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Gestão das políticas educacionais do ensino médio na Argentina

Gestión de las políticas educativas de la escuela secundaria en Argentina

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Resumo

Ao longo da história da educação na Argentina, a escola tem sustentado suas políticas educacionais em uma estrutura institucional burocrática e racional orientada para servir os interesses de uma minoria. Hoje, as políticas de inclusão social e a sanção do ensino secundário obrigatório são apresentadas como uma oportunidade de democratizar a gestão das instituições de ensino secundária. Este artigo apresenta uma pesquisa empírica cujo objetivo principal é analisar as decisões e medidas tomadas pelos diretores de escolas públicas e privadas na Argentina, a fim de aplicar o mais recente Lei Nacional de Educação (LEN), que as sanções da escolaridade obrigatória do nível secundário. A metodologia é parte dos estudos da gestão da educação, que analisa qualitativamente as práticas educativas a partir de uma perspectiva institucional. Assim, a pesquisa usa fontes primárias, cuja técnica da

construção os dados é da entrevista em profundidade. O objetivo da análise das entrevistas foi caracterizar as diferentes estratégias e práticas de gestão de inclusão social no nível secundário, através das dimensões: 1) O lugar de trajetórias sócio-educativas dos alunos nas propostas educacionais; 2) estratégias de retenção; 3) O lugar de aluno na construção de acordos e projetos educacionais; e 4) a relação entre a instituição e as famílias.

Palavras-chave: Ensino secundário. Educação. Inclusão social. Escolaridade obrigatória. Políticas educativas.

Abstract

Throughout Argentina's education history, Secondary School has supported its policies on a bureaucratic institutional structure rationally oriented to serving interests of a minority. Today, social inclusion policies and compulsory secondary schooling are presented as an opportunity to democratize the management of educational institutions. This article presents a piece of empirical research whose main purpose is to analyze the decisions and actions taken by the directors of secondary school in state-run and private educational institutions in the city of La Plata, in order to apply the National Education Law (LEN) that sanctions compulsory secondary education. The methodology used in this paper is in line with socio-educational management studies oriented to analyze educational practices qualitatively from an institutional perspective. Thus, primary sources were consulted by means of in-depth interviews for data collection purposes. The analysis of the interviews was aimed at characterizing the different social inclusion strategies and management practices in secondary education through the following dimensions: I) the student's role in the development of agreements and educational projects; II) retention strategies; III) the place given to students' socio-educational trajectories in educational proposals; and IV) the link between the institution and families

Keyword: Secondary education. Management. Compulsory education. Education policies. Social inclusion.

Resumen

A lo largo de la historia de la educación en Argentina, la escuela secundaria ha sostenido sus políticas educativas sobre una estructura institucional de tipo burocrática y racional orientada a servir a los intereses de una minoría. En la actualidad, las políticas de inclusión social y la sanción de la obligatoriedad de la educación secundaria se presentan como una oportunidad para democratizar la gestión de las instituciones educativas. Este artículo presenta una investigación

empírica cuyo objetivo principal es analizar las decisiones y medidas adoptadas por los directores de escuelas secundarias públicas y privadas en Argentina, con el fin de aplicar la última Ley de Educación Nacional (LEN) que sanciona la obligatoriedad del nivel de educación secundaria. La metodología se inscribe en los estudios socio- educativos de la administración de la educación, orientada a analizar cualitativamente las prácticas educativas desde una perspectiva institucional. En función de ello, la investigación utiliza fuentes primarias, cuya técnica de construcción de datos fue la entrevista en profundidad. El análisis de las entrevistas se orientó a caracterizar las diferentes estrategias y prácticas de gestión de la inclusión social en el nivel secundario, a través de las dimensiones: 1) el lugar del estudiante en la construcción de acuerdos y proyectos educativos; 2) las estrategias de permanencia; 3) el lugar de las trayectorias socio- educativas de los estudiantes en las propuestas educativas; y 4) el vínculo entre la institución y las familias.

Palabras clave: Educación secundaria. Gestión educativa. Inclusión social. Obligatoriedad escolar. Políticas educativas.

Introduction

The study of educational management reveals the ways in which education policies materialize in every educational institution. The literature about educational management addresses different dimensions of analysis. One line of research focuses on different approaches and organizational structures in order to understand institutional practices (GAIRÍN SALLÁN, 1996; POGGI, 2001; CANTON MAYO, 2003; DUSCHATSKY, 2001), such as the Habermasian rationality concept applied to educational management, which allows for the recognition of the assumptions upon which educational management practice is based.

Another line of research is devoted to analyzing the management of educational institutions and education in general (PASTRANA, 2003; BARRIENTOS NORIEGA and TARACENA RUIZ, 2008; ANTÚNEZ, 2000; GVIRTZ, ZACHARIAH and ABREGÚ, 2011) and provide

information about different management styles, forms of participation promoted from principalships, leadership styles, etc.

The construction of conceptual tools is the subject of study of another line of research (FERNÁNDEZ, 2009; ROCKWELL, 2000; BALL, 1989; BATES, 1989; BARDIZA RUIZ, 1991), for example, the approach from the "daily school life" or the micropolitics of the institution.

Finally, another line of research analyzes education policies in connection with educational management (TIRAMONTI, 2011; CARLETTI, 2012; TERIGI, 2008; PUIGGRÓS, 2007; TEDESCO, 2010; SVERDLICK, 2006; SANDER, 2006; EZPELETA, 2004). These research studies recognize a forcing of the existing institutions (TIRAMONTI, 2011), a need to restructure the modern administrative format considering the latest education policies on social inclusion (TERIGI, 2008) and a need to expand analyses about the processes and practices of educational management (TEDESCO, 2010).

These contributions are made in a context where current national education policy aims to promote educational equality by ensuring the conditions for inclusion, recognition, integration and educational achievement of all children, youths and adults at all levels and modalities, but mainly at compulsory education (NATIONAL EDUCATION LAW 26.206, 2006: 17). However, the education system continues to use management practices in keeping with the traditional bureaucratic structure and a selective education policy. Thus, the present educational management is faced with the challenge to renew its institutional practices in order to make the social inclusion policy feasible.

In this context, this research study is in line with educational management studies whose aim is to provide knowledge about social inclusion in educational institutions. To this effect, the article analyzes those practices of democratic management that emerged in the institutions in order to facilitate social inclusion policy at secondary education. Thus, the general objective of this paper is to reconstruct the decisions, choices

and actions taken by directors of secondary schools in the Province of Buenos Aires (the largest province of Argentina) in order to comply with the national law of compulsory secondary education.

Context

Tiramonti (2011) and Tenti Fanfani (2003) note that, throughout the second half of the last century and so far this century, secondary education found a way to process pressure through inclusion, without sacrificing its differentiating and selective mission. Populations that should have been included were first segregated and later included in different school circuits, each of which had a predetermined admission pattern that allowed for the promotion and support of such socio-cultural group. Statistics are quite revealing as regards the degree of social exclusion in secondary school: only 11% of the students that begin first grade, finish secondary school. According to the results of an educational trajectories analysis, most dropouts occur at secondary school. While in primary school, the dropout rate does not exceed 2% in any year, in secondary school, this number climbs to 21.6% in state-run schools and drops to 12.5% in private institutes. Thus, the "incorporate to segregate" strategy is naturalized.

In 2006, in Argentina a new education law was enacted. This law repealed Federal Education Law No. 24.195. The new law, called the National Education Law (LEN) No. 26.206 currently in force, states three objectives historically attributed to secondary education, that have been resolved differently in the past (PUIGGRÓS, 2007). First, the law ensures access to knowledge allowing for continuity of studies, which are not reduced to college, since only 12% of the young people who complete secondary school, access university education. Moreover, continuity of studies should not be restricted to keeping the school bench occupied, but must move towards the formation of individuals who could access the knowledge required not only in their own current social spheres, but

also in other prospective social circles. In this sense, the construction of the new curriculum for secondary education is significantly different from previous curricula mainly focused on university.

Second, the law aims to strengthen education and citizenship practices. The Rights-centred Approach applied to teaching practices involves recognizing the citizenship status of students in schools and their power to make decisions as adolescents and youths at present. It does not appeal to the conception of forming citizens "in" or "for" the future deferring the active participation of youth sectors of society in spaces where they are key players. Contrariwise, this law urges all institutional and social actors in the current socio-cultural context to engage in interrelationship and social link actions between generations, genders, classes, ethnic groups, etc. In these terms, teaching the constitution, the rights and obligations or carrying out projects on Human Rights are necessary, but not sufficient, actions in the classrooms, since they only make sense in the context of a democratic school. Rather, teaching citizenship is making school a place of meeting.

Third, the law states that it must create a link between schools and the productive world to prepare students to enter into the labour market. To do this, the school should address the question of the large number of youths and adolescents who work and are already part of productive labour. Thus, job readiness training in higher years of secondary education should provide opportunities to learn about the different production areas, reflect on their historical and current constitution, and the plethora of positions that everyone could reach studying. Work, in this sense, is no longer considered an exclusive object of certain modalities of secondary education but rather becomes a structuring concept of all secondary schools, where "work or study" do not become mutually exclusive choices.

MONTES and ZIEGLER (2012) note that, although the new education law is orientated to include new sectors to the school, education normally fails since the institutions continue to operate

under the selection-by-exclusion principle from the late nineteenth century. As regards the institutional challenges posed, TERIGI (2008: 29) acknowledges that "in our country, educational management is not prepared to assume important changes in secondary education smoothly. Of course, this is not a malfunction of the bureaucracies. Actually, they are prepared to operate as they have historically done." The traditional way of understanding education in favour of the unity of the educational system, does not legitimize different institutional formats in secondary schools as a way of promoting greater justice.

Method

The **main purpose** of this study is to explore the different strategies and management practices of social inclusion in secondary education. In this sense, the **methodology** used in this paper is in line with socio-educational management studies oriented to analyze educational practices qualitatively from an institutional perspective. Thus, primary sources were consulted by means of in-depth interviews for data collection purposes.

Regarding **the empirical unit**, the province of Buenos Aires (the largest province of Argentina) has 3,136 secondary institutions and 49,629 teaching positions, including school principalship positions[1]. In La Plata, capital city of the province, there were 72 ESB (Basic Secondary Schools), 37 secondary schools, 6 technical colleges, one agricultural school, 2 secondary schools in prisons and 2 CEBAS (Specialized Cycles for Adult Secondary Education)[2] in 2009. Currently, the Secondary Education Office is in charge of three directors, serving 1,004,714 students[3]. In this context, between 2011 and 2014, 32 interviews to directors of secondary schools in the city of La Plata were conducted

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[1] Data provided by the National Board of Information and Evaluation of Educational Quality (DiNIECE).
[2] Data provided by the District Office of La Plata.
[3] According to data obtained from the official website of the Secondary Education Office of the Province of Buenos Aires: http://servicios2.abc.gov.ar/lainstitucion/sistemaeducativo/secundaria/

(namely, 22 state-run secondary schools, 8 private secondary schools and 2 technical colleges)[4].

The **analysis** of the interviews was aimed at characterizing the different social inclusion strategies and management practices in secondary education through the following dimensions: I) the student's role in the development of agreements and educational projects; II) retention strategies; III) the place given to students' socio-educational trajectories in educational proposals; IV) the link between the institution and families.

In this sense, the information collected through interviews in combination with specialized literature, allowed to develop a conceptual map of the main actors' strategies, practices and positions in institutional contexts as regards the management of social inclusion in secondary schools today.

Results

New support conditions for an old formula: grade retention

MADDONI (2014) recognizes a student population which does not find public spaces in keeping with their experiences, thoughts and practices, situation that becomes apparent in the increasing absences and dropouts from educational institutions. Absences and grade retentions are greater in the early years, given that the beginning of secondary school deepens difficulties that already started in primary school.

The social inclusion policy which arouse in response to exclusion (KAPLAN, 2006) is intended to modify certain organizational and academic features of the school system, such as the institutional distribution of education, students' support proposals, and community and multidisciplinary actions.

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[4] The interviews were conducted by the students of the careers of Educational Sciences, Biological Sciences and Physics and Chemistry, during the classes in charge of the author of the article, corresponding to the subject of Management of Education and Educational Institutions (National University of La Plata).

This section aims to reconstruct the actions carried out by educational institutions to avoid grade retention, and the consequent dropouts. In the interviewee's words:

"This year, within the 'Improvement Plan' framework, we proposed to replace exams by lessons. It is a plan of 8 lessons with a special professor during which students must meet certain requirements in order to pass the subject, and be exempted from the final exam. It is a useful strategy to help students pass the school subjects they have failed. We have this plan for first, second, third and fourth year, but all students who have subjects pending can take part in the plan." (E16)

As the director notes, the "Improvement plan" for secondary schools is a national program[5] that aims to improve learning conditions for students. Each institution develops certain strategies or actions they consider appropriate, to contribute to the development of conditions, agreements and projects that may enrich and enhance youths and adolescents' training. One of these specific proposals is to help students through support classes and tutorials.

An alternative to grade retention is the implementation of certain strategies that smooth students' path through secondary school. Particularly, achieving a balance between those curricular trajectories established by teaching programs and schemes and the actual variety of students' educational trajectories is of paramount importance. In this regard, another strategy is described by the following interviewee:

"If you spark interest in what you're doing, if you say what you're doing, why you're doing it, and you show its usefulness, you add meaning to compulsory schooling. 'You are here for these reasons, do you understand?' If we think the only aim of school is getting students a job, that's underestimating them. In reality, the school is a generator of dreams, everyone at some point dreamed of being an astronaut, a cook or a safeguard." (E17)

The contributions of the interview relate to certain ideas previously discussed about the construction of meaning around compulsory

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[5] According to "Design and Implementation of the Institutional Improvement Plan" (2011), Document No. 1, Ministry of Education.

education and students' participation in institutional life which, in turn, smooth students' path through secondary school.

Picking up the previous section analysis, the educational and social trajectories of youths and adolescents are not linear or homogeneous, and the features of their experiences are unique and dependent on different groups of students (DUSCHATZKY, FARRÁN & AGUIRRE, 2013, BRACCHI & GABBAI, 2013).

Compulsory secondary education should be conceived as an opportunity to create and strengthen meanings that students can build around the idea of attending school. A proposal in keeping with this conception is that of opening school doors, in terms of sharing with students the logic and dynamics of the institution, "you're here because of this...," as the director pointed. This is a way of showing students their value at school.

Retention strategies: projects devised and implemented by students

Everyone's right to education, with its counterpart, compulsory education, are rooted in the primary level of the national education system. In this regard, compulsory primary education became a space of domestication, designed to "civilize" the children of workers (ALVAREZ URIA and VARELA, 1991). Thus, the sanction of compulsory primary education, through law no.1420 in 1882, meant that the school and the schooling process acquired the function of ensuring social order through discipline and control (DUSSEL, 1997; GRINBERG and LEVY, 2009).

In this respect, LEVY (2013) notes that the compulsory nature of education of that time was linked to the suppression of rights and personal guarantees. Thus, the application of school discipline was possible because the foundations that generated the school discipline also conceived the individual as a being deprived of rights, as an object of state supervision.

By contrast, the National Education Law No. 26.206 enacted in 2006 recognizes that children and adolescents are individuals endowed with rights rather than objects of protection. The rights stated are the following: to life, dignity and personal integrity, private life and family privacy, identity, identity papers, education, non-discrimination due to pregnancy, parenthood or motherhood, freedom, sport and recreational game, environment, free association to speak and be heard.

Today, there are new conditions and new subjectivities that recognize diversity in pursuit of social inclusion. The school management is no longer looking for homogeneity but for inclusion of the varied social, cultural and individual conditions, as well as different pace and forms of work, of studies, and personal forms of relationship to knowledge. The interviews that follow are related to other ways of thinking the educational proposals, where the youths and adolescents attending secondary school today are the major figures:

"Art is a spectacular universal language that allows us to put experience into words, and that is why it changes our lives. Although the core school cycle is common to all students, as in all schools, each institution has an orientation from the fourth year onwards.... Everyone leaves with a smile from here. It's fascinating. The bell rings and the students do not want to leave; they are playing the organ and the timpani, and that is great! This form of communication brought us near. We approached. And not only was there music, but theatre and folk dance. Last year we had four folk quartets that shook my soul. That is why in 2008, we chose art as the orientation of our secondary school. We were the first school of art-music." (E5)

The interviewee proposes to choose the modality of secondary institutions according to the interests, practices and projects of students and teachers. Beyond the regulations, the coexistence of all the actors at the educational institution does not refer to a group of individuals sharing the same space during a given period of time but, as the director notes, to their interrelationship, i.e. an inter-generational meeting that takes place through channels such as art and music[6].

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[6] Secondary education in Argentina is organized in two cycles: (1) Common Core School Cycle and (2) Oriented Education Cycle, whose nature varies according to different fields of knowledge, different social spheres and work areas.

Furthermore, the ways in which students mix with teachers, also called inter-generational links, do not refer to the asymmetry with respect to knowledge (so characteristic of longstanding relationships established inside the educational institutions), but are rather conceived as an approach emerged from sharing the same experiences from different perspectives, beyond the roles that each actor plays in the institutional life (director, teacher, teaching assistant, student, etc.) This contributes to share experiences respecting the interests, assets and trajectories of each other.

The dialogue between generations inside schools has more to do with recognizing that there are different types of knowledge than with assuming that it is the teacher, and not the student, who is in possession of knowledge. LEVY (2013) notes that new generations acquire knowledge through the use of new technologies; that operating domain inverted generational transfers; it is the youngest who teach adults their use, they have an ease of movement in these environments that adults lack. Thus, trust in student's knowledge is a possible mode of exchange, a way to integrate their practices to the school context:

"We have been working in the radio since last year. We set up a radio studio; the students gathered the computers that make up the radio, they made records for the ones who will take over; and developed the automated technology (even remotely with their home computers). And they did everything from scratch: they repaired old computers, assembled the new computers... They walked the streets in search of useful parts of old computers and brought them to school, they are brilliant! We have a bag full of spare parts, so if you find any obsolete computer, please bring it here!" [Laughs] (E7)

Such is the case of the previous interview, which portrays how knowledge integration practices allow students to be the creators of digital scenarios in the school, such as the radio studio. In this case, it is the recognition not only of students' digital knowledge, but also of the street as an everyday space for youths and adolescents, as the director says. The materials found on the street are selected by the students and brought to school to be used in the assembly of radio equipment.

So, the concept of "digital scenarios" adds to LEVY's (2013) ideas about youths' digital knowledge. The recognition of students' digital knowledge, along with the spaces generated by teachers and directors, allow for the creation of interaction scenarios between the different generations that coexist at school.

Continuity strategies for students' trajectories: the link between studies and work.

According to CAPPELLACCI (2008), the guidance function of school as regards students' trajectories should extend the areas of student experience so that they can shape decisions related to their life projects. Educational institutions should provide students with educational and job counselling, offering a glimpse of how the future would look like, allowing to visualize different alternatives, and facilitate experimentation through concrete actions.

Meanwhile, RASCOVAN (2013) notes that representations of occupational and professional spheres are closely related to students' school biographies, so the varied experiences developed along their educational trajectories are crucial to the process of building a future.

In this sense, it is of vital importance to provide specific educational experiences that can link students with work experiences and study in order to improve these trajectories. As ACOSTA (2011) remarks, the institutional proposals that focus on continuous trajectories ensure gradual progress in the subjects and out-of-school spheres as well, through the bonds established between the school and the community, and the school and the productive world.

The interview below depicts the different work and study practices and experiences that contribute to the enrichment of students' trajectories:

"Every year, in a joint effort of the subjects of Management Technology, Organizational Theory, Economics, Accounting Information Systems and Geography, students must create their own Travel Agencies—with all that this implies—and offer package tours in an annual exhibition in which they put a lot of effort and enthusiasm.

The students set up the company, design the tours, and "sell" the packages. Actually, it is a success. Besides, the students work with College syllabuses, so that those who choose Economics careers may go through their first year at college at ease, perfectly knowing the content of each subject." (E8)

One of the nodal issues of the new education law, which PUIGGRÓS (2007) analyzes, is the commitment to stop thinking in terms of the study-work binomial that contributes to reproduce some circuits, where work-related knowledge pertains to agricultural and technical modalities, and other types of knowledge that require higher education remain in the domain of other modalities of school, such as the "common education schools".

On the contrary, in order to integrate different types of knowledge and practices, the law aims to link study and work practices in all secondary schools. In reality, secondary schools are developing several integrated proposals, depending on the context, needs and, above all, life projects of their students. Thus, according to the above interview, one of the possibilities of integration between work and study knowledge and practices that allow for the establishment of links between different experiences as regards students' trajectories, is setting up a business, from its conception to the sale of services and products. Other interviews show other possibilities, such as the following:

"We are working with clubs to create spaces for interaction, for example, spaces devoted to students who want to play chess. Other students play soccer in teams such as 'Huracán' or 'Estudiantes,' so we adapt Physical Education schedules for them. These are actions between the school and the community. We have interviews with soccer clubs' representative, neighbourhood associations and community radios all the time. We are always looking for articulation to facilitate the participation of students. There are projects with 'Radio Universidad,' with the School of Journalism. So, community and school are in constant communication, they are not watertight compartments." (E9)

The example above clearly shows the link established between secondary school and students' life projects. The students that attend

school daily, do not leave their experiences behind before entering school, but quite the opposite; these proposals aim to recognize the students as youths and adolescents with their own lives, biographies and previous and current paths. In this sense, the school recognizes the practices and knowledge that students develop in other extramural areas, and this reinforces three key ideas for strengthening secondary education.

Firstly, the agreements contribute to the strengthening of the school's socio-community dimension through the search for agreements and exchanges between the school and other civil society organizations. Secondly, the practices that favour the agreements help students put different types of knowledge constructed at school into practice, thus, giving them the possibility to apply them in a particular labour practice. Thirdly, the students' work experiences gained through these agreements are also presented as a strategy to enter into the labour market. Thus, the agreements provide certain necessary conditions for students to continue their careers in the work sphere.

The right to secondary education: a task of co-responsibility

The inclusion of all the youths and adolescents at secondary school, as DUSCHATZKY and AGUIRRE (2013) observe, is not a matter of establishing a priori mechanisms to house students, but of making room for new situations. The school is no longer an idea or a project, or a promise, but rather something that happens in the occurrence of events. The school is conceived as an educational institution in constant rebirth, not inhabited by the monotonous reiteration of its objectives, purposes, tasks, or rules.

Thus, inclusion can be thought of as in terms of "providing a space" (DUSCHATZKY, FARRÁN and AGUIRRE, 2013), which requires a change of thought and decisions, bringing interventions, actions and creations into play; and not just a mere gesture of allowing entrance to those who ask permission.

In this sense, this article examines how the schools "make room" for everybody, and manage mandatory secondary education. Throughout the interviews analyzed, directors talked about the educational proposals that allow the link between the school and the students' trajectories, and the relationship between the institution and community organizations.

Youths and adolescents' education is not the sole responsibility of directors and teachers; families are also responsible. The interviews that follow show new ways of parent involvement that aim to strengthen the school-family bond, making them an ally in the schooling process of their children:

"I think some parents refuse to come to school because they think we call them on some behaviour problem of their children. There are those who want to know and those that do not want, or care, to listen... Ideally, it would be great if we could provide a meeting place for parents to attend, a space that they could make their own, eventually leading to a more regular contact with them; thus, they could come to school not only when a serious situation arises. But this idea has not been implemented yet; in fact, it has never got beyond the planning stage." (E11)

The director's account approaches us to a new paradigm that aims to support school-family alliances based on an advice and not a complaint perspective. As the interviewee observed, it is an established practice that schools call parents on their children's errors, to talk about how they have gone astray breaking institutional regulations. Shortly, parents are called to help re-adjust student's practices to the rules that standardize behaviours and ideas.

Instead, we can currently observe a rethinking of the school-family relationship conditions, which is consistent with GVIRTZ, ZACHARIAS and ABREGÚ's (2011) arguments, that parents should not only be called when problems arise, but also to share projects, ideas and institutional practices with them. It is about building alliances from a proactive and positive perspective of the institutional reality, as noted by the example below:

"The school still needs the family, as children do, although they think themselves as grown-ups and do not want their parents to come to school. The other day when we made a School, Family and Community workshop, we invited families and only four moms came. They took part in the activities, read a few short stories that were chosen by the school librarian, and it was great! In kindergartens, it is more likely to have a high turnout of parents when this kind of activities is carried out but what happens in secondary school? Parents are called only when there is a conflict, so to reverse this, we invite them to school festivals, children's school performances or fairs, and very few come, but when they come... if they knew the happiness of their children!" (E12)

As shown in the example above, secondary compulsory education is a task of co-responsibility, where the socialization areas closest to the youths and adolescents join in a relationship to support school attendance.

In this regard, one possible action is to invite parents to participate in activities, this will show the students that their surrounding circle accompanies them during this stage from a position of participation, construction of ideas and proposals. At the same time, the interview shows that conflicts can weaken the school-family link, therefore, the education approach as a right and obligation constitutes an opportunity to redefine bonds' content: why does the school call families and what for? In the interview that follows, there is another example of co-responsibility as regards secondary education:

"Compulsory primary education has been implemented some years ago, but compulsory secondary education is the great challenge; because you're talking about teenagers who have other possibilities, other interests. Now there is more dialogue, more proposals from school and more relationship with the families. We must work with families because there are many times that students do not come to school because they are taking care of their little brothers because their parents are divorced. That is, how we can make the family group understand that it is not only a matter of obligation, but of reflection on the benefits of the obligation. We must try to think not about forcing parents to bring the students to school, but of establishing agreements and making commitments to fulfil that obligation." (E13)

The idea of "reflecting on the benefit of compulsory education," as the director states, questions the direct relationship between obligation and requirement. The proposal aims to ensure that the requirement be meaningful to the families, contributing to demonstrate that the counterpart of fulfilling the obligation to attend secondary school is not a penalty but a right. So "education rights, meaning and family" constitute a vital triad that, in partnership with the school, contribute to support students' trajectories.

Conclusions

The paradigm of social inclusion at secondary school, promoted through the enactment of the National Education Law, is not confined to standardize organizational processes, and main actors' practices and choices, but to make of the varied groups' participation, an institutional mode of operation.

Throughout the article, there are several experiences and practices that serve as support strategies and a guide for youths and adolescents' socio-educational trajectories to find a place at secondary school. In this sense, the conclusions try to pick up some ideas that have given substance to these strategies.

First, school projects should be devised and staged by students. Certain essential contributions on the subject have noted that one of the difficulties to sustain comprehensive proposals in schools is the hourly organization of teaching positions, which require teachers to work in shifts in different institutions, making it difficult for them to build a sense of belonging, which is critical to educational projects.

This idea somehow implies that school projects and proposals are the sole responsibility of teachers. However, this paper proposes that it is the students who should sustain and develop these projects in a co-responsibility context, where teachers guide and contribute to their development along the students' school path. This idea contributes to rebalance students and teachers' responsibility.

Second, institutional decisions and practices should make sense to all of actors involved in order to generate students' participation and permanence. This requires the recognition of the heterogeneous backgrounds and diverse experiences that surround and shape students' lives. In this respect, the school could deploy some strategies, such as the continuous review of the relationship between those trajectories designed in the curriculum and the real trajectories of youths and adolescents. Likewise, the conventions and agreements between the school and other community organizations may offer students the possibility to develop labour and professional experiences that enrich their knowledge, promote their integration and strengthen their experiences.

Thirdly, the recent compulsive nature of secondary education involves a paradigm shift, where relations as regards knowledge, links between school and society, and commitments among all the institutional actors should be redefined. This implies, mainly for teachers and directors, a time to re-learn, go back and walk a mile in other people's shoes. Surely, there will be links to strengthen and/or ideas to redefine in relation to the traditions and legacies that teacher training and institutional management have left in every director's biography.

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