management team of CEU Heliópolis (Gomes, 2021), which led to the presence of 12 participants.

The processing of the data resulted in three major key themes, which were analyzed, based on the reading and re-reading of the transcription of the records of the focus groups, namely: i) UNAS: establishment and articulations; ii) the influences/incidences of UNAS in the production of Public Policies for childhoods; iii) The Educating Neighborhood: origin and context.

Data analysis relied on content analysis (Bardin, 1979; Franco, 2007) of written records that, as Bardin (1979, p. 105), conceptualizes: “the theme is the unit of meaning that is naturally freed from a text analyzed according to criteria related to the theory that guides reading”.

## **The public school and its real contexts: basis for the shares of the Educating Neighborhood**

Heliópolis progressively emerged from a condition of subalternity to a condition of a population that claims and conquers rights, gaining strong social leadership, from the appropriation of the physical space by residents, by the community organization, especially when it comes to UNAS.

The decisive factor of the local context for the emergence of the Educating Neighborhood refers to the changes in the pedagogical-curricular reorganization of EMEF Presidente Campos Salles - one of the main public schools in the region and recognized by the Ministry of Education as one of the 177 innovative institutions in basic education - in the mid-1990s, which modified the school structure and culture, with the belief that students (children, adolescents, young people and adults) are not lesser beings, that they must be respected and that another Education would be possible in that locality. Inspired by Escola da Ponte, located in Portugal, and by the internal and external transformations of that school which inspired educational innovations in the world, the team at that school chose to demolish the external walls and internal walls that separated the classes into year groups, having as curriculum matrix the student protagonism and autonomy, the collective work of students and teachers, combined with the local needs.

From the reorganization of the school's infrastructure, the curriculum, the increasing participation of students, families, and the local environment in defining and monitoring the school's Pedagogical Political Project (PPP), through Commissions formed by students, parents, and local population, EMEF Presidente Campos Salles opened up to the territory, with a real connection with the neighborhood and the region.

Thus, the school created favorable conditions for changes with a curriculum aimed at respecting and reorganizing time, space, and the characteristics of being a child, privileging ludic and expressive languages, which translated into rights and propositional actions to live in society and the understanding of democracy (Mesquita, 2018).

At the center of this transformation was the bold and courageous action of the school principal at the time, Braz Nogueira. He started, with the school team, a set of reflections on the role of public school in that real-world context, stimulating teachers and community leaders to take on the task of breaking through the processes of teaching-learning in the traditional and crystallized school way in teachers' minds and hearts, students, and family members, for the sake of the perspective of an integral and humanizing education.

Integral education presupposes interfaces built, in an organic way, between schools and the territories they belong to, with the reinvention of ways of teaching-learning that privilege the wholeness of human formation and potentiality, as local, social, philosophical, and political action (Moll, 2012).

The result of this experience in formation and participation was a debate, at municipal level, in the early 1990s about the Educating Cities, along with a local popular movement in Heliópolis that charted ways to improve the quality of life of the population, with the participation of UNAS. These two movements: from the city to the territories and from the territories to the city are at the origin of the Educating Neighborhood in Heliópolis.

The Movement of Educating Cities, started in Barcelona, Spain, and which afterwards expanded around the world, and counted on the adhesion of municipalities that committed to the principle that Education, is a strategic element that unites the different sectors in Public Policies in one location. In this context, the municipality of São Paulo defined itself, at the time, as an Educating City.

Thus, the Educating Neighborhood, as a local political strategy for networking, with horizontal and vertical links, is taking shape as an educational action for the involvement, engagement and sense of belonging, at the local level, generated by the subjects involved (internal and external to EMEF Presidente Campos Salles), anchored in the principles inspired by Escola da Ponte and the Movement of Educating Cities that conceive education as a priority in the educational process in that territory; the school as a center of community leadership and that autonomy, responsibility and solidarity should be part of the human relations that involve local educational actions (Fundação Padre Anchieta; Prefeitura do Município de São Paulo, 2010).

The protection of children and the guarantee of the condition of the right to childhoods represent a milestone in Western societies. Based on the understanding of children through the way they live their childhoods as a social construction, Education is linked to historical, social, territorial and social contexts, with possibilities of cultural, gender, race and socioeconomic variations (Sarmiento, 2005; Botto; Aquino, 2019) and, for this reason, the term "childhoods" indicates that depending on the place and social position they occupy in society, children can live, or not, childhoods, as a time to be a child.

The PPP of EMEF Presidente Campos Salles is the result of a collective action of the school and the opening up to the territory of Heliópolis, with a new pedagogical organization that transformed the old classrooms into study halls, composed of different year groups, with study scripts prepared by teachers, involving the integration of areas of knowledge and collective planning, in which at least three teachers share the management of the same year group.

The protagonism of the students is observed, in the school's daily life, which comprises listening channels and taking part in: assemblies, students' committees, conversation groups, mediating committees, school boards, and student self-governing boards. All these aim at fostering a collaborative culture and democratic practices that can be seen in a simple visit to the school, revealing schedules and rituals that are different from educational organizations that are hardened and crystallized in most schools, according to the ethical principle of life in society (Mesquita, 2018).

This pedagogical differentiation caused the school to receive outstanding educational awards and the São Paulo Municipal Board of Education (Conselho Municipal de Educação - CME) to recognize EMEF Presidente Campos Salles as a school that has a Special Education Project, based on partnerships with its own school team, parents, UNAS and institutions for preparing educators who are focused on the values defined collectively. According to the Report CME n. 433/15: "What draws attention to the present project is the fact that management is shared with the community, and this is one of the reasons that makes the project special" (CME/SP, 2015, p.2).

### **Heliópolis and UNAS Educating Neighborhood: partnerships and paths to incidence on Public Policies for Childhoods in the region**

Santos (1998) considers that one possible way out for the fragile Brazilian democracy is the social movement globalization as a form of resistance to the global neoliberal corporate globalization process – which favors external markets and makes use of the territory as a speculative source of information, deepening regional differences, with disorderly and non-sustainable growths as models that resulted in economic and social inequalities, environmental degradation and lack of attention to basic living conditions of a large population contingent.

It is in this social-political entanglement that the actions to defend rights undertaken by the organized civil society positively influence the disputes for Public Policies, giving form and social perception to a public problem, and strengthening operations in institutional participation contexts, next to those who make decisions (such as Council representatives, Commissions, etc.), through diverse forms of activism and social pressure, of organizing interest groups and by modifying structural forms of norms and rights such as changing legislation, regulatory forms, etc. (Brelàz; Alves, 2011).

The path and constitution of UNAS and Educating Neighborhood are justified by the necessary struggle for local infrastructure, housing and, above all, for UNAS to constitute itself as an NGO, in 1990, as a condition for participating in agreements and partnerships with the public authorities, as in the words of Mércia (manager of a affiliate's equipment under the responsibility of UNAS): "we already had this understanding that people would be the ones to guarantee public policies, we could not wait only for the government".

UNAS currently maintains more than fifty social projects which support educational, cultural, and social programs, the majority of which are offered as extra curriculum activities for the regular school children and adolescents in the region, as of partnerships established with governmental agencies and also with companies. It is worth mentioning that such projects were demands made before the public authorities, based on the needs felt by the population, in an organized way and through the participation of community leaders in institutional channels such as the Sectoral Councils (Health, Housing, Education, etc.), Child Protective Services and Municipal Councils of Rights, in general.

It is worth recording how the actions of the Educating Neighborhood in Heliópolis were defined, with the leadership of UNAS, in an articulated way with the public power. For example, UNAS has projects aimed at fighting violence, in partnership with the Municipal Department of Development and Social Assistance, and with the Social Protective Services to Children and Youth who are Victims of Violent acts (SPSCVV) “Curumins do Brasil”, which offers specialized care, with networking and aims at strengthening self-esteem, overcoming the situation of violation of rights and reparation of human dignity.

Mariana, an UNAS social equipment educator serving children and adolescents, who, as a child, was a student at EMEF Presidente Campos Salles, tell us about the neighborhood relationships that have become stronger and have, for its part, strengthened their sense of belonging

When we talk about childhood, we have to add other things as well. I went to school, I studied here at Campos Salles and it was very crazy, we lived here in the community and there were some people who lived in Patente, but who studied here and we put plastic bags on our feet to come to study, so people would immediately say: “here come the clay feet; here come the ‘faveladinhos’” (young favela residents) – and even to go to work too, to catch a bus, it was such a sacrifice and we were always labeled as “favelados” (favela residents), but we are proud to be “favelados” because the “favelados” learned to articulate, learned to work together and organize the community. The community is organized, not by organized crime, but organized by an institution, actually organized by the people (Gomes, 2020, p. 116).

The predominance of women’s participation in the UNAS fights stands out in a historical period in the country, especially from the 1970s onwards, in which awareness of women’s discrimination, patriarchalism and domination grew, in which they took to the streets to fight for equal rights, in Brazil and around the world, putting themselves on the public agenda, through activism and vindicating movements, in the fight for social and cultural changes, in social movements and, especially, in underprivileged neighborhoods. In this fight carried out by women, individual and collective identities were affirmed, which contributed to the promotion of new local meanings.

The premise of the right to the city, advocated in the Statute of Cities - Federal Law number 10.527/01 (Brasil, 2001) - is another factor that signals a path to the establishment of a landownership policy and a well-being policy of populations in large cities, considering the growing processes of unbridled urbanization and gentrification. However, the implementation of this public policy is yet to happen.

Complementary actions to the school, such as socio-educational actions performed by UNAS, which are elective, fulfilled and fulfill in Heliópolis, in social projects, the role of offering integral



education, as an additional tutoring, which brings a dimension of the reconfiguration of schedules and formal and non-formal educational environments and which depends, to a large extent, to become viable, on the organization in territory and on intersectoral actions.

The territory, understood in a sense that expands to human relations, unites the local and the global, as an environment of resistances and territorialities and also as a demarcated space of power, which assumes, for Santos (2000), the idea of used territory or living territory, transnationalized (globalized) and a landscape. It is necessary to return to it to understand its dimensions and potentialities, with a structure endowed with its own movement.

The defense of human rights stands out in UNAS' actions, since the fight against the exploitation of the population by land-grabbers. The understanding that one of the characteristics of human rights is the fundamental rights of the human beings and the interdependence between rights, because if there is no decent housing, full employment, integral education, for example, access to other rights is also weakened.

Intersectorality is a form used by UNAS and Educating Neighborhood agents to integrate and dialogue with different sectors that operate in the same territory (Junqueira, 2000). In the case of Childhoods' Policies in Heliópolis, the sectors that most dialogue with each other are Education, Health, Culture and Social Assistance.

Driven by the actions of UNAS and, intentionally, by collective actions involving different local institutions around the Educating Neighborhood, it is possible to verify, in the view of the community leaders interviewed, that a panorama of intersectoral actions was outlined along the way in order to overcome episodic and urgent actions, which involve risks to human life, such as cases of extreme violence, abuse, mistreatment against children and adolescents.

Territorializing actions as a principle and strategy of human development depends, in turn, on the local intersectoral articulation and the elaboration of jointly constructed action plans, horizontally, representing challenges for local policies. These actions favor the recognition and management of active potentials in social relations and power processes from the perspective of the territory, adding several perspectives, in order to recognize the socio-territorial dynamics and their complexity (Andrade, 2009).

We know that the exercise of the intersectorality that is revealed on the front lines of local care is not an easy task, as when training experts in the social field, for example, the integration of knowledge does not occur intentionally. More than political decisions, they are practices, which result from collective reflections and the public commitment of professionals to effective teamwork, through propositional attitudes that are articulated around common causes and objectives, which can generate potential interventions, with dialogues and sharing of knowledge, in order to horizontalize knowledge and power relations (Sposati, 2006).

From an intersectional point of view, UNAS operates and is a protagonist in dealing with different Municipal Secretariats, in particular, with the Municipal Secretariats of Education, Health, Social Welfare, Culture and Public Policies (sectors of origin of the agreements established by the institution). However, we reaffirm that the dimension of intersectorality is mainly based on the commitment of professionals who operate in the territories, with collective actions that can

become, sometimes, discontinuous, with the parting/withdrawal of certain professionals (as occurs, in general, in the public service).

Thus, the Educating Neighborhood in Heliópolis is the result of a historical process engendered by several local actors/actresses, highlighting the commitment of institutions such as UNAS and the leaders of the initial housing movement that, since the first socio-educational actions in Heliópolis, saw in Education the central point for the success of the actions in the territory and sought to strengthen socio-educational services, which were visualized in relations with public powers and therefore, in the initial planning of the housing sites, already anticipated the preservation of areas for the construction of schools and healthcare facilities.

Alongside the internal and external changes at EMEF Presidente Campos Salles, we must highlight the achievement of educational and pedagogical perspectives through the engagement of education professionals in changing and preserving a differentiated pedagogical project, overcoming the year group separation established by the curriculum, through democratic participation, through the protagonism of students and families and through the advances made there concerning the broad understanding of education, citizenship and childhood. Such bold changes and actions by local leaders and educators created the conditions for the school's internal changes to reverberate in the territory of Heliópolis.

Acting in territory and in an interconnected network indicates forms of resistance, of production of identities, that are both individual and collective and of the 'common' (as another possible rationality), as real achievements of a social movement that continuously rediscovers values and transgresses official ways of doing politics (Dardot; Laval, 2017). Consequently, discovering 'the common' can mean acting in the public sphere and exercising the right to the city. The aspect of joint, collective construction and Freirian education for each and all, as a reference for socio-educational actions in Heliópolis from the perspective of the Educating Neighborhood.

This discovery of "the common" impacts the rights of childhoods and places growing demands on Public Policies, valuing the humanization through communication, the trust in the human being's potential to make and remake history against the different forms of oppression and authoritarianism experienced on daily basis. As for the Freirian concepts, such as dialogicity, awareness, lovingness, and criticality, we can add "unfinishedness" as a human condition of "being more" and, consequently, the dialectical processes of being and turning into a being, in the world and with others, on a path that is never ready (Freire, 1996).

The Educating Neighborhood involves different actors and institutions that help produce this path. In general, the support of collective practices occurs in local institutions that start to demand partnerships with other institutions, public or not, with emphasis on the aspect of the continuous training of the leaders involved, being common the studies and reflections of educators on their practices, as well as the integration of knowledge present in the daily lives of the institutions that participate in the Educating Neighborhood and that are visible in the Annual Seminar of the Educating Neighborhood and in the daily actions, organized around the definition of the Unified Calendar of the Educating Neighborhood, for example.

The bet on human potentiality is present in the daily lives of the socio-educational units under the responsibility of UNAS and the Educating Neighborhood, with situations that challenge educators and community leaders and that portray social inequalities and the fragility of families, given the limits imposed by survival, questioning the ways of being individualized. Such care is linked to the care of each and all with their own territory of belonging, by the understanding that individual actions impact the collective, according to Solanje's statement

For me, Educating Neighborhood, you have to feel it. I'll give you an example here ... I'm there cleaning the street, I sweep it every day and there was a neighbor who came and threw something on the ground, I had just swept, and he threw something, so I told him: "You're going to leave this here? I have just swept the street." And he replied: "No, but in a moment the garbage man will pass by" – and I told him: "No, this is the Educating Neighborhood and I'll explain it to you, the Educating Neighborhood is one passing on the teaching to the other, so I'll pass on a teaching that I also learned that the days that the garbage collector spends here are Monday, Wednesday and Friday, so you have to take the garbage here and take it out on that day, because it will bring rats, it will bring dirt here and our street, which is beautiful, it will get ugly and I know you don't want that, because you live here, right?" And the guy was speechless, frozen – after he finished talking – everyone clapped. For me this is the Educating Neighborhood (Gomes, 2020, p. 130).

Solanje's narrative helps us elucidate the importance of building perceptions of equality and recognition in socially unequal environments, challenged by the dimension of education, with the capacity to contribute to the engendering of cultural and symbolic changes that come together and can serve to change modes of social representation, based on the perception of subjects and their territories of belonging. Regarding the bet on human potentiality, Freire (1996) warns us that this is an ontological vocation of the human being, as consciousness of its unfinishedness and that it translates into the forms of care for being, doing and being more and it is in the process of humanization that subjects recognize themselves as human and can decondition themselves from the inhuman relations that oppress them.

The care and well-being of children and adolescents built through the affective links between children' and adolescents' educators, the respect for developmental processes and their own learnings, are ways to deal with external, social limits (as reported by Nicolaus): "I can see so many, so many self-injured children and teenagers, children being beaten by drug dealers because they (children) stole something in the neighborhood, children being sexually abused. And we have something very strong that is the collective, the referrals - whether it goes to Curumins, or to another project of ours."

The strategy of the Educating Neighborhood as a collaborative network operation expanded the actions in the territory of Heliópolis, especially when UNAS was defined in 2008 by undertaking the principles of EMEF Presidente Campos Salles (autonomy, responsibility, and solidarity), with the addition of the central role of Education, in a broad sense, and of the school as a community leadership center.

Thus, in the territory of Heliópolis, the brands of humanizing processes are established, with subjects recognized in their political role, as subjects of relationships who desire, project, interfere

and interact with and challenge each other's History in the construction of a more humane and just society. The involvement of the Heliópolis population in the actions of UNAS constitutes a learning environment for all, in local daily life, by recognizing the different demands, the experience of active citizenship, the joint construction of other ways of learning and the uncompromising fight for rights and identities in times and spaces that are produced in the exercise of fight and militancy, in the form of children's, adolescents' and young people's identities who learn early in life to survive and resist violence (structural, symbolic and physical).

Women and men strengthen themselves in the fight and, in some cases, in an intergenerational legacy when seeking new directions. In Kátia's words, whose late mother was one of the pioneers in the fight for having UNAS' daycare centers for children and who has one of the childcare centers of the CEU Heliópolis Complex named after her

I am an example, right, I was a child and adolescent of the UNAS Project, so since I was a little girl I participate in the actions here in Heliópolis, even as a child when my mother went to some manifestation I was with her and I can say that for me it contributed a lot, especially in believing in myself, "I can", "I am capable" and that is why I decided to go back to study, to be a teacher, to study Pedagogy (Gomes, 2020, p. 132).

Among other actions, in particular, the option to build a culture of peace, against violence – with the preparatory actions for the Peace Walk and the Walk itself, held annually in the first week of June (to remind of the murder of young Leonarda, at that time, a student at EMEF Presidente Campos Salles), through collective organization, led by the 'Movimento Sou da Paz' – bring to light the topic of violence and the response of peace, such as community building, addressing the different kinds of violence (physical, institutional and symbolic) to which the Heliópolis population is subjected, which results in decreased rates of violence in the region and more human forms of relationships, seeking the co-accountability of the population in the fight for safety and other rights.

Respect for human values in different forms of social coexistence is presented as a support for a culture of peace and needs daily translation into acts, in addition to verbal defense (Jares, 2007). Children in large cities are, especially for safety reasons, increasingly confined to institutions that are far from complying with the doctrine of full protection recommended in the Statute of Child and Adolescent (Federal Law number 8.069/1990) (Brasil, 1990) in which the discovery processes of themselves and the world, the movement, and the socialization occur, to a great extent, among peers.

For UNAS and the Educating Neighborhood, the children and adolescents of Heliópolis are the responsibility of the community, integrating different subjects, in dialogue with the city, mapping out training paths, through which learning circulates as a territory that educates, that seeks interlocutions, being the local territory or the city, understood as non-formal spaces, which communicate and integrate the subjects who live there.

It is important to emphasize that children and adolescents, in general, stimulate us to alterity, suspend our certainties, due to the dimension of the new they represent, while requiring the availability of adults before their existence. The dimension of authority is evident in socio-educational environments, in the face of today's challenges, resizing the place of the authorial

subject, the conservation of habits and traditions and accountability for the world, as postulated by Arendt (2001).

To answer Arroyo (2010): what new quality and subject of Public Policies is being engendered in these experiences? What new role will the State need to assume in these relations? Quality is in the daily life of the relationships woven there and the unequal subjects are becoming political subjects, through learning that does not conform to previously programmed times and spaces.

## Final considerations

Understanding the Educating Neighborhood of Heliópolis, rooted in an economically vulnerable region, but potentially rich in experiences of participation, mobilization and social achievements, meant entering the idiosyncrasies and understanding the genesis of the socio-educational movements that produced it (De Santis, 2014).

Such a condition can shed important light to reflect and deepen our understanding on democratic Public Policies that have social/popular participation, rights, quality, the well-being of children and childhoods and, above all, the look and actions of those below, with social resistance as a background, contributing to a differentiated way of producing Public Policies and protecting and guaranteeing rights.

We came to the conclusion that the Policies for children in Heliópolis were guided by the way social policies in general in Brazil were defined, by focusing on different social groups as a way to mitigate social inequality, with limits to the consolidation of universalizing policies. The “unevenly done subjects” of Heliópolis ‘put the foot at the offices’ doors’ and challenge the managers of Public Policies and pose themselves as political subjects, not accepting the place of recipients/objects of policies, and, by overcoming the mere claim, they advance in the proposition and in the possibility of controlling these policies, to guarantee rights (which must be for each and all) and not crumbs, small pieces of social actions that serve to keep the subjects in the same place, conditioning them to subalternity.

It is undeniable that the context of Public Policies for children throughout the twentieth century in Brazil, especially from the 1990s on, was marked by struggles and conquests of rights in the legal sphere, ranging from social welfare to the condition of rights, with laws and norms that favored full protection and priority for the care of childhoods. A fundamental precept in Policies for childhoods, in general, is the responsibility of the State and Society with the new generations. Signs of Social Welfare in the country began to be felt after the 1988 Constitution, with advances and retreats, depending on the government officials on duty; it meant advances in the coverage of assistance in educational institutions for childhoods. However, problems regarding educational quality still remain.

An important and paradoxical point to be problematized is the system of agreements in UNAS’ social projects, as an expression of social policies that serve specific social segments and that contribute to maintaining a fragmented system of social protection, as a poverty relieving strategy, since the government does not directly assume responsibility for guaranteeing these rights (Oliveira, 2014).

From the condition of a social movement representing the Association of Residents' Centers to the officialization as an NGO, UNAS was strengthened with the strategy of the Educating Neighborhood, believing in the transformative potential of Education. Its position is consolidated in the territory of Heliópolis as a network that intertwines several elements, having striking historical ballasts such as the militancy built in the struggles for housing, the changes and the opening up of EMEF Presidente Campos Salles to and with the territory, the decisive presence of women, external support for the Heliópolis cause, the values of human, democratic and social justice rights, together with the options for a humanizing and popular education, the qualification and training of educators, intersectoral actions, the expansion of Heliópolis voices in sectoral and municipal Councils and Forums as delegation exercises and the intergenerational investment, represent important factors for the internal and external recognition that UNAS enjoys and the experience of the Educating Neighborhood and that aligned a differentiated relationship with the public authorities.

UNAS and the strategy of the Educating Neighborhood influence and focus on the production of Public Policies for childhoods, as revealed by the more than 50 projects and social actions under its responsibility, which are the expression of the unpublished feasible, to which Paulo Freire (1978) referred, such as the possibility of hope, utopia and transformation.

The boldness of what Heliópolis and the Educating Neighborhood represent for the municipality of São Paulo, the external recognition and the centrality of the right to Education and Integral Education as important factors of social transformation, impacted and impact Policies and bring relevant contributions to the understanding of the agency of social movements and NGOs in the dynamics of acting in the gaps of Public Policies, 'put the foot at the offices' doors' of decision makers, in a negotiated, creative and situated way, contributing so that the right to the city is not understood as an abstraction, but built with the sense of belonging, identity and solidarity, to enable equal access and enjoyment of goods and services that are basic and that make human life dignified and, in the case of UNAS, through the priority option for the defense of the rights of children and adolescents.

In the case of Social Policies and Policies for childhoods, UNAS, reinforced by the strategy of the Educating Neighborhood, emphasizes the limited reach of assistive policies, which propose (and interpose), within the possible conditions, in its practices, the intention to put in place policies that protect and guarantee rights and that respond to the real needs of the population, with an emancipatory bias and with relative autonomy.

UNAS and Educating Neighborhood in Heliópolis represent the struggle for the right to the city as a space for all and highlight the criticism of the role of Public Policies that would need to consider and value the diversity of educational processes of/in the territories and educational institutions as 'learning communities' (Formosinho; Machado, 2009; Fullan; Hargreaves, 2001), unlike the homogenization and vertical imposition of programs, projects and actions. How to deal with everyone's space and the real possibility of being a citizen, considering the history of Heliópolis (which has been built in the city's cracks) and which reveals the non-democratization of urban use and occupation and access to basic public goods and services? How to define center and outskirts in an uncoordinated Policy scenario?

The research findings indicate to us that UNAS and the Educating Neighborhood, as a web of stories – and memories – woven in the territory, are inspirations for Public Policies and for the right to childhood education as an action coordinated with social movements and the territory for the purpose of justice and social transformation, if seen in its constitutional process and objective responses relevant to problems that plague regions of high population density.

The results of the research also indicate that learnings for the development of Policies gestated from the bottom up, considering that what happens in Heliópolis, are a reality that affects everyone and lift us up from the place of certainties (Fravet-Saada, 2005), especially about the right to have rights in relation to Public Policies for childhoods, such as individual and collective accountability with the new generations and with the right to the city (Gomes, 2020).

To paraphrase an African proverb: “it takes an entire village to educate a child” and, in this instance, the Educating Neighborhood in Heliópolis has a lot to teach...

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