

Challenges In Youth And Adult Education (YAE) At Instituto Federal Baiano: The Perspective Of Its Employees

Michele Sena da Silva¹, Antonio Amorim²

¹ Master in Youth and Adult Education, Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia Baiano, Pró-Reitoria de Desenvolvimento Institucional Brazil.

² Doctor in Psychology, Universidade do Estado da Bahia, Departamento de Educação, Brazil.

ABSTRACT : *This article presents the challenges faced by a Brazilian program in the modality of Youth and Adult Education in an institution of professional education in the state of Bahia. It is part of the research done by the author during her Master Course in Youth and Adult Education. It was conducted in 2018 by a multiple study case with 35 civil servants, employees of 5 units of IF Baiano, using the interview as instrument of collect data. It could be noticed that students from YAE are seen with prejudice and considered unable to learn, then formal education should be far from the perspectives of these people. Besides, the challenges are related to the conservative view of the employees, that represents the same view of the society. However, institutions such as IF Baiano exist to guarantee these educational policies, such as PROEJA, can be a door to young and adult workers who could not finish basic school having this right assured. Thus, to occupy such places of production of knowledge is also a question of resistance for them.*

KEYWORDS: *Challenges in Youth and Adult Education, IF Baiano, PROEJA.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Historically, Youth and Adult Education (YAE) occupies a minor place in Brazilian education. It is the modality that intends to offer formal education to young, adult and elderly people who could not start or continuous their studies for any reasons in their lives. That is why it is strategic to face social inequalities, being also a space to build and share knowledge and experiences from life and society. It is meaning of resistance within Education area, and it was originated from Popular Education, which is based on awareness and humanization of human beings. It is also characterized for offering programs and campaigns with a compensatory, assistance and supplementary bias that disregard the continuity of schooling.

Since Brazilian Constitution of 1988, basic education was guaranteed to everyone, what included YAE. Later in 1996, other legislations such as *Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional*, an educational law, reinforced the right to education for young and adults. However, in 2019, illiteracy rate of people aged 15 and over was estimated at 6.6%, 11 million illiterates ^[1]. So, Brazil has a social debt to those people who had their right to education denied.

Many are the reasons for people's departure from formal education, both in childhood or in adulthood. Work is the main one. Besides, being the source of self and family support, it is responsible for the impossibility of attending classes, as well as the need to enter or get qualification to remain in the labor world. Thus, work is a dimension to be discussed concerning YAE in Brazil.

Students from YAE are workers who interact to the labor world in different ways and have, in this modality, the opportunity to raise their education level, what may led them to a better occupation, consequently, a more decent life. They are people who had their learning processes in life, on their daily experiences and at work. They know a lot about the world, although they do not have formal understanding of the ideologies that oppress them, even taking their dignity. So, the school have the challenge of making these students' knowledge meaningful, promoting through it access to a scientific knowledge that value their cultural diversity.

In face of the need for a public policy in YAE that articulated education and work, in 2005, the Decree 5,478 created a program that allowed the public of this modality, the right to complete basic education

Challenges in Youth and Adult Education at Instituto Federal Baiano: the perspective of its

integrated with a professional training course. Initially, it was called *Programa de Integração da Educação Profissional ao Ensino Médio na modalidade de Educação de Jovens e Adultos - PROEJA* (Program for the Integration of Professional Education into High School in the modality of YAE). Besides, it was offered just by the institutions that were part of *Rede Federal de Educação Profissional, Científica e Tecnológica* (Federal Network of Professional Education, Science and Technology).

In 2006, the Decree 5,840 replaced the previous one, changing the name of the program to *Programa Nacional de Integração da Educação Profissional com a Educação Básica na Modalidade de Educação de Jovens e Adultos* (National Program for the Integration of Professional Education with Basic Education in the YAE Modality), but it kept the acronym PROEJA. It introduced new guidelines that, among other issues, the decree expanded its scope, its offer to elementary education too and to other systems of education, municipal, state and private entities of social service, learning and professional training.

Rede Federal de Educação Profissional, Científica e Tecnológica is linked to *Ministério da Educação* (Ministry of Education) and its institutions, the *Institutos Federais de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia* (Federal Institutes of Education, Science and Technology) have the responsibility of offering YAE in courses from PROEJA. These are public institutions, created to offer courses that aim to establish a relationship between the productive world and the world of work in Basic, Higher and Professional Education.

Instituto Federal de Educação Ciência e Tecnologia Baiano (IF Baiano) is one of the two institutions which is part of *Rede Federal de Educação Profissional, Científica e Tecnológica* in the state of Bahia, Brazil. Nowadays, it has the rectory in the city of Salvador, 14 campuses, besides Distance Education poles distributed in 19 territories of identity, and it offers courses of Professional Education from basic education, with high school, PROEJA, to Higher Education, with graduations and courses in *lato senso* and *stricto senso*, such as Master.

Since 2005, these institutions were called upon to guarantee the right to education to young and adults through PROEJA. Historically, most of these institutions did not have experience with the EJA modality until the creation of the Program ^[2]. This brought resistance and limitations to its offer and its expansion through the various campuses of the federal institutes, what is a reality until the current days.

This paper is part of the study *Ampliação da oferta de vagas da EJA integrada à educação profissional: uma proposta para o PROEJA no IF Baiano* (The expansion of YAE's vacancies integrated to professional education: a proposal to PROEJA at IF Baiano) done by the author in her Master Course in Education of Young and Adult People. The general purpose is to reflect about the challenges of offering PROEJA at IF Baiano, showing the perspectives of its employees. The specific objectives are to identify their view about acceptance of the program and to discuss the main challenges faced to offer the program. With this, it is hoped to increase the debate about YAE in the *Rede Federal de Educação Profissional, Científica e Tecnológica*, aiming to expand its offer in this network.

II. METHODOLOGY

This paper has its origin in a qualitative study, whose technical procedure was a multiple case study. Educational research is committed to the social reality of the subjects involved. Thus, it dialogues with the historical, social and cultural context of these participants, showing how values and beliefs are configured in a certain time, building a historical situation of the object of study.

The qualitative approach was selected to support the object of the investigation, since it works with the subjectivity of the people, considering their beliefs and values as part of the social reality experienced by a group. It deals with meanings, beliefs and values, that is, a phenomena which is part of the social reality that is used to understand actions and attitudes shared by a group ^[3]. In this way, the interaction with them enable the construction and the analysis of an overall view.

In the same way, this argument is reinforced because the qualitative research is appropriate to deal with social phenomena ^[4]. It means that this kind helps to work with structured socially power relations, among other questions. It is important to mention that it was the approach that better fit to the proposed study.

Regarding the study case, it is a technical procedure relies upon a particular case. This methodology is broadly used in the Social Sciences and in the area of Education, due to the unique and singular character of the investigated object, which is common in social research. It is normal for a case study to reveal similarities with other cases, serving as a reference in similar situations, which is the motivation for a multiplicity of the study.

Challenges in Youth and Adult Education at Instituto Federal Baiano: the perspective of its

A case study research focus on a complex social phenomenon and on the desire of understand it in holistic and real perspective ^[5]. It means that this strategy allows an overview of the research object that it can guide other similar situations, besides the specificities of each case can provide a qualified view of the proposed problem based on the repetition in several different cases, what make the study recognized for its robustness.

The investigation had its locus at *IF Baiano*, Bahia, Brazil. It was selected 4 campuses in the cities of Catu, Governador Mangabeira, Guanambi and Serrinha, where PROEJA had been offered from 2015 to 2018, year of the presentation of the dissertation, besides two management sectors located in Rectory. The period coincided with the *Plano de Desenvolvimento Institucional 2015-2019* (Institutional Development Plan 2015-2019), in valid at that moment.

According to the last *Relatório de Gestão* (Management Report) published in 2019, referring to the year of 2018, 1,722 civil servants are employed at *IF Baiano*: 849 teachers and professors and 873 technical-administrative servants ^[6]. In this research, 35 servants participated: 8 collaborators at each campus, 2 managers and 1 technical-administrative servant from the rectory.

68.6% women and 31.4% men represent participants of this research. Their ages vary between 30 and 56 years of age. 17.1% declared themselves white and 82.9% declared themselves black. 25.7% are specialists, 40% masters and 34.3% doctors. The length of service at *IF Baiano* varies between 1 year and 3 months to 13 years. None of them were students of EJA. 97.1% have experience with EJA within a period that varies between 1 month and 11 years and only 20% took some training course for YAE.

In this research, the interview was used as instrument of data collection. It is very used in many investigations. It is very practical because it allows the capture of information from anyone about different subjects in a immediate way ^[7]. Thus, it turns possible going deeper in the questions with more intimacy and getting close to the issues raised from the perspective of the interviewees.

III. PROEJA: THE EDUCATION YOUNG AND ADULT WORKERS AT IF BAIANO

In the current context, schooling is a process that integrates human life. However, it takes place in diverse spaces, especially with the YAE public. These people have their learnings in their daily lives. And a major challenge for the school is to try to give meaning to these experiences, because to ignore them would be like to reduce the creative potential of these working men and women that already have a history in the community in which they are inserted. In this sense, education is a right that should be guaranteed to everyone, regardless of age, and on a continuous basis throughout life ^[8].

The increase in schooling to high school represents the possibility of continuing formal education at the higher level, a break of the paradigm for these students who are seen as incapable. It is true the State's difficulty in fulfilling the signed commitment to universalize high school for all ^[9]. In this sense, PROEJA offered at IF Baiano is another opportunity of formal education for working men and women who seek it not only to increase schooling, but also to professional training yet, yet being one more way of YAE modality integrated with Professional Education in State of Bahia. Therefore, it is defended the need to expand the discussion on the YAE modality and PROEJA at *IF Baiano*. It is a question of social responsibility with those who had their right to education denied.

In the interview done, one of the points researched was regarding the perception of the employees about the acceptance of PROEJA at IF Baiano. This issue affects the offer of the program, since the feeling of welcoming or rejection among those who work directly with this public interferes on the receptivity of the program in the school unit, since they are the ones who conduct the modality in this context.

About it, it is important to reaffirm that PROEJA is in dispute with high education since its creation in 2005. At that year, bills passed in the Chamber of Deputies and in the Federal Senate aiming at the creation of technological universities, through the transformation of the institutions that nowadays is known as *Institutos Federais de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia*, which created expectations for these institutions to become universities. It had repercussions in the gradual increase courses at high education level and stagnation of YAE ^[10].

Concerning the acceptance of PROEJA at IF Baiano, the Fig. 1, below represents how the members of the scholar community that collaborated in the research perceive the program.



Figure 1: Word cloud that represents the perception of acceptance of PROEJA at IF Baiano in the view of its employees

The analysis considered the number of times that each word was said by the informants to qualify PROEJA. Thus, the ones highlighted were those that had the greatest recurrence. The terms used to qualify the acceptance of the program in the school units investigated were: prejudice, opposition, complicated, difficult, troublesome, obstacle, peripheral, marginalization, exclusion, lack of assistance, obligation.

The conceptions about PROEJA are derived from an elitist and a conservative vision whose ideology is based on the traditional pedagogy that values the idealized student, a child or an adolescent, which is distant from the adult worker student from YAE. However, to deal with the subjects from Young and Adult Education it is required a sensitive view from the part of the employees of IF Baiano, since these are a different public with a life history of learnings that need to be considered by school.

The words used to report to PROEJA represent evidenced the difficulty of the program in be transformed into a public policy, which makes the modality fragmented and with little institutional value ^[10]. In this way, YAE can be easily abandoned or reduced in favor of other modalities. The qualification of PROEJA by the research informants reveals this reality.

Thus, the questions raised about the acceptance of PROEJA need to be addressed by the institution as one of its challenges: the offer of Young and Adult Education. In this way, the school needs to improve its institutional and educational spaces, aiming at overcoming the existing dogmas and expanding human horizons ^[11].

An important perception is that the acceptance relationship that each school unit establishes with the program is fundamental to its success. On campus where it is well accepted, courses last longer, and teams are organized and plan their actions within the limitations that each school unit has. In fact, there are no similar difficulties, but they occur to different degrees, emerging as challenges for the modality at the institutional level. Thus, it is observed that PROEJA is still trying to find its place in IF Baiano and on its campuses.

In the next point of the interview, it was discussed the challenges faced by PROEJA at the units investigated at *IF Baiano* from the view of its collaborators. Its analysis considered the number of answers given by the participants, from where emerged the dimensions suggested by them. It does not mean that the fact they have not mention any of them, they disagreed or denied the situation at the institution. From their answers were organized five dimensions of challenges: administrative, infrastructural, pedagogical, political and social, aiming to present the perceptions about the challenges by unit according to each reality.

It is important an explanation about how the challenges dimensions was organized. The administrative challenges were those related to management, which could be general or specific to the campus, such as: sensitizing teachers, talking to the servants about the subject, developing an admission policy that considers the specificities of YAE, completing the classes offered until the number of vacancies offered, adapting the demands of the course to those of the community and the campus, carrying out an adequate demand study, guaranteeing the program, expand the areas of the courses offered to YAE's public, build a pedagogical and

Challenges in Youth and Adult Education at Instituto Federal Baiano: the perspective of its

management policy for the modality, raise funds for student assistance, institutionalize the offer, plan the actions for the YAE, turn available the payment of scholarships within the defined period.

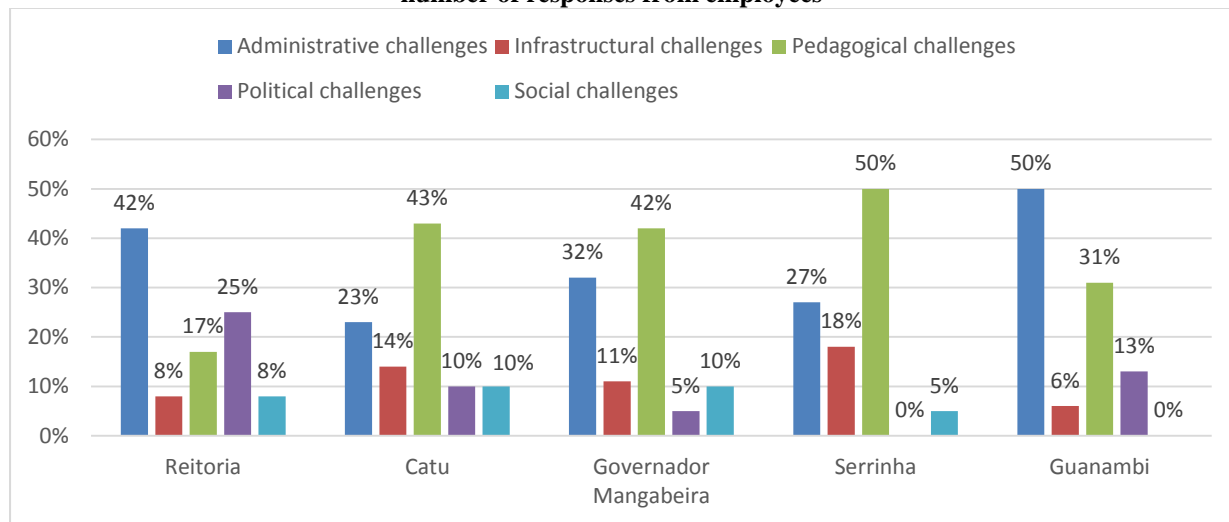
Infrastructural challenges are related to campus infrastructure and access issues, among others. As examples, it was mentioned: transportation, poor campus structure, inadequate night lighting on the campus, construction of laboratories, location of the campus, inadequate infrastructure of the access road to the campus.

The pedagogical challenges are focused on issues that refer to or impact in some way on teaching and learning, such as: promoting continuing teacher training, adapting the class schedule, reformulating the course's pedagogical project, reformulating the course load, integrating with the other courses, decrease the number of curricular component, increasing the amount of practical classes, decreasing dropout, creating conditions for the permanence and student success, elaborating didactic material for the modality, making practical classes more accessible, elaborating a curriculum that meets the demands of its audience, elaborating of a Didactic Organization focused on YAE, reducing student disapproval.

The political challenges are those that impact on the program due to institutional political will, such as: sensitizing managers, understanding the importance of implementing the program, understanding YAE, knowing and understanding the objectives of an *Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia*, accepting the modality in the institution and improving the relationship with the external community.

The social challenges are a significant characteristic of the students of YAE. These are traits that they carry with themselves, which are the result of a condition of unequal opportunities and that *IF Baiano*'s employees need to overcome. Examples: working with students who left school a long time ago, working with students with difficulty to use digital media and working with students who have difficulty learning, assimilating and paying attention. See below Table 1 presenting the challenges faced by PROEJA at *IF Baiano*.

Table 1: Proportion of challenges faced by PROEJA at IF Baiano per investigated units based on the number of responses from employees



It is noticed that the challenges are centered primarily on pedagogical questions with 43% of the answers in Catu, 42% in Governador Mangabeira, 50% in Serrinha and 31% in Guanambi. Then, in administrative matters with 23% in Catu, 32% in Governador Mangabeira, 27% in Serrinha and 50% in Guanambi. In the view of the Rectory, administrative and political challenges are more prominent, with 42% and 25%, respectively. Besides, the administrative issues are present in all school units investigated, as well as in the Rectory. This indicates the need for institutional work in this area, aiming to develop the program's own issues, since management is responsible for promoting YAE, and the way it relates and perceives PROEJA is extremely important for the future of the program.

Thus, it was perceived that the administrative challenges is one of the first major steps towards understanding and consolidating Youth and Adult Education at *IF Baiano*. In addition, it was noticed that the place occupied for the program in the institution influences the types of challenges to be faced. The central perspective is much focused on political and administrative issues due to its competencies targared at guiding policies, actions, planning, among others. On the campuses, in turn, the pedagogical and administrative issues are stronger, because that is where the course comes to life, and these two aspects are interconnected to put it into practice.

Challenges in Youth and Adult Education at Instituto Federal Baiano: the perspective of its

Regarding to the other challenges, it was observed that from the third position, variations started to happen. In this position, the pedagogical challenges were present in the Rectory, representing 17%. In Catu, Governador Mangabeira and Serrinha the position was occupied by infrastructure challenges with 14%, 11% and 18%, respectively. In Guanambi, political challenges came in third position, representing 13%.

The last positions were organized as follows: in the Rectory, the infrastructure and social challenges obtained the same percentage, 8% each. In Catu, political and social challenges took over, both with 10%. In Governador Mangabeira, social challenges represented 10% and politicians 5%. In Serrinha, social challenges referred to 5% and there was no reference to political challenges. Finally, in Guanambi, infrastructure challenges received 6% of responses and there was no reference to social challenges.

It was observed that each unit has its own dynamics with regard to the challenges faced. There is a repetition pattern in some units, but there are specificities that make each reality unique. Thus, the exchange of experiences is a precious and necessary moment to discuss YAE and plan its future. It is important to emphasize that the organizational culture has a direct impact on the employees' perception of the challenges faced by PROEJA. Besides, the manner how the campus management relates to the Identity Territory and the Rectory is a determining factor in ensuring the provision of YAE in the units, as this is a political issue, what affects the expansion of the modality.

YAE's challenges demonstrate where efforts need to be focused to strengthen the modality in the institution. Some reasons that hinder PROEJA's offer in *IF Baiano*: teacher training, participation of teachers in issues related to YAE, prejudice against students, access to the campus, student's profile, inappropriate selection process, a reductionist conception of YAE by managers^[12]. Thus, here it is possible to reaffirm the challenges, demonstrating the existence of a prejudiced view regarding the Youth and Adults Education, what difficult its expansion at *IF Baiano*.

The article *PROEJA: entre desafios e possibilidades*^[2] (PROEJA: between challenges and possibilities) have already reported several of the difficulties reported by the participants of this research and confirmed that the little experience with YAE in the *Rede Federal de Educação Profissional, Científica e Tecnológica* has caused limitations to its functioning process. However, the hard beginning, with a lack of initial skills with YAE, what made the work with the program a bit difficult, it is possible to recognize that after more than ten years of PROEJA, the program is still seen as a problem, demonstrating the prejudice against its students and similar challenges.

It is observed that progress towards YAE has been slow since the creation of PROEJA. Thus, it is clear that the studies already carried out by authors such as Nogueira and Moura and Henrique, even in different realities, show similar situations within *Rede Federal de Educação Profissional, Científica e Tecnológica*. Thus, challenges are part of the daily lives of these institutions, which need to work on them, seeking to overcome them in order to guarantee the commitment assumed with society.

Institutos Federais have their purposes and characteristics based on local and regional socio-economic development in conjunction with the area of operation of the Identity Territory. Thus, the education of young people and adults, through PROEJA, is inserted in the context of those institutions in order to provide basic education articulated with professional education to the YAE public, meeting their legal mission.

IV. CONCLUSION

PROEJA still faces many challenges to be offered at IF Baiano, as well as in many other institutions from *Rede Federal de Educação Profissional, Científica e Tecnológica*. The program is still seen as a second modality at IF Baiano what reflects in the prejudice, the disqualification and opposition against it. This is a cyclical situation that has been repeated along the years, hindering the consolidation of this public policy for the public of young and adult education.

Students from YAE are people who have exclusion as part of their lives. To break this paradigm, IF Baiano have to assure the commitment of investing in this modality, expanding its offer, its courses and its policies for the students' access, staying, learning and conclusion with success. Thus, it requires a new view over PROEJA, one that consider the differences of gender, race, class and generation, what is typical of this modality.

Besides having the right to education, to occupy places of knowledge that were denied, it is one of the main responsibilities of PROEJA. The program is also a compensatory policy that aims to overcome the quality of opportunities to basic education that young and adult people had along their lives. Thus, the institution is also

Challenges in Youth and Adult Education at Instituto Federal Baiano: the perspective of its

a place for working and giving voice to these students' realities and perspectives of about the world, seeking for approaches and methodologies that can give support to their reality.

Many young and adults who have not yet completed high school, people enough to study in the program. To maintain, to expand, to offer courses in this modality means to overcome the conservative view that is part of *Rede Federal de Educação Profissional, Científica e Tecnológica*, which is the real challenge faced by PROEJA, to change the employees' mind about the modality. Thus, another institution positioning in relation to it is need. YAE is a right, it is not a favor.

V. Acknowledgements

We are grateful to all participants for giving their help in this research, what gave support to observe the behavior of the public policy PROEJA at IF Baiano and propose a way to expand its offer to all 14 campuses.

REFERENCES

- [1] IBGE. *Educa* IBGE. RJ, 2020. Access: <<https://educa.ibge.gov.br/jovens/conheca-o-brasil/populacao/18317-educacao.html>>, on 09/15/2020.
- [2] D. H. Moura, A.L.S. Henrique, PROEJA: entre desafios e possibilidades, *Revista Holos*. 28(2), 2012, 114-129. Access:<<http://www2.ifrn.edu.br/ojs/index.php/HOLOS/article/viewFile/914/536>>, on 03/15/2017.
- [3] M.C.S. Minayo. O desafio da pesquisa social. In: M.C. S.Minayo, S.F.Deslandes, R. Gomes. (Org.). *Pesquisa Social: teoria, método e criatividade*. 28. ed. Petrópolis, RJ: Vozes, 2009. p. 9-29.
- [4] R.J.Richardson. et al. *Pesquisa social: métodos e técnicas*. 3. São Paulo: Atlas 2011.
- [5] R.K. Yin, Robert K. *Estudo de caso: planejamento e métodos*. Translation: Cristhian Matheus Herrera.5. ed. Porto Alegre: Bookman, 2015.
- [6] Brasil./Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia Baiano. *Relatório de Gestão 2019*. Salvador, 2020. Access: < <https://ifbaiano.edu.br/portal/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/RG-2019-27.08.2020-TCU.pdf>>. In: 09/20/2020.
- [7] M. Lüdke, M.E.D.A. André. *Pesquisa em educação: abordagens qualitativas*. São Paulo: EPU, 2012.
- [8] J. Paiva. Tramando concepções e sentidos para redizer o direito à educação de jovens e adultos, *Revista Brasileira de Educação*, 33(11), 2006, 519-566. Access: <<http://www.scielo.br/pdf/rbedu/v11n33/a12v1133.pdf>>, on 07/27/2017.
- [9] A. Z. Kuenzer. (Org.). *Ensino Médio: uma proposta construída para os que vivem do trabalho*. São Paulo: Cortez, 2002.
- [10] J.M.B. Vitorette. A não consolidação do Proeja como política pública de Estado. Doctoral diss., Universidade Federal de Goiás, GO, 2014. Access:<<https://repositorio.bc.ufg.br/tede/handle/tede/3917>>, on 06/16/2017.
- [11] A. Amorim. *Escola: uma organização social complexa e plural*. Santa Cruz do Rio Pardo, SP: Editora Viena, 2007.
- [12] A.E.S. Nogueira, *EJA no IF BAIANO: desafios e possibilidades para a gestão educacional*, marter diss., Mestrado Profissional em Gestão e Tecnologias, Universidade do Estado da Bahia, BA, 2016.