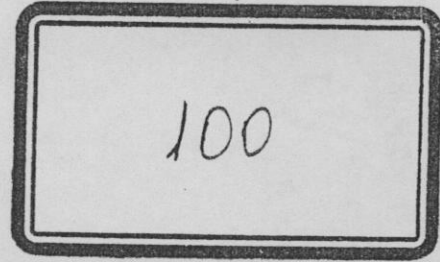


MOVIMENTO
DE
EDUCAÇÃO
DE
BASE

1961



AN EXPERIENCE IN THE
EDUCATION OF ADULTS IN BRAZIL

"MOVIMENTO DE EDUCAÇÃO DE BASE", AN EXPERIENCE IN THE
EDUCATION OF ADULTS IN BRAZIL

A. DESCRIPTION OF THE WORK AND REPORT ON RESULTS

ORIGINS - The origins of the "Movimento de Educação de Base", MEB (BASIC EDUCATION MOVEMENT), may be traced to the experience of education through radio conducted by some of the Brazilian Bishops of the Northeast of Brazil. The Archdiocesis of Natal and Aracaju were the first to adopt this new educational method through radio, which proved most adequate for underdeveloped areas where the lack of communication, lack of natural resources and, especially, lack of human resources, keep the majority of the population at such a low cultural, economic and social level that it is incompatible with human dignity.

In 1961, the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops carried out an educational plan, on a national scale, based on the successful experiences of Natal and Aracaju. The President of the Republic gave full support to this initiative by issuing Decree nº 50.370 of 21st March, 1961. By this decree, it was established that the Federal Government, through agreements which would be signed by the Ministry of Education and Culture as well as other entities of the federal administration, would provide the necessary funds to carry out the program which CNBB (National Conference of the Brazilian Bishops) would sponsor through the Basic Educational Movement, using Catholic radio stations.

OBJECTIVES - Defined as an entity with social and educational aims, MEB, in short, has the following objectives:-

Cooperate in the integral formation of adults and adolescents in the developing areas of the country, provide the means necessary to enable the rural worker to become conscious of his dignity as a human creature, make him realize his own problems and seek communitary solutions towards a change in his standard of living, enable him to establish criteria to

understand and judge the changes which are already taking place around him, thereby transforming himself into an agent in the process of cultural creation.

MEB'S BASIC EDUCATION - Education is a process of cultural integration, either by assystematic procedures, as is the case in all social intercourse in a community, or through methodical processes which enable students to participate consciously and creatively in the cultural inheritance of humanity. MEB, destined originally to function in an area where educational processes have always been assystematic and spontaneous, helps in the formation of man, offering him basic information, encouraging creative activities and furnishing him the minimum rudimentary instruments so that the learner himself might become the agent of his own promotion.

The process of action considered suitable by MEB is that of Basic Education which is an education aiming at forming man in accordance with what he really is, and giving him, at the same time, the minimum essential for his own fulfilment as a human being. In this sense, the educational effort should be developed with a view to self promotion, preparing and assisting in the formation of people capable of leadership in the process of development in their respective communities.

ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONING OF MEB - MEB is structured on a national scale. The fundamental unit of the work of MEB is the "Basic Education System" which covers a defined area. Each system has a Local Team which plans, executes and coordinates a program for the area. This Local Team selects and trains, in their spheres of action, voluntary animators who participate diligently in the System's program of activities.

The majority of MEB System consist of Radio Schools. They are characterized by having their activities centered around the radio transmissions of educational programs, directed to a net of radio schools with properly organized reception. In some areas, the work is carried out in direct contact with the communities, owing to the deficiency of radio transmissions.

To prepare its program of activities, the Local Team makes a survey of the area to be covered employing the

technique of area studies. During this survey the communities are motivated to participate in the educational activities of MEB while the Team collects data for the future selection of voluntary animators in the communities. Once the area is determined, the Local Team trains future animators and plans, together with them, the work to be carried out. Activities once begun, the Local Team remains in close contact with the communities in which the program is transmitted, supervising and coordinating all the work.

The Local Systems of Basic Education in the same State are coordinated by a State Team which draws up, with these Systems, a State-wide program of work.

MEB is organized on a national scale through a Central Secretariat with headquarters in Rio de Janeiro, State of Guanabara. The Central Secretariat is responsible for the creation and organization of new Systems for the training and selection of local team personnel, for the organization of State Teams and for coordinating, technically and administratively, the work throughout the country.

WORKING AREA - Devised to carry out a program of education in the underdeveloped areas of the country, MEB tried to reach all the area foreseen for its activities. However, as the maintenance of the Systems is in direct relation to the human, material and financial resources available, the amount of Basic Education Systems has oscillated during the years of MEB's existence. In 1961, MEB functioned with 11 Systems, rising to 31 in 1962, and reaching 59 in December, 1963, covering 15 Brazilian States in the Northeast, in the Western Region and part of the Amazonic Region. Financial Restrictions, however, compelled an interruption in the activities of several Systems which resulted in reducing their number to 55 in 1964, 51 in 1965, 37 in 1966. At present, (January, 1968), 21 Systems are at work in 8 States, i.e., AMAZON - Tefé - Coari - Manaus - PARÁ - Santarém - Conceição do Araguaia - Bragança - PIAUÍ - Teresina - CEARÁ - Crato - Cratoús - Sobral - Limoeiro - Fortaleza - SERGIPE - Aracaju - Propriá - Estância - MATO GROSSO - Cuiabá - RONDONIA - Guarajaramirim - ALAGOAS - Macció - R.GRANDE DO NORTE - Natal - Caicó - Mossoró.

The same restrictions preclude the reopening of work in the interrupted Systems and initiating activities in several other areas.

MEB'S ACTIVITIES - Among the activities carried out by MEB, the following should be noted:- Radio Schools, Popular Animation and Training of Personnel.

Radio Schools - A Radio School in a rural community has, as its fundamental objective, the cultural and economic integration of this community in the larger community by means of a systematic transmission of information on communication and production, as well as motivation towards the changing of attitudes. The information, especially if given separately, from teaching how to read and write, has no meaning.

The objectives of the Radio Schools are based on the knowledge of the needs and possibilities of the rural worker. The continued study of his concrete situation in the community, led MEB to promote activities, develop methods, establish goals and specific objectives which have, gradually, revealed an undeniable pedagogic originality.

During years of work its methods have been a permanent search for adjustment and study of what really is within the grasp of the Brazilian rural worker and within the limits of his motivational structure as well as within his typical way of thinking.

Its fundamental pedagogic orientation is, in short, an attempt over more fully achieved of making the rural worker, in his present condition, the subject of an education aiming at communication and communitary production. The aims of MEB's radio transmissions limit themselves to the objectives of Education, which are those which normally may be obtained in a school. They merely represent one aspect of the work of MEB.

About 450.000 students have concluded the school-year in the Radio Schools of MEB since 1961. In December, 1966, (after the reduction of its area of activities). MEB numbered about 2.600 schools and 30.900 registered students. In 1963, MEB numbered more than 7.000 Schools and approximately 146.000

students. These students are, for the most part, persons between 15 and 30 years old. In the areas which are not covered by conventional schools for children, the Radio Schools are also attended by youngsters under 15 years.

The tests to assess their learning at the end of each year show an average result above 80%, according to the studies carried out at the end of every year. These results are confirmed by the constant supervision of the Local Teams and by letters received from Monitors and students, as well as by the difference in behaviour of students in their communities.

Popular Animation - Popular Animation is a global process for the promotion of man through his own actions. The expression "Popular Animation" means, strictly, work animated by popular elements. In the case of educational work, they will be people who promote their own education and take upon themselves the consequent responsibilities.

Popular Animation is a process to structure the community and organize groups, gradually taken over by its own members, relying on their own community leaders. The community organizes itself as a result of the discovery of its values, resources and requirements, in an attempt to overcome its social, economic, cultural, political and religious problems and, also, to assert its members as subjects.

Popular Animation is a task for the community. It is obtained through the transformation of groups of individuals who live together, into an integration of persons who think, plan and organize in common, trying to attend to all as members of the local community, without ignoring the national and international problems.

Some instances of communitary work fostered through MEB's influence:

Communitary work is of the greatest possible variety, differing from place to place. Some begin with cleaning up their village, others by acquiring a small medical ambulance (a cart), others by improving their homes. There are still other localities who are awaiting larger resources for the

purchase of a few heads of cattle.

Other activities are also organized in accordance with the needs of the different communitary groups, such as:-

. Cooperatives, syndicates, schools for children, mothers' clubs, youth clubs, sports clubs, popular theatres, building of houses, clearing up or opening new roads, barber shops, libraries, etc. Debates about communitary problems, such as vaccination, sewage pits, filters, etc.

. Communitary Clearing of the Ground for Cultivation - Groups of the population clear the ground for cultivation in order to obtain the resources with which the people might solve their most pressing problems. Communitary plantation is done by all the men of a locality. They busy themselves with cutting down trees and preparing the ground for plantation. When all is ready, the women do the planting, helped by the men. While some women plant, others prepare food for all. The children busy themselves in distributing the sprouts to be planted, or distribute water to all.

Personnel Training - One of the chief concerns of the Movement is the training of skilled personnel, as no similar exist. The training sessions are of the utmost educational value, as they aim at the conscientization of the trainees enabling them for the specific activities of MEB.

MEB organizes these intensive courses for the training, or improvement, of its different teams, in the systems of basic education and, also, for the training of animators who will act in their own communities (monitors, leaders, cooperativists, etc.)

It may be noted that in 5 years MEB, in courses of an average duration of only 10 days, trained 805 persons of 16 States, to take part in specialized technical activities. Apart from this, 13.771 persons, living in the remotest regions of the Brazilian hinterland, participated in 518 courses (average duration of five days) to be

trained as popular animators which represents a most outstanding educational activity.

In fact, the efficiency of MEB's personnel is only achieved thanks to these trainings. Besides these courses, days of study and specialized meetings are organized in addition to the permanent improvement through the supervision of work. Besides developing its own educational activities, MEB gathered a set of methods and techniques which are always being revised and reformulated and is the best example of the vitality of the Movement. Proofs of this assertion are the constant requests for technical assistance addressed to MEB by the different entities connected with national development.

Special attention is also given to the "Popular Animators" in connexion with their specific training for the functions they are to undertake. Apart from their special training, they also participate in the meetings, and supervision keeps them in permanent contact with their teams. As popular leaders they take up their roles in the communities, becoming real agents in the transformation of the local reality.

B. EVALUATION

As a result of the criteria mentioned above, we may point out the following:-

1. MEB developed pedagogical activities straight from the Educational Radio Programs with the leaders responsible for the animation of the communities. These activities are decentralized in order to meet the requirements and peculiarities of each region;

2. Although MEB's chief aim is basic education, it does not restrict itself merely to teaching how to read and write, but integrates the whole effort in a global perspective of education. Not only have Radio Schools

succeeded in teaching the rural populations how to read and write but have often helped their access to regular conventional courses;

3. The absence of adequate reading material for the rural populations of Brazil obliged MEB to prepare texts, such as, "Viver é Lutar", "Saber para Viver", "Mutirão I", "Mutirão II", "Mutirão pra Saúde" (the last mentioned, through a contract with the Ministry of Health). Besides these texts, other primers were printed in different States (Minas Gerais, Bahia, Pernambuco, Rio Grande do Norte). And, besides school books, collection of cards, certificates to monitors, posters, local papers, bulletins for improvement, etc., were prepared.

4. The attempt to discover adequate methods for the work brought about the creation of MEB's own form of activity. Radio called for a special methodology which has been developed and adjusted to existing conditions. The certainty of the importance of the animator's role led to great concern with his training in order to enable him to perform his duties as an educator and make up for the limitations of radio transmissions. The preparation of the "Program for 1965" is the result of these researches as well as other experiments with direct methods for teaching how to read and write by means of cards which enable the animator to teach. As to evaluation, MEB follows all the activities permanently and closely by supervision, visits, correspondence with animators and pupils, besides making tests to see improvements and holding meetings for appraisal and planning. Several researches to determine the changes regarding behaviour, awakening, "Conscientization", through the study of correspondence of several years have been made in the same area. Other researches have been planned but are subject to financial limitations.

5. The work has been carried out since 1961 as a

whole. There being systems which have been functioning for six years, others for 4 years, etc. The newest system has been working for two years and a half. Systematic observation during this period allows the elaboration and the improvement of the techniques applied by MEB. In the first place, by increasing the number of radio schools, MEB gradually transferred responsibilities to the leaders who determine the importance of the work deemed most necessary for the development of their communities.

6. MEB conveyed a message of national integration to more than 500 of the remotest districts of the Brazilian hinterland, regions never before attained by other educational agencies of any kind, awakening them to a real and effective participation, not only in their local communities but in the global Brazilian society.

C. OPINION OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE

The National Committee entrusted with the indication of the Brazilian Government's candidate for the Reza Pahlevi Prize, chose the Movement of Basic Education considering that:-

1. It represents an important experience in our country in the field of popular education, especially in underdeveloped areas;
2. It represents the responsibility of the people's education in remote areas of the country, independent of Government action;
3. It represents the possibility of conveying education to areas in which the conventional school is reached with great difficulty;
4. It represents the training of technical personnel in the very regions which most need it, thus contributing for the creation of specialized

groups in adult education, a fact of great importance in Brazil today;

5. It represents an achievement which has won respect, both in the country and abroad, by the results obtained, by the critical attitude in face of present realities, by the creation of educational methods appropriate and adequate to conditions in Brazil.
6. It represents an effort to carry out an educational effort with limited resources, maintaining, at the same time, results in keeping with the investment made;
7. It represents one of the most important attempts at national integration in a country with Brazil's territorial dimensions.

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