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The sociocultural profile of undergraduate students in education in the Universidade Federal Rural do Semi-Árido field – which subjects in the semi-arid do we speak of?

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ABSTRACT

This text, presents an analysis about the sociocultural profile of students of the Interdisciplinary Degree in Field Education of the Rural Federal University of the Semi-Arid (LEDOC/UFERSA). Based on a documentary survey, it takes information from 257 students of that graduation for analysis. The analysis is systematized in five "thematic axes", namely: a) number of male and female students; b) age group of the trainees; c) ethnic-racial belonging; d) family income range; e) the naturalness of the students. In conclusion, we assume that most of the students are women, are between 17 and 25 years old, self-declared brown or black, have as family income up to two minimum wages and have naturalness referring to cities circumscribed in the Mesoregion of Western Potiguar of the State of Rio Grande do Norte. These aspects point, among others, to the feminization in the training of teachers of The Field Education and to the inclusion of social groups of the semi-arid potiguar in Higher Education, which were marginalized in the formation of Brazilian society.

KEYWORDS

Field education. Teacher training. Higher education.

O perfil sociocultural dos estudantes da Licenciatura em Educação do Campo da Universidade Federal Rural do Semi-Árido – de quais sujeitos do semiárido falamos?

RESUMO

O texto em tela objetiva apresentar uma análise acerca do perfil sociocultural dos estudantes da Licenciatura Interdisciplinar em Educação do Campo da Universidade Federal Rural do Semi-Árido (LEDOC/UFERSA). Com base em um levantamento documental, toma para análise informações de 257 discentes da referida graduação. A análise se encontra sistematizada em cinco eixos temáticos, a saber: a) número de discentes homens e mulheres; b) faixa etária dos estudantes; c) pertença étnico-racial; d) faixa de renda familiar; e) naturalidade dos estudantes. Como conclusão, sobrelevamos que a maior parte do alunado é constituída por mulheres, possui faixa etária entre 17 e 25 anos, se autodeclara parda ou preta, tem como renda familiar até dois salários mínimos e possui naturalidade referente a municípios circunscritos na Mesorregião do Oeste Potiguar do Estado do Rio Grande do Norte. Esses aspectos, entre outros, apontam para a feminização na formação de professores da Educação do Campo e para a inclusão de grupos sociais do semiárido potiguar na Educação Superior, os quais foram marginalizados na formação da sociedade brasileira.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Educação do campo. Formação de professores. Educação superior.

¿El perfil sociocultural de los estudiantes del grado en educación del campo de la Universidad Federal Rural del Semi-Árido – de los cuales las asignaturas del semiárido hablamos?

RESUMEN

Este texto presenta un análisis del perfil sociocultural de los estudiantes del Grado Interdisciplinario en Educación de Campo de la Universidad Federal Rural del Semiárido (LEDOC/UFERSA). Basado en una encuesta documental, se necesita información de análisis de 257 estudiantes del citado programa de pregrado. El análisis se sistematiza en cinco "ejes temáticos", es decir: a) número de estudiantes masculinos y femeninos; b) grupo de edad de aprendices; c) pertenencia étnico-racial; d) rango de ingresos familiares; e) naturalidad de los estudiantes. En conclusión, en general, nosotros que la mayoría de los estudiantes son mujeres, tenemos un grupo de edad entre 17 y 25 años, se declaran marrones os pretos, tienen como ingresos familiares hasta dos salarios mínimos y tienen naturalidad refiriéndose a ciudades circunscritas en la Mesoregión del Potiguar Occidental del Estado de Río Grande do Norte. Estos aspectos, entre otros, apuntan a la feminización en la educación de los profesores de La Educación de Campo y a la inclusión de grupos sociales del semiárido potiguar en la Educación Superior, que fueron marginados en la formación de la sociedad brasileña.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Educación en el campo. Formación de profesores. Educación superior.

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Introdução

In contemporary decades, with the implementation of educational policies aimed at promoting Higher Education, such as the Program to Support Restructuring and Expansion Plans for Federal Universities (REUNI), we have had a significant increase in the number of students from lower classes with access to Higher Education. By bringing Higher Education to cities in the countryside, either through public institutions or through the private sector, contributed to the increase in the number of students from the lower classes, as never seen in the history of Brazil (DINIZ; GOERGEN, 2019).

Furthermore, there was an increase in the number of courses under different modalities: baccalaureate, teaching and technological (DINIZ; GOERGEN, 2019; GATTI *et al.* 2019). In the case of undergraduate courses, the expansion of interdisciplinary degrees has become a mark in the national context. Apart from that, there was the birth of specific degrees, such as the Degrees in Rural Education. As a result of the historical struggle of rural social movements, these graduations intend to include, according to Medeiros, Amorim and Carvalho (2020), subjects who, in the historical course, were denied the right of access to education, as well as its continuation in this process and also access to Higher education.

This work is a study which analyzes the sociocultural profile of students from the Interdisciplinary Degree in Rural Education at the Rural Federal University of the Semiárid (LEDOC/UFERSA), Campus Mossoró, Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil, based on a documentary survey conducted in 2018 with information available in the academic records existing at the previously mentioned university. For this, it is based on the analysis of five thematic axes produced at the time of construction and analysis of the data, namely: a) number of male and female students; b) students age group; c) ethnic-racial belonging; d) family income range; e) place of birth of the students.

According to Medeiros (2019), we point out that we understand the “sociocultural profile” as the set of social and cultural characteristics referring to a social group of subjects, which contribute to bring it closer or to distinguish it from other groups, as a human collective situated in a historical context and time. Thus, we studied the sociocultural profile of students from the countryside, subjects who represent the people of the countryside in the State of Rio Grande do Norte and/or other federative states.

In the methodological aspect, the research was carried out in two stages: in the first, we requested, in the Electronic System of the Citizen Information Service (e-SIC), via opening a protocol, the contact with UFERSA and the information that we wanted; in the second, with access to the information recorded in the students' documents, we organized the data, through quantitative parameters, in 04 (four) graphs and 01 (one) map for qualitative analysis.

In total, we obtained information from the 257 (two hundred and fifty-seven) students enrolled in the LEDOC/UFERSA Course in 2018. In the data production process, contact with the information did not allow us to identify the subjects in any way, given that that we received

from the institution the reports consistent with the student records, using the e-SIC database as an intermediary. We clarify that the available information was highlighted by the students during the registration period for admission to the LEDOC/UFERSA Course.

In addition to this brief introduction, we organized the rest of the text into three sections: at first, we discuss the Interdisciplinary Degree in Rural Education at UFERSA, its general aspects, including its proposal for teacher training, curriculum organization, among others; in the second moment, we presented the analysis of the sociocultural profile of the students, based on the thematic axes highlighted above; finally, in the final considerations, we learned about the importance of including rural populations in Higher Education, especially through access to teacher training courses.

We hope that this study be added to the other articles published in the present issue of the “International Journal of Higher Education”. Also, we hope that the research will contribute to the national debate promoted in different sectors of the educational area regarding Higher Education addressed to rural people.

Interdisciplinary Degree in Rural Education at UFERSA – general aspects

The Interdisciplinary Degree in Rural Education at the Rural Federal University of the Semi-Arid (LEDOC/UFERSA) began its training activities on December 2, 2013¹. This is an initial training course for teachers whose target audience is aimed at rural populations.

We point out that in its Pedagogical Course Project (PPC), it is stated that, among the impelling justifications for its creation, is the urgency, on the part of UFERSA, to carry out actions that encourage the populations that live in rural Potiguar to remain in the countryside for means, among other points, of an education linked to the reality of the semi-arid region, and this may occur by valuing their cultures, their knowledge and their ways of living (RURAL FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF THE SEMI-ARID, 2013).

According to the PPC, as UFERSA is an institution that values the social commitment to act in the direction of scientific, cultural and educational development for part of the semi-arid territory of Rio Grande do Sul. It has a population in needy social and economic conditions, faced the challenge of building an initial teacher training course committed to this context (FEDERAL RURAL UNIVERSITY OF THE SEMI-ARID, 2013). The Pedagogical Course Project also informs that,

[...] the proposal of UFERSA to create the Degree in Rural Education shows itself as a unique opportunity to intervene in this reality, from the training of teachers to work

¹ We found, on the UFERSA website, the information that its creation took place through the Resolution of the University Council (CONSUNI), nº 005, of November 28, 2008. However, due to our professional experience at LEDOC/UFERSA, we were aware that the course was approved at the institution, in that year, for Public Notice SESU/SETEC/SECADI/MEC nº 2, of April 23, 2008, but did not receive approval from the Ministry of Education, which led to the elaboration of a new proposal, for Public Notice SESU/SETEC/SECADI/MEC nº 2, of August 31, 2012, and the beginning of the training actions of the degree only in 2013.

in rural schools in the semi-arid region and in the promotion of pedagogical practices contextualized with the local culture, without losing sight of the limits and potential of the Brazilian semi-arid region (FEDERAL RURAL UNIVERSITY OF THE SEMI-ARID, 2013, p. 15).

In addition to this characteristic, the PPC points out that UFERSA, being involved in the process of expansion and democratization of Higher Education, which took place through Law Decree nº 6096, of April 24, 2007 (BRASIL, 2007), the implementation of the Support Program for Restructuring and Expansion Plans of Federal Universities (REUNI). What is more, it is a rural university that, since its origin, as the Higher School of Agriculture of Mossoró/RN (ESAM), has been keeping a dialogue with the issues of the countryside and with the development of the Brazilian semi-arid region. It offers bachelor's degree courses, first in the area of Agrarian Sciences - Agronomy and Veterinary Medicine - and later in the scope of Engineering and Applied Social Sciences, when it was realized the possibility of expanding its training scope (FEDERAL RURAL UNIVERSITY OF THE SEMI-ARID, 2013). Thus, these are the main reasons provided in the Pedagogical Course Project that ensure the importance of creating the degree in the institution.²

Among the legal frameworks which support the proposal for teacher training in the document, there are the National Curricular Guidelines for the Initial Training of Basic Education Teachers, Opinion CNE/CP nº 9, of May 8, 2001, and Resolution CNE/CP nº 1, of February 18, 2002; the Operational Guidelines for Basic Education in Rural Schools, Opinion CNE/CEB nº 36, of December 4, 2001, and Resolution CNE/CEB nº 1, of April 3, 2002; and the Opinion CNE/CEB nº 1, of February 1, 2006, which discusses the Pedagogy of Alternation for Basic Education in Rural Schools (FEDERAL RURAL UNIVERSITY OF THE SEMI-ARID, 2013).

Within the scope of the Ministry of Education, LEDOC is registered as an interdisciplinary degree, in the face-to-face modality, in the Municipality of Mossoró - RN, city where the Central Campus of UFERSA is located. Once the information is attested, it is important to recognize that LEDOC/UFERSA was approved as a permanent course by the SESU/SETEC/SECADI/MEC Notice No. Campo (PROCAMPO), which, between 2008 and 2012, published three Specific Selection Notices for the opening of courses in Higher Education Institutions in the country.

As a main objective, it intends to qualify teachers to work in the final years of Elementary School and High School, in the areas of Human and Social Sciences and Natural Sciences in rural schools, and also to work in the management of school and community educational processes in the environment. rural. From this perspective, its target audience is composed of

² The PPC states that the high number of subjects from the countryside without literacy in Rio Grande do Norte, in the 2000s, led social movements in the countryside to organize and seek public bodies, such as the Secretary of Education and Culture of the State of Rio de Janeiro. Grande do Norte, to offer teacher training courses to work in education in rural areas. In order to face these challenges, UFERSA perceived the construction of LEDOC as relevant. These characteristics are also guided as a justification for the creation of the Course in the institution (RURAL FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF THE SEMI-ARID, 2013).

different subjects who work and/or live in the countryside (FEDERAL RURAL UNIVERSITY OF THE SEMI-ARID, 2013).

As a consequence of the SESU/SETEC/SECADI/MEC Public Notice No. 2, of August 31, 2012 (BRASIL, 2012a), providing that institutions, when preparing teacher training proposals, should think about qualification in Natural Sciences and/or Mathematics, the choice for the qualification in Human and Social Sciences, in addition to Natural Sciences, is justified, according to the document, by the fact that, in that period, there were already two Degrees in Mathematics at UFERSA, one in the distance modality and the other in the face-to-face modality offered by the National Plan for the Training of Basic Education Teachers (PARFOR).³

Thus, the qualification in Human and Social Sciences is considered relevant, since there were, until now, degrees offered in the area by the institution, and there was a lack of professionals in this context to work in Rural Education in the semi-arid region of potiguar. The Pedagogical Course Project presents:

The option for the qualification in Human and Social Sciences was due to the fact that UFERSA has already fulfilled its social role of training teachers in mathematics and, also, because we know the reality of rural schools, in which teachers/ the curricular components of the human and social areas do not have adequate and contextualized training for living in the countryside and in the semi-arid region. In addition, recent education policies show some changes towards the inclusion of certain components in school curricula, such as sociology and philosophy in high school, and Afro-Brazilian history and culture, established as a mandatory theme by Law 10,639, of January 9th of 2003. This is a national demand of schools that becomes even more evident in rural schools, being, therefore, an area of extreme relevance for us to carry out a contextualized education for coexistence with the semi-arid (FEDERAL RURAL UNIVERSITY OF THE SEMI-ARID, 2013, p. 17).

For the admission of students to LEDOC, UFERSA develops specific selective processes, aimed at the people of the rural environment of Rio Grande do Norte, focusing on the populations of the West Potiguar Mesoregion, an agglutinating space of 62 municipalities in the State that have culture and ways of life close/proper to rural populations. Again, we consult the Pedagogical Course Project to support our discourse:

The course will be carried out through the organization of a group with admission based on a specific selection and the identification of demands by UFERSA and partners, in order to favor an identity formation among the participants and the collective management of the pedagogical process. For the organization of the class, preference will be given to students who live and/or work in the semi-arid countryside communities that make up the West Potiguar Mesoregion, with a view to better organizing the alternation regime that characterizes the course (FEDERAL RURAL UNIVERSITY OF THE SEMI-ARID, 2013, p. 28).

Since its creation at UFERSA, in 2013, there have been biannual and annual entries of newcomers to the Course. On average, each class is made up of 60 students⁴ who, throughout

³ In the year 2021, only the Degree in Mathematics in the distance modality is in operation at the institution.

⁴ The State of Rio Grande do Norte is divided, politically, into four mesoregions that cover a quantitative of 167 municipalities: Mesoregion of West Potiguar (62), Mesoregion of Agreste Potiguar (43), Mesoregion of Central

the training process – more precisely, in the fifth period – opt for a specific training qualification, that is, Human and Social Sciences or Natural Sciences.

Internally at the institution, the Course is linked to the Center for Applied Social Sciences and Humanities (CCSAH), with most of the subjects offered by the Department of Human Sciences (DCH), and has the support of 16 teachers from different areas of knowledge, with centralized dedication to the Course, to carry out teaching, research and extension activities, as they are part of the vacancy codes available for public tender by the Ministry of Education at the time of approval of the degree.

In this context, there are teachers with initial training in Pedagogy – 04 –, History – 01 –, Geography – 01 –, Portuguese Language Arts – 01 –, Libras Language Arts – 01 –, Science – with qualification in Biology – 01 –, Chemistry – 02 –, Social Work – 01 –, Social Sciences – 03 –, and Physics – 01. Apart from these professionals, LEDOC/UFERSA receives support from other professors of the institution in the areas of Agronomy, Law, Veterinary Medicine, Philosophy, among others.⁵

In reference to its proposal for teacher training, the Pedagogical Course Project is that the degree works on a semester basis of credits, having as methodological orientation the Pedagogy of Alternation with class stages in the School/University Time and in the Community Time, during the day shift, with a duration of 04 years, that is, 08 academic semesters, with a total workload of 3,210 hours/classes, distributing the curricular components and training contents in three training centers (RURAL FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF THE SEMIARID, 2013).

From the 3,210 hours/classes, the Core of Common Studies, the first training core, adds 1,605 hours/classes, with subjects in five areas, namely: 1) Human and Social Sciences; 2) Languages and Codes; 3) Pedagogical Studies; 4) Agricultural Sciences; 5) Mathematics. In the organization of the curricular matrix, this nucleus is responsible for the foundations that support the training of teachers in the Course. The second core, prescribed as the Core of Integrating Activities, comprises 975 hours/classes, with curricular components related to the context: 1) Research; 2) Pedagogical Practices; 3) the Integrating Seminars; 4) Supervised Internships. In our understanding, its main function in the curricular matrix of the Course is to contribute to a greater relationship between formative times – school/university time and community time. The last core, made up of 630 hours/classes, focuses on the study of specific areas of qualification. It is called the Specific Studies Nucleus and is organized into two areas: 1) Human and Social Sciences; 2) Natural Sciences (RURAL FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF THE SEMIARID, 2013).

Potiguar (37) and Mesoregion of East Potiguar (27). Each Mesoregion is also divided into microregions. The West Potiguar Mesoregion has the largest number of municipalities and is located entirely in the potiguar semi-arid region (BRAZILIAN INSTITUTE OF GEOGRAPH AND STATISTICS, 2017).

⁵ We found a record, on the institution's website, which points out, in the academic year of 2016, the admission of 30 students per academic semester, however, this amount occurred only in that period - year 2016. In the others, the constitution of each initial class had the number of 60 students. We also inform you that, as of 2017, the entry of graduates into the Course has been carried out annually and no longer every six months.

It is from these three training centers that the set of disciplines is organized into 08 academic semesters designed for teacher training and merges the curricular matrix of LEDOC/UFERSA. In the training process, the Core of Common Studies begins in the first period and continues until the last semester of training. Both the students of the Human and Social Sciences qualification and the students of the Natural Sciences qualification take courses in the aforementioned nucleus together.

The Core of Integrating Activities, like the previous one, begins in the first semester of training at LEDOC/UFERSA and continues with disciplines until the eighth semester. In it, students from both qualifications attend curricular components in common; however, the number of disciplines and the value of hours/classes of the same, in moments, is lower than the Core of Common Studies.

On the other hand, the Specific Studies Center, unlike the other two, begins only in the fifth period of training in the Course, a phase in which students choose, on their own initiative, the qualification in which they intend to graduate. In the curriculum matrix, it is proposed, through the distribution of the curricular components in the three training centers, the inclusion of five major areas of training - Human and Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Mathematics, Languages and Codes and Agricultural Sciences - endorsed for the elaboration of proposals of LEDOC courses in the country (BRASIL, 2012a). The emphasis on the areas of Human and Social Sciences and Natural Sciences does not exclude the other areas.

According to the PPC, due to the complexity of aggregating the two qualifications in a single curriculum, these areas span different academic semesters and are not limited or concentrated in a single core (RURAL FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF THE SEMIARID, 2013). Even with a perspective of disciplinary curricular organization by knowledge areas, the processed relationship of the curricular components between the training areas and the training centers is one of the aspects that offers paths for the interdisciplinary training of teachers in the degree. O Projeto Pedagógico de Curso informa:

[...]the set of thematic areas is articulated in the different centers and activities, in order to guarantee an interdisciplinary formation based on a disciplinary curricular organization by areas of knowledge, as recommended in the Pedagogical Project [...] of UFERSA (RURAL FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF THE SEMIARID, 2013, p. 33-34).

In this logic, the official document says that the curricular components are not taken as disciplines or programs finalized for application, but, differently, they are understood “as particular forms of study” on areas, knowledge and contents that only acquire meaning, in the totality of the training proposal, when linked to the alternation of training times – school/university time and community time – considered, every six months, in the course (RURAL FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF THE SEMIARID, 2013, p. 31).

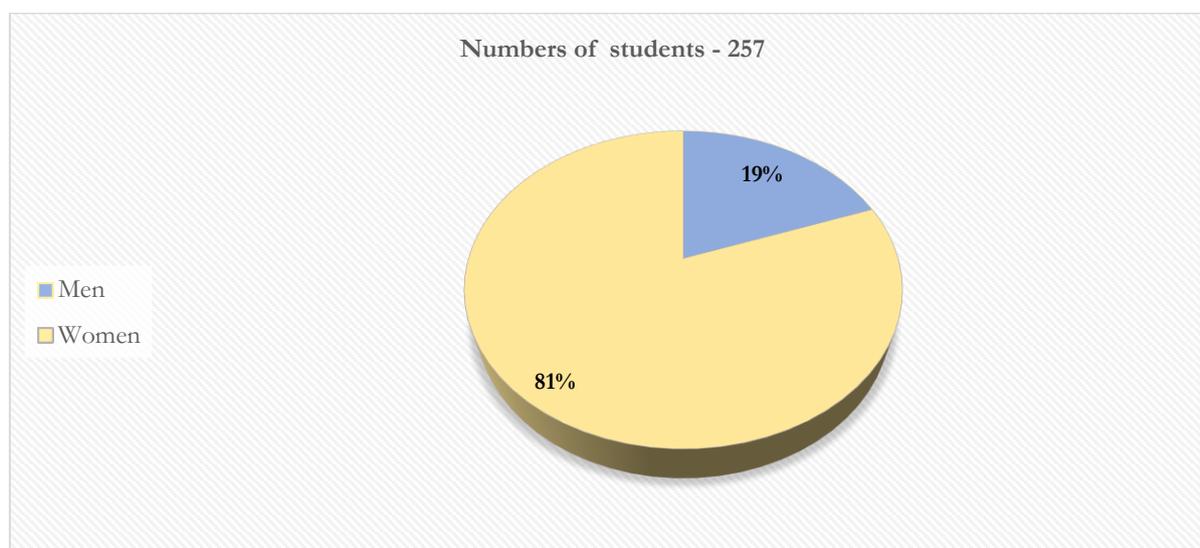
It is worth mentioning that research, in this context, appears as one of the central dimensions that interconnect the entire curricular organization of LEDOC/UFERSA. It is responsible both

for the dialogue between the training centers and the curricular components of each academic semester and for the association of training actions between the periods of School/University Time and Community Time (RURAL FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF THE SEMIARID, 2013).

O sociocultural profile of LEDOC/UFERSA students - the analysis

After listing the general aspects of the LEDOC/UFERSA Course, we continue the discussion by presenting the analysis regarding the sociocultural profile of the students of this graduation. As mentioned, in searches carried out through the Electronic System of the Citizen Information Service (e-SIC), we obtained important records of the institution, which we later systematized into five thematic axes. In this way, in reference to the first thematic axis, “number of male and female students” of LEDOC/UFERSA, we communicate that most of the students refer to females. Graph 1 summarizes the findings:

Graph 1. Percentage of Male and Female Students at LEDOC/UFERSA



Source: Electronic System of the Information Service for the citizen (e-SIC), 2018.

From the 257 students of the Interdisciplinary Degree in Rural Education at UFERSA in the first half of 2018, 207 are female and 50 are male. This value confirms the percentage of 81% of the students being represented by women and 19% being constituted by men.

As is known, this characteristic in the profile of students in undergraduate courses and teaching in Basic Education is not a recent phenomenon. In the study by Gatti and Barretto (2009, p. 161), there are notes that, since the emergence of the first normal schools, the “process of entry of women into basic teaching” was introduced in the country. Associating the teaching profession as an extension of maternal activities and with the understanding, on the part of Brazilian society, that the female choice for education is natural, the teaching career, in the country's Basic Education, expanded through a "visibly segmented pattern of education". gender point of view” (CATANI *et al.*, 1997; GATTI; BARRETTO, 2009).

Carvalho (1996), Louro (1997) and Cunha (2012), based on research carried out on the historical process of feminization of teaching in Brazil, add that, from the 19th century onwards, the teaching profession became a representative element of the teaching work done by women. For reasons of power, domination and hierarchization throughout history between social and cultural groups and, above all, about the division of labor between men and women in the country, some professions, which at the beginning of the construction of Brazilian society were characterized as represented by men – like the teaching profession, which in the period of colonization of Brazil, with the Jesuits, had teachers characterized as male –, became a reference in terms of women's work.

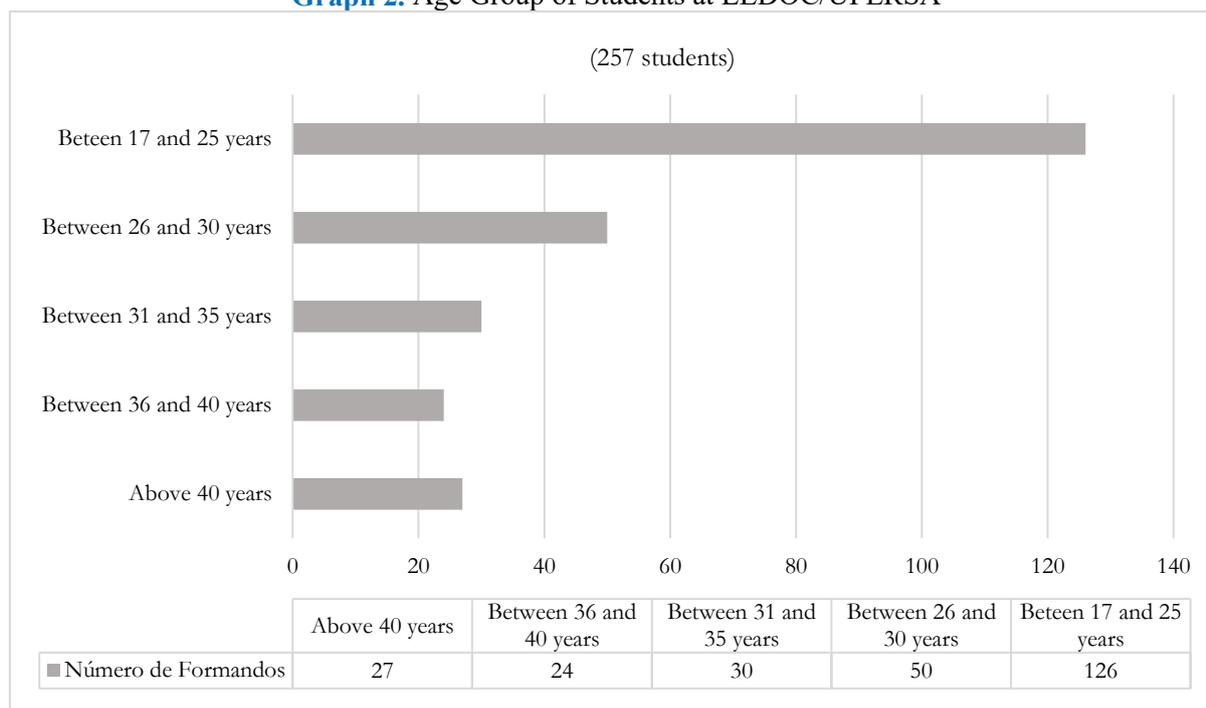
To confirm our understanding, we mention the analysis of the study produced by Carvalho (1996, p. 78):

The data indicate that, in the first four grades of the 1st grade (former primary school), female predominance has been going on since the 20s of this century in Brazil. Maria Cândida Delgado Reis, for example, shows how, 'since the 19th century, the teaching profession had been clearly delineating itself as a field of female work', with women reaching '70% of the total number of employees in charge of teaching', in 1921, according to the statement made by educator Lourenço Filho (Reis, 1991, p. 67 and 72). In 1990, the female presence had already advanced from the initial grades to the final grades of the 1st grade, to the 2nd grade and to specialist positions [...].

This tendency towards the feminization of basic teaching became perceptible in the search for initial teacher training courses in Brazil. Gatti and Barretto (2009) also show, based on statistics from the National Student Performance Examination - ENADE/2005, that, in the degrees in Pedagogy, Letters, Biology, History, Geography, Mathematics and Chemistry, women constitute the largest portion of students. The exception is, according to the authors' study, in Physics degrees. As a measure, 92.5% of Pedagogy undergraduates are women and, in the specific courses, this figure varies between 54% – in Geography, Mathematics and Chemistry degrees – and 82% – in Modern Languages Course.

At LEDOC/UFERSA, this characteristic is not contrasting. As we have seen, the largest audience for undergraduates is made up of women. Perhaps, this data will lead us, in the future, to another reference: as the intention is to train for teaching by areas of knowledge and for the management of school and community educational processes to work in education in rural areas, women licensed by the Course, possibly, they will work in spaces beyond the classroom in the countryside and "occupy" management and leadership positions, in the educational, social and political sense, in social movements, associations, rural workers' cooperatives, among others, spaces represented by the presence male in the field (MEDEIROS, 2013).

The second piece of information that stands out to us about the sociocultural profile of the students at LEDOC/UFERSA is in line with the age group of the students. Graph 2 systematizes the records:

Graph 2. Age Group of Students at LEDOC/UFERSA

Source: Electronic System of the Information Service for the Citizen (e-SIC), 2018.

The fact that 126 students from LEDOC/UFERSA are between 17 and 25 years old confirms that the students of this graduation are, in the majority, formed by young people. This is confirmed when we compare the other numbers regarding the aspect under discussion. Almost half of the students fit this reference – 49.1%.

From a different angle, there are students who fit into other values: with the age group from 26 to 30 years old, there are 50 students – 19.5% –; between 31 and 35 years old, there are 30 students – 11.7% –; between 36 and 39 years old, there are 24 undergraduates – 9.4% –; and, over 40 years old, we found 27 students – 10.3%. From these records, we can list some positive considerations about the sociocultural profile of the students at LEDOC/UFERSA: the first one corresponds to the understanding that the entry of this young public, from rural areas, into the university contributes to the increase of social inclusion of peasant youth in Higher Education in the State of Rio Grande do Norte. In history, there are conclusions that rural subjects, in general, as a result of the influences of capitalism in the educational system, have few possibilities of social ascension through the continuity of studies (CALDART, 2005).

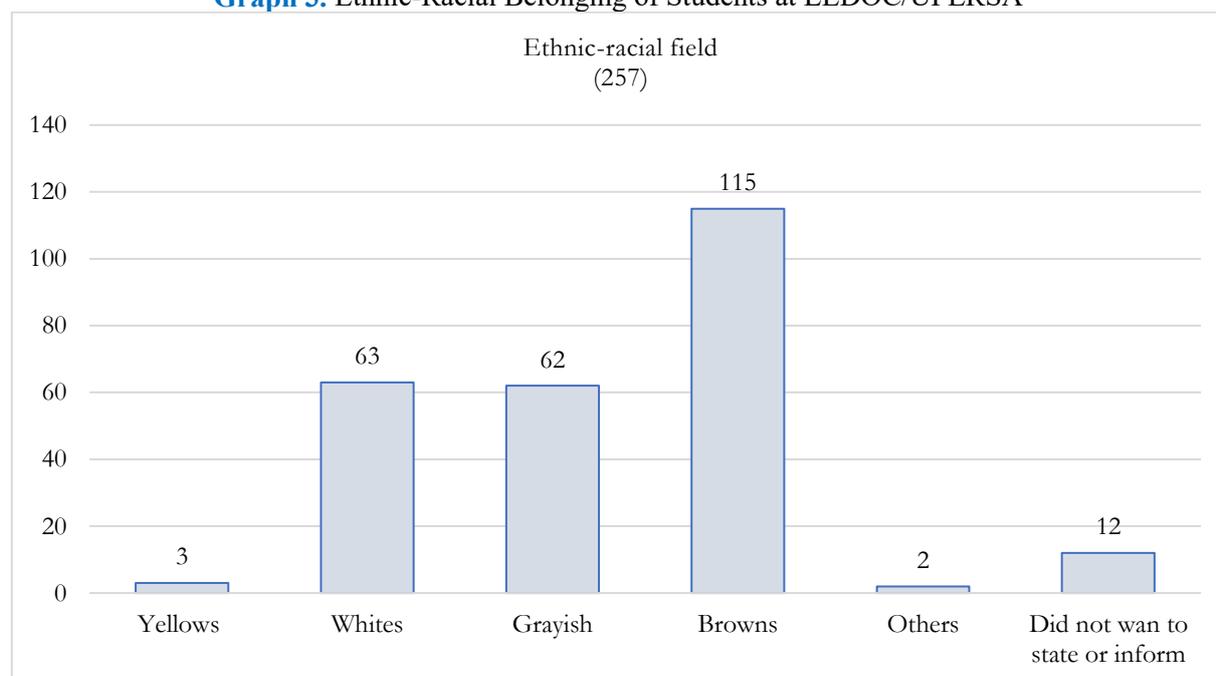
The second consideration is that LEDOC/UFERSA has been able to partially meet what was prescribed as a referral for the preparation of teacher training proposals regarding the public entering the LEDOC in the country. In the public notice (SESU/SETEC/SECADI/MEC Notice No. 2, of August 31, 2012) that allowed the creation of this new type of licenciante degree, it is noted that those entering these graduations must fall into six groups - Basic Education teachers from rural areas; youth and adults from rural areas; rural people in general; members of rural social movements; other professionals from Basic Education in the countryside; and educators of non-formal spaces in the countryside (BRASIL, 2012a). The draft prepared by the

Commission of the Rural Education Working Group of the Secretariat of Continuing Education, Literacy, Diversity and Inclusion (SECADI), a document that, in addition to the Specific Selection Notices, served as a guideline for the construction of the Pedagogical Projects of the Courses, goes, in part, to what we wrote when it rectifies that the Degrees in Rural Education should cover, among others, young people and adults from rural communities who have completed high school and still do not have higher education (BRASIL, 2011).

In general, comparing the records about the age group of the students at LEDOC/UFERSA with the study by Gatti and Barretto (2009), we also identified that the reality of the Course is not far from the teaching degrees in Brazil. In the authors' research, 46% of undergraduate students, including specific courses and Pedagogy, are between 17 and 24 years old, 30% are between 25 and 29 years old and 21% are in the age group of 30 to 39 years.

Following the information regarding the sociocultural profile of LEDOC/UFERSA students, we called, for the presentation of grades, the Ethnic-Racial Groups in which the students declare themselves.

Graph 3. Ethnic-Racial Belonging of Students at LEDOC/UFERSA



Source: Electronic System of the Information Service for the Citizen (e-SIC), 2018.

Based on what is documented, the largest portion of LEDOC/UFERSA students is concentrated, in the sense of ethnic-racial belonging, in three groups: 115 students claim to be brown, 63 students claim to be white and 62 undergraduate students declare themselves to be black.

With the representation of this aspect in Graph 3, it is important to consider the aspect that the number of self-declared black students – 62 students –, and the number of self-declared white undergraduates – 63 –, is almost the same. There are no significant percentages that distinguish

a prevalence of students in the Course belonging to one of the groups mentioned in this paragraph.

In the trajectory of formation of the Brazilian people, our society was (and still is) made up of specific social groups that monopolized a good part of what was available in human and natural resources, as well as making use of different mechanisms to develop models and standardize so-called true social stereotypes for all, with the aim of favoring domination over other groups that did not occupy/were found in the same social sphere (CARVALHO, 2008; GOHN, 2011; OLIVEIRA; MAGALHÃES, 2014).

As we know, this situation had repercussions in the educational system, with the denial of the right of access to Education, of permanence and of school success, whether in Basic Education or in Higher Education, for many subjects. However, the reality addressed made groups excluded from the country's social and educational agenda to claim and develop instruments of struggle through organized social movements and joint actions. Among them, we can list the Black Movement – which among the agendas, advocated the opening of public higher education for specific demands, such as, for example, the quota system for the population referenced in its core –; and the Landless Rural Workers Movement (MST) – which, in defense of agrarian reform, demanded specific education for rural populations.

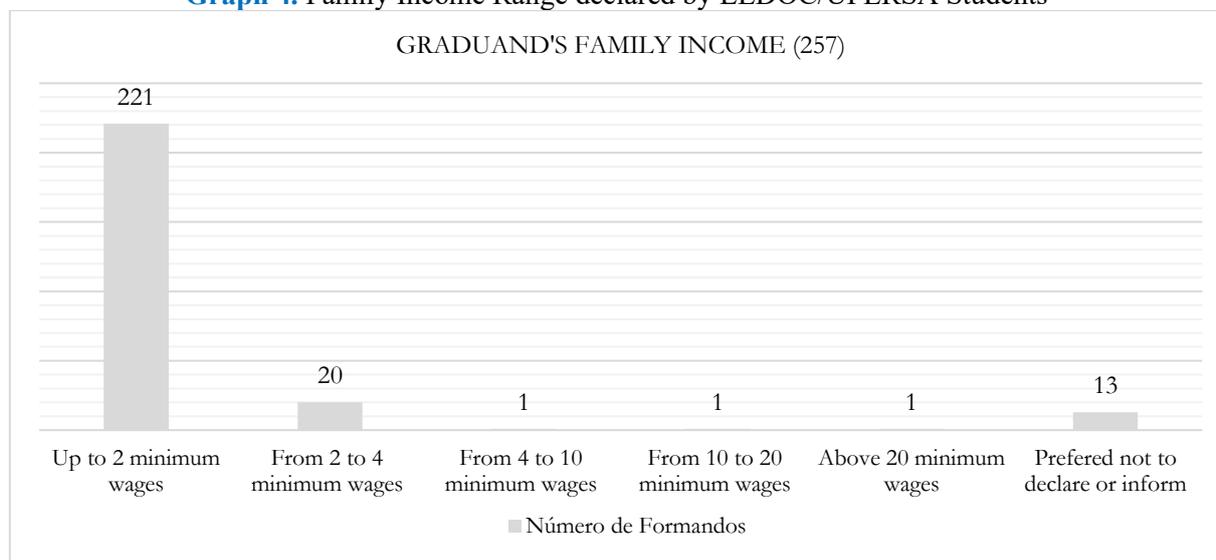
What is more, one of the legitimate proofs of the struggle of organized social movements – in their plurality –, is consistent with the institutionalization of affirmative actions and policies to democratize access to Higher Education through Decree Law nº 12,711, of August 29, 2012 (BRASIL, 2012b), which provided, in particular, on admission to universities and federal institutions of high-level technical education, amended by Decree Law No. 13,409, of December 28, 2016.

In its articles of law 1, 3, 4 and 5, specifically, it is inferred about the distribution of vacancies for admission to universities and federal institutions of high-level technical education. As a result of this legal provision, there has been an increase, in recent years, of a considerable volume of subjects from social classes who, in history, have not been able to obtain the same educational conditions and, therefore, have suffered in the denial of access to systematized knowledge by humanity, made present, in turn, in academia (BRASIL, 2012b; OLIVEIRA; MAGALHÃES, 2014).

In the selection notices for new entrants to the Interdisciplinary Degree in Rural Education at UFERSA – Notices No. 11/2017, No. 25/2016 and no. 73/2014 –, the organization of vacancies offered by social groups and specific quotas has been supported. This aspect and the other issues described in the previous paragraphs help in understanding the number of students in the evident ethnic-racial groups, however, we emphasize that the Course, above all, refers to an inclusive policy in the context of Rural Education in Brazil. As a consequence, it is more than expected the approval of students from groups that were left on the sidelines in the educational processes in Basic and Higher Education in Brazilian history.

Another data that we got in the searches about the sociocultural profile of the students of LEDOC/UFERSA and that we expose at this moment gives the family income declared by the students at the time of registration for admission to graduation. Let's analyze:

Graph 4. Family Income Range declared by LEDOC/UFERSA Students



Source: Electronic System of the Information Service for the Citizen (e-SIC), 2018.

Particularly, it is not surprising that 86% – 221 – of the newcomers to LEDOC/UFERSA have indicated, as family income, the value of up to two minimum wages. In order to explain this statement, we take into account some arguments: Gatti and Barretto (2009) found that the social devaluation of the teaching profession has increasingly made the Brazilian students who finish high school to lose interest in teaching degree courses. A large part of the students from middle class social groups or upper one, in economic parameters, who finish Basic Education, request, in order to continue their studies, baccalaureate courses in the areas of Engineering, Medicine and Law. The teaching profession is seen by many as a second option (GATTI; BARRETTO, 2009). On the other hand, students coming from less favored social classes, taking a different line, enter Higher Education via degrees.

In the same discussion, we mention a passage from Nóvoa (2017) who, in his essay on teacher training in Brazil, places the movement of devaluation that the teaching profession has been suffering in recent decades in the context of the advance of the influences of the international marketing sector in Education. Brazilian higher education, which has an impact on several dimensions of teacher training courses. The devaluation of the teaching profession is part of a larger process of deprofessionalization of basic teaching, converging to the selection of a specific public for the exercise of teaching - subjects from less favored social classes -, which has been aimed at training, for part of the State, mainly in private institutions, spaces that bring together the largest volume of degree courses in the country. The author concludes:

Deprofessionalization manifests itself in very different ways, including low wage levels and difficult conditions in schools, as well as processes of intensification of teaching work through logics of bureaucratization and control. The discourse of efficiency and accountability has reinforced policies based on 'value-added measures',

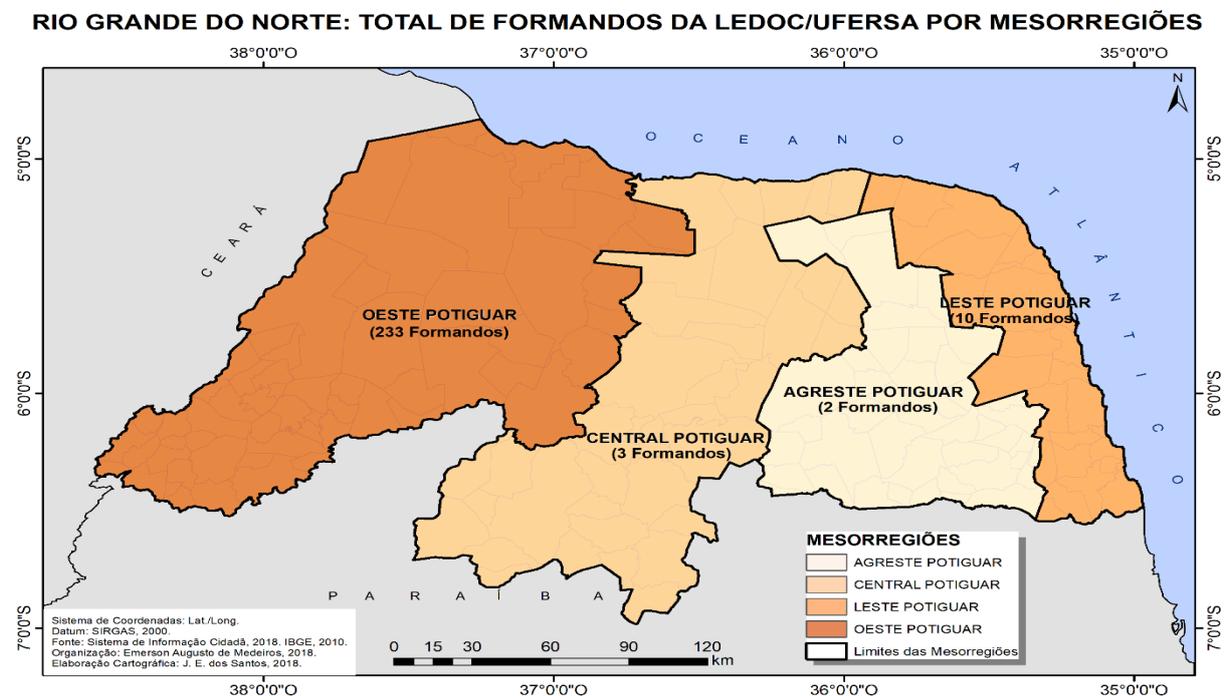
which remunerate teachers according to student results, thus devaluing other dimensions of professionalism [...]. The return of ideologies that affirm the possibility of assigning teaching functions to people who have 'notorious knowledge' of a given subject, as if that were enough, also contributes to the discredit of the profession (NOVOA, 2017, p. 1109).

A second argument that supports our assertion is linked to the specificity of the original context, that is, from which the public entering the Course comes. The Potiguar semi-arid region is a territory that “suffers” economically. Not only LEDOC/UFERSA students are placed in this environment. It is undeniable that the students of this graduation are from a less favored origin at a social level; however, in the institution's baccalaureate courses, this characteristic is also noticeable.

To conclude the arguments that aim to explain the question that 86% of the students of the Interdisciplinary Degree in Rural Education at UFERSA have, as a family income, up to two minimum wages, we remind you that, just as the ethnic-racial belonging is one of the criteria valued in the selection process for admission to the Course, the family income range is also considered in the same context.

The final aspect situated in the searches on the sociocultural profile of the students of LEDOC/UFERSA brings to the debate the geographical naturalness of the students. Based on the reading of Map 1, we draw conclusions.

Map 1. Number of Students of the LEDOC/UFERSA Course by Mesoregion of the State of RN, based on place of birth



There is a high number of students from cities in the West Potiguar Mesoregion of the State of Rio Grande do Norte. From the 257 students at LEDOC/UFERSA in 2018, 233 were born in cities located in this context.

We found out that the West Potiguar Mesoregion, in terms of geographical organization, has 62 municipalities grouped into seven microregions. It is the second most inhabited mesoregion in the state, according to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (2017), and concentrates important cities in Rio Grande do Norte, such as Mossoró, Apodi, Caraúbas and Pau dos Ferros. As we discussed, it is indicated in the Pedagogical Course Project that teacher training at LEDOC/UFERSA focuses on, at the target audience level, the rural populations of this mesoregion. In this aspect, we noticed, by reading Map 1, that 90.7% of its students are from (in terms of naturality) this location. In addition to this data, from the 62 cities which takes part of the West Potiguar Mesoregion, 21 include course graduates naturally in their context, with emphasis on the Municipalities of Mossoró - 90 students -, Upanema - 36 trainees -, Apodi - 20 students -, Areia Branca - 13 students -, and Serra do Mel/RN - 11 undergraduates.

As for the other mesoregions of the State of Rio Grande do Norte, we found a small number of students from municipalities that are part of these geographic areas: from the Central Mesoregion Potiguar, there are 03 students; from the Agreste Potiguar Mesoregion, there are 02 undergraduates and, from the East Potiguar Mesoregion, we find 10 students.

However, we would like to point out (in Map 1) that it does not mean that the students live in these places at the time of the documentary survey (year 2018). We confirm the naturalness of the students, attesting, from what is documented at UFERSA, their places of origin. Even so, we conclude that such indications clarify that there is a concentration of students of the Interdisciplinary Degree in Rural Education from the exposed territories. Finally, we explain that, with this characteristic, there are also students from other Brazilian states: from Ceará - 07 students from the municipalities of Aracati, Jaguaruana and Juazeiro do Norte -, and from Pará - 01 student from Belém.

Conclusion

This study highlighted as a central objective to analyze the sociocultural profile of students from the Interdisciplinary Degree in Rural Education at the Rural Federal University of the Semiarid (LEDOC/UFERSA), Campus Mossoró, Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil, based on a documentary survey conducted in 2018 with information available in the academic records existing at the aforementioned university. With the explanation of the analysis carried out, we finished this text highlighting some aspects learned in the investigation, namely:

a) LEDOC/UFERSA students are mostly represented by women. This characteristic marks the trend of feminization in the training of Rural Education teachers in the context of this new modality of graduation, something close to what occurs in the teaching courses in the country (GATTI; BARRETTO, 2009). As we highlighted earlier, this could mean, in the future, the presence of this public exercising different management and leadership roles in rural education spaces, especially in the scope of Non-Formal Education, given that, if we validate

that one of the objectives of teacher training in the graduation is the training of professionals to work in the management of community educational processes, this characteristic will be exercised;

b) We verified that there is a significant number of students in the LEDOC/UFERSA Course who declare themselves brown and/or black. This factor contributes to thinking about the social inclusion of subjects who, in history, were excluded from accessing and staying in Higher Education. We are hopeful and anxious that, within the scope of these students' professional performance, when they graduate, inclusive practices can be carried out that affirm the identity of the different populations of the countryside – in particular, the remaining populations of quilombos and with tradition in the Afro-Brazilian culture;

c) The analysis highlighted that there is a high number of young students, aged between 17 and 25 years old, at graduation. We believe that this aspect illustrates that the aforementioned degree has managed to bring together the rural youth public. If we consider that this public is mostly born in the West Potiguar Mesoregion, we believe that this will contribute to the social and educational improvement of the semiarid region of Rio Grande do Norte;

d) Most students of the LEDOC/UFERSA Course have a family income of up to two minimum wages. In this context, we understand that there are demands for internal policies at the university for the permanence of students in graduation. We understand that, in this dimension, new studies on institutional policies aimed at student assistance in the institution are also important.

In general, we reinforce that the Degree courses in Rural Education in Brazil are essential for the achievement of the right to Education of rural populations in Higher Education. In the semi-arid region of the state of Rio Grande do Norte, we believe that, in the long term, the creation of LEDOC/UFERSA will improve the educational quality existing in rural areas. With rural teachers trained for this territorial scope, we hope that Education will be carried out in a contextualized way, meeting part of the local demands of each space in which it will be promoted.

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