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*Governance with the Population: Frames, Measurement Instruments,
Strategies and Mechanisms - Governance of Intersectoral Policies
with the Population: Illusions and Reality*

**Articulate to Implement: the role of CEDET in the institutional
arrangement of public policy of special education for intellectual
gifted and talented students in Brazil**

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Abstract

This paper discusses the implementation of the public policy of special education for students with high skills and intellectual giftedness in Brazil. The main purpose was to verify the role played by the Center for the Development of Potential and Talent - CEDET in its institutional arrangement (PIRES, GOMIDE, 2014). To understand how the policy is implemented we analyze the means and instruments that are used for its effectiveness. CEDET was created in 1993 and operates regularly in Lavras-MG, a city in the south of Minas Gerais with 102,124 thousand inhabitants (IBGE 2017). CEDET is a space of support and educational complementation to gifted and talented students, attending the different schools of the community at all levels of Basic Education (GUENTHER, 2006). It currently serves about 500 students, from eleven municipal schools, eight state schools and two private schools. It promotes integration and co-responsibility with the schools and with its partners, assuming co-responsibility both in relation to the process and the expected results. The focus of the work is to understand the participation of social actors in the public policy, highlighting the articulation role played by CEDET. The main concepts about the subject of intellectual giftedness and talent are taken from the studies of Guenther (2000, 2006, 2007), Fleith (2007) and Antipoff and Campos (2010), as well as government regulations made by the Brazilian Ministry of Education (MEC, 2008; BRASIL 2008). The paper highlights social participation in public policies and the involvement of social actors and associations as a way of executing and cooperating with policy implementation and, thus, we verify the institutional arrangements that allow CEDET to carry out its activities. The paper also exposes the historical context and explains the activities carried out by CEDET throughout its twenty-five years of existence. Data collection was done through interviews and bibliographical and documentary researches, in order to get a better understanding of the way this public policy is implemented, thereby obtaining relevant information on the subject. One of the findings was that despite the city hall maintain the CEDET, the Association of Parents and Friends for Talent - ASPAT plays a fundamental role in the execution and maintenance of the Center, as well as guiding the activities. This association is responsible for articulating a wide network of volunteers and managing the agreements with the public power, with the universities, with clubs, and a number of other organizations for the effectiveness of the public policy of special education. In addition, this research highlights the importance that volunteer work and institutional cooperation have for policy implementation.

Keywords

Special Education; Policy network; Participation; Policy implementation.



Introduction

In Brazil, special education began in the period of the Portuguese Imperial Administration with two institutions dedicated to education for people with disabilities. The first, created in 1854, was the Imperial Institute of the Blind Boys (now the Benjamin Constant Institute - IBC), and the second, created in 1856, was the Imperial Institute of the Deaf-Mutes (now National Institute of Deaf Education - INES). Throughout the 19th century, only the blind and deaf were provided with special education actions, and even so, these actions were only available in the city of Rio de Janeiro, capital of the empire (Lanna Junior, 2010, p. 12).

The Imperial Institute of the Blind Boys was inspired by the Institute of Blind Boys of Paris, where the best models of education were at that time. At the beginning of its operation, it received students from the provinces of Rio de Janeiro and Ceará. Until the end of the regime, it began to receive students from several provinces, but their admission depended to the authorization of the Minister and Secretary of State for Business of the Empire. A similar procedure was given at the Imperial Institute of the Deaf-Mutes.

These two institutions were created on the initiative of the State, but there were also initiatives of civil organization in the early twentieth century. In 1926 the Pestalozzi Institute was founded, aimed at the care of people with intellectual disabilities, and in 1954, the first Association of Handicapped Parents and Friends (APAE) was founded. The first specialized assistance for the gifted and talented students was created in 1945, within the Pestalozzi Society, by Helena Antipoff, a Russian educator and psychologist who, at the invitation of the State Government of Minas Gerais, came to work at the newly created School of Improvement in Belo Horizonte (MEC 2008).

Since then, special education has been treated as the education of people with disabilities, be it intellectual, hearing, visual, motor, physics or from invasive developmental disorders. In the same way, gifted and talented individuals have also integrated the recipients of special education (MEC 2008).



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In its origin, special education was dedicated to the teaching directed to the students that needed a differential treatment and the approach employed by the Brazilian State promoted special education in a segregated way in relation to the other students¹. More recently the treatment dedicated to special education students has been changing, with the adoption of guidelines that favor an inclusive and universalistic perspective.

The Salamanca Statement of 1994 proclaims that inclusive schools should determine more effective means of not segregating students with disabilities and gifted and talented ones, giving all students access to regular education. According to (Rogalski, 2010):

[...] When equality of rights appears along with respect for differences, the universalist vision, marked in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, of 1948, prevails. Students have equal rights, regardless of individual characteristics, interests, and needs, which are different. The Salamanca Statement makes clear that the school must offer adequate services to meet the diversity of the population (Rogalski, 2010, p. 10).

The Brazilian Federal Constitution of 1988 establishes as one of its fundamental premises “to promote the good of all, without prejudices of origin, race, sex, color, age and any other forms of discrimination” (art.3, subsection IV). Article 205 treats education as a right of all, ensuring the full development of the person, the exercise of citizenship and qualification for work. Article 206 sets “equal conditions of access and permanence in school” as one of the principles for the teaching and a duty of the State. Article 208 provides for the provision of specialized educational services, preferably in the regular educational system (BRASIL, 2018).

At present, special education is defined as a type of education that covers all levels, stages, and modalities, in the provision of specialized educational services, availability of resources and services, and orientation regarding their use in the teaching and learning process in the education (BRASIL, 2008).

However, despite the significant advances in the area, inclusion is still a challenge with regard to special education in Brazil. Education in Brazil is still far from achieving these guidelines fully and there is much to do regarding inclusion and equality in education. Students characterized with 'giftedness' continue to have access to regular education,

¹ APAE - Exceptional exceção.



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despite the need for specialized care that considers their learning singularities. In the absence of a specific public policy for this segment, the teaching was done in the regular format (MEC 2008).

In this context, a society that is able to promote social inclusion will only be possible if inclusion is made at all sectors of the social life of individuals. That is, society will be inclusive to the extent that all spheres of social life, such as education, economics, culture, and health, integrate the social segments that are still excluded (ROGALSKI, 2010). The Salamanca Statement further reinforces:

While inclusive schools provide a favorable setting for achieving equal opportunity and full participation, their success requires a concerted effort, not only by teachers and school staff, but also by peers, parents, families, and volunteers. The reform of social institutions are not only a technical task; it depends, above all, upon the conviction, commitment and good will of the individuals who constitute society (UNESCO, 1994, p. 11).

The Salamanca Statement counted with the adhesion of the Brazilian government. The 1996 Law of Directives and Bases of National Education (LDB) is based on the responsibility of the public authority, provides for preferential enrollment in the regular education network and specialized support.

Also as a consequence of the Salamanca Statement, in 2001 the document National Guidelines for Special Education in Basic Level of Education was approved, which again turns to the context of inclusive schools, both in the public and private sectors, that should enroll students in the regular services of education (MEC, 2001).

With regard to education for gifted and talented students, in 2005, the High Abilities/Giftedness Activities Centers (NAAH/S) were organized in all states and the Federal District. The purpose of this action was to guide families and promote continuing education to guarantee access and permanence of these students in the public school system. In 2007, the Educational Development Plan (PDE) was launched, which sought to overcome the dichotomy between special education and regular education.

In 2013, the Ministry of Education gave rise to the "Inclusive Education Program: Right to Diversity", which main purpose is to change the conception of educational units to the



perspective of inclusion. Thus, initiatives were promoted to train managers and teachers throughout the country so that these actors could better prepare to treat education to those who need special education.

As this brief history tells, although initiatives to promote special education have emerged from civil society throughout the twentieth century, the regulations and guidelines for the promotion of special education in the Brazilian context have departed from the federal sphere of government in a typical top-down orientation in which the propositions are formulated centrally by the federal administration for further implementation at the local spheres. There is, however, a long journey so that regulatory directives, especially with regard to the promotion of inclusive education, come to materialize. On the other hand, social participation occurs in the opposite direction, from the bottom up.

In this context, regarding particularly the special education, the social participation of parents, families and volunteers, as well as teachers and school staff, government officials, and technicians are fundamental to the effective promotion of the social inclusion of students who are the focus of special education policies. In order to understand how the special education policy for talented and gifted students is implemented in the city of Lavras, this study focuses on the role of a non-governmental organization, the Center for the Development of Potential and Talent - CEDET, based on the following question: What is the role played by CEDET in the institutional arrangement of the Public Policies of special education in Lavras, Minas Gerais?

Public policy, policy networks and governance

One of the classic ways to define public policies is the 'State in action' (Jobert, Muller, 1987). In another view, public policies can be conceptualized as belief systems, "sets of value priorities and causal assumptions about how to realize them" (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993, 16). Public policies in action also constitutes in a set of actions taken by the social actors mediated by the state to guarantee social rights. Public policies are needed to ensure that rights are realized, such as the right to education.



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All public policy involves social actors, such as street level bureaucrats, beneficiaries, associations working in partnership with government, civil society, volunteers and other public institutions. The social actors can serve as tools to operate or even initiate some movement with some predefined purpose. According to Souza (1991):

Actor is someone who represents, who plays a role within a plot, within a network of relationships. A particular individual is a social actor when he represents something for society (for the group, the class, the country), embodies an idea, a claim, a project, a promise, a denunciation. A social class, a social category, a group can be social actors. But the idea of "actor" is not limited only to people or social groups, institutions can also be social actors: a union, political parties, newspapers, radios, television stations, churches, etc. (SOUZA 1991, p.54).

Souza (1991) highlights the role of social actors in networks of relationships. Public policies can also be understood from the perspective of networks. According to Rhodes (2006 p.426), "a policy network is one of a cluster of concepts focusing on government links with, and dependence on, other state and societal actors".

Policy networks are sets of formal institutional and informal linkages between governmental and other actors structured around shared if endlessly negotiated beliefs and interests in public policy making and implementation. These actors are interdependent and policy emerges from the interactions between them.

Rhodes (2006) emphasizes the role of beliefs and interests in the formulation and implementation of public policies. In the Brazilian case, since the 1990s, the beliefs and interests of social actors related to public policies were very strongly associated with the promotion of a democratic and participatory society. This is due to the promulgation of the Constitution of 1988, named as 'Citizen Constitution'.

The exponential growth of civil associations since the 1990s may be related to the process of decentralization and democratization of municipal governments, which give importance to popular organization and participation (CARLOS, SILVA, 2006, p.168).

From the 1990s, a period of search for the institutionalization of democracy in public management began. The local public power starts to incorporate mechanisms and channels of popular participation in the elaboration and implementation of public policies. It should



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also be noted that the participation of civil society in urban social movements and civil entities is more strongly felt in neighborhood associations and community associations (CARLOS, SILVA, 2006).

The analytical approach of institutional arrangements can be useful to analyze the implementation of public policies, especially regarding a process of change. The 1990s constituted a broad transition process of Brazilian society initiated by the new Constitution. The institutional approach focalizes the interactions between institutions and social actors in the implementation of policies. It allows to understand how the implementation is affected by the bureaucracies and also by the means of control and social participation.

Institutional arrangements comprise the specific rules that agents establish for themselves in their economic transactions or in their particular political and social relations (North, 1995). In this way, it can be affirmed that the institutional environment provides the set of parameters on which the public policy arrangements operate.

According to Pires and Gomide (2014), public policy arrangements define a particular way of coordinating processes in specific fields. They limit who is entitled to participate in a particular process, the object and objectives of this, as well as the forms of relations between the actors. Therefore, it is understood that the relationship between institutions and development should not be confined within the institutional environment, but rather to the specific policy arrangements.

Today, there are several actors and interests to be coordinated within the Brazilian context. Among them, we have the bureaucracies of various powers and levels of government, politicians from different parties and civil society organizations. Around each policy, organizations (with their discrepancies, resources, competencies, legal instruments and mandates) are arranged, coordination mechanisms, negotiation and decision spaces between actors (government, political system, and society). All this, besides obligations such as transparency, accountability, and control (Pires; Gomide, 2014).

Thus, in order to understand the process of public policies, it is necessary to understand the institutional arrangements that underpin their implementation. Therefore, for Pires and



Gomide (2014) the concept of institutional arrangement is understood as being "the set of rules, mechanisms, and processes that define the particular way in which actors and interests are coordinated in the implementation of a specific public policy." It is the institutional arrangements that attribute to the state the capacity to execute its objectives, that is, the arrangements that determine the state's capacity to implement public policies.

The division of power between public and private actors has always been at the heart of the analysis of policy networks. In its origin, it relied on the participation of corporate actors, such as trade unions and businessmen. More recently, the greatest interest has been through governance by (and through) networks, on trends in the relationship between state and civil society policy making in specific arenas. Thus, the term governance is a broader and more suitable term than government with public resources and services provided by any permutation of government and the private and voluntary sectors (Rhodes, 2006 p.430).

According to Rhodes (2006 p. 436),

policy network analysis stresses how networks limit [or foster] participation in the policy process; decide which issues will be included and excluded from the policy agenda; shape the behavior of actors through the rules of the game; privilege certain interests; and substitute private government for public accountability. It is about stability, privilege, and continuity.

With a focus on the social construction of policy networks through the ability of individuals to create meaning, we analyze individuals seeking to realize certain objectives and outcomes, making an assessment of the context in which they find themselves, and promoting the coordination for the implementation of the policy of special education.

Methods

Research design

Regarding the objectives, this research is characterized as descriptive. This type of study intends to describe the facts and phenomena of a certain reality. The descriptive research requires the researcher a series of information about what he wants to research. In its approach, this study is classified as a qualitative research, which is concerned with aspects of reality that can not be quantified, focusing on the understanding and explanation of the



dynamics of social relations and the deepening of the understanding of a social group, an organization or any other object of study. Qualitative research also associates data collection, analysis of texts and direct observation of the analyzed subject.

The research was spatially delimited to the city of Lavras, where Cedet is located. At first, we proceed with a documentary search so as to getting to know more deeply Cedet's history and identifying the main actors involved in articulating and implementing policies to gifted and talented students. After this, key actors were identified and semi-structured interview scripts were formulated. Next, the interviewees were selected and contacted, who were selected based on the knowledge of the topic and the role played in the execution of Cedet activities.

Procedures

Relating to the procedures, this study was based on bibliographical and documentary surveys and on the collection of primary data through semi-structured interviews. For documentary research, official documents of Cedet, Aspat and information made available on the websites of the other related actors were used.

For the interviews, initially the number of respondents was not limited, since we chose to construct a sample by saturation. According to Ritchie, Lewis and Elam (2003) as the study goes on more data does not necessarily lead to more information and there is a point of diminishing return to a qualitative sample. Glaser and Strauss (1967) states that saturation sampling refers "to a moment in the field work in which the collection of new data would not bring further clarification for the object studied." The founder, a coordinator, facilitators and members of Aspat were interviewed. The interviews were recorded and transcribed.

The analytical procedures were carried out through the content analysis, made from the transcription of interviews, testimonials and documents. According to Minayo (2007):

Generally, all procedures lead to the relationship of semantic structures (meaningful) with sociological structures (meanings) of statements and articulate the surface of text statements with the factors that determine their characteristics: psychosocial variables, cultural context and message



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production processes. This analytical set aims to give internal consistency to operations (MINAYO 2007, p.84).

Thus, for data interpretation it was necessary to penetrate the meanings that the social actors shared about their realities from the interviews. Among the modalities of content analysis was used thematic analysis that is the most appropriate for qualitative investigations. According to Minayo (2007, quoted by GERHARDT, SILVEIRA, 2009, p.84), “the thematic analysis consists of discovering the nuclei of meaning that make up a communication whose presence or frequency means something to the analytical objective”.

Participants

The Center for Development of Potential and Talent - CEDET was created in 1993 and operates regularly in Lavras-MG, a city in the south of Minas Gerais with 102,124 inhabitants (IBGE 2017). Cedet is a space of support and educational complementation to the gifted and talented students, attending the different schools of the community, in the different levels of the early years of formal education (GUENTHER, 2006).

It works regularly in a house that has been adapted in the downtown and counts on four environments for pedagogical work that are realized in groups or individually. Each student has an individual work plan which allows the formation of groups for the execution of activities, with 5 to 15 students (GUENTHER, 2006). However, due to the size of the space and the structure of materials, not all activities are carried out at Cedet’s main office. Some activities also require their own environment, such as laboratories. In addition, they are usually performed where the volunteers are located, for greater ease with their facilities (GUENTHER, 2006).

Cedet is characterized by being a community-based program, outside the school context, but integrated with the school system (GUENTHER, 2007). The Association of Parents and Friends for Talent Support - ASPAT takes the technical responsibility for its management. Aspat is a non-profit civil society organization and has objectives and operating dynamics established in its own statute. It seeks to support and raise awareness on the theme of talent development among its members and the community. It encourages the fostering of



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the educational process necessary for Cedet's development and the research for tools for education of the gifted and talented students. In addition to providing student accompaniment, Aspat works with families to improve their children's orientation, and stimulate talent in areas of intellectual, artistic, creative, sports and social knowledge (CEDET, 2018).

The Lavras City Hall is responsible for basic expenses of physical maintenance, logistics, and the payroll of the staff of teachers and facilitators. In its cooperation network, Cedet also has the support of community clubs, especially the Rotary Club, which fostered the foundation of Aspat and Cedet (CEDET, 2018), as well as universities, companies and other organizations located in the city.

The theoretical framework on which Cedet is based comes from humanist philosophy. The center aims to provide direction and intentionality to its educational project, where it focuses not only on the student's talent but on the basic dimensions of the humanistic formation: the person itself (self-concept); coexistence with others (concept of the other) and relationships with the environment (*ethos*) (GUENTHER, 2007).

From these concepts, Cedet organizes its activities in three major areas of stimulation and enrichment, as the author and founder Zenita Guenther (2007) cites: 1) Communication, Organizations, and Humanities, which cultivates experiences linked to social life and human relationships, communication and common experience; 2) Science, Research and Technology, which deals with scientific knowledge, human relations with the environment, and ways to know the world in an organized and rational way; and 3) Creativity, Abilities, and Expression, which opens space for the personal sphere of feelings, appreciation of beauty, relationships with one's own body, stimulus to skills, self-control, and conviviality oriented to personal management of common goals (GUENTHER, 2007, p. 3).

In order to identify the students who will benefit from the activities, each semester an individual evaluation is carried out by Cedet's staff and, after that, if the students are characterized as gifted, they start their activities (GUENTHER, 2007). To keep the institution functioning, Cedet has a multidisciplinary team of teachers recruited in different areas. The



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professional team and logistic structure is maintained mostly by the municipality, with collaboration State Secretariat of Education, in addition to a huge voluntary network. Throughout the years Cedet has counted on hundreds of volunteers, in the most diverse areas of knowledge, occupation, hobbies, lifestyle, some of them remaining in the program for five years or more (GUENTHER, 2007).

The entire community and a large part of the city's private educational actors contributes to the operation by providing equipment, venues, and volunteer work. Based on the students' demands, Cedet looks for volunteers who will work together with the teachers and facilitators in their activities. Guenther (2007) points out that the presence of volunteers in Cedet is not a matter of budget savings, but rather a quality requirement for the pedagogical project. Facilitators are responsible for individual plans and student accompaniment. Each facilitator follows-up an average of 70 to 80 children enrolled in two or more schools. Visits to schools are made weekly and each student has an individual follow up (GUENTHER, 2007).

The structure of Cedet is articulated around a large number of social actors that form a network of interaction with education professionals, instructors and volunteers, organized so that students could be under the influence of more than one advisor. Each semester Cedet has about 100 volunteer instructors working with groups of children and young people in some activity. The weekly meeting between the volunteer and the students can take place at Cedet's seat, at university laboratories, as well as at offices, government departments, companies, private schools, clubs, sports centers, fitness centers, and workplaces. The involvement and participation of the community, as well as the Federal University of Lavras, is carried out in accordance with the needs detected by the individual work plan of each student.

In addition to staying in regular school with students of their age group, all this structure provided by Cedet allows the students to develop their skills. That way, participating in Cedet means having contact with a multitude of groups of children, colleagues from other schools, as well as other areas and organizations from the city. It also provides interaction



with different professionals in various situations, like the volunteers who teach them, visitors, trainees and the various people who work at the center (GUENTHER, 2007).

Findings and Discussions

The founder

From the interview with the founder, it was possible to understand the influence of the humanistic perspective and the focus on identifying and working with gifted and talented children early in childhood.

“Every year children are born; there is a 5% human capacity that can not be wasted. According to the social environment, according to the environment in which they live, according to the hygiene and health they have, this potential can be lost (...) [it is necessary] to find them before they engage in crime, which picks up these most capable children very early”.

She affirms that since the beginning of Cedet there was a great support of the parents of the students and that the center “was founded with great force and very independency from the political power, because we already had the children”. The model of CEDET and ASPAT working together, according to the founder has already been a predefined model. In addition to bringing the students' parents and the community closer together, there are numerous other tools that foster and sustain the work done.

The role of Aspat is so broad and so diffuse that it is difficult for you to put in a few items, but every link with the community is done through Aspat. Financial help is mandatory through Aspat, but also the help with volunteer search, festivities and sometimes we call them to put the secretariat (of Cedet) in order.

It was through Aspat that the agreements with various entities and social actors of the city began. The founder further adds that “this is a kind of philosophy that we had, that you should not ask people to help with the government, the government already has the tax”. Its informal character and its configuration from the base of society are highlighted as one of the factors that can explain the community engagement with Cedet's activities: “Aspat is an organization, even a small budget one, it works in my house until today, and it's the one that



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brings, does things, brings books, brings lecturers from outside... the community embraced soon!”.

Again, the founder emphasizes the independent and autonomous character of the association in relation to the government: “it is also up to these social actors within the public policies to fight, resist, deny, oppose, strategize and redefine reality”. Thus, the founder makes clear that if there is no such political independence and opposition from the association, with all the change in the political landscape, Aspat would have been closed for a long time. According to her, “Aspat is totally free from the City Hall. It was a point of honor, because if you want a group that may have to make opposition, you may have to complain, you may have to criticize, so you better not be dependent”.

The agreements signed with the various organizations of the city are carried out by Aspat. Among the main partners, great prominence is given to the universities. In Lavras there are three great universities, one public and two private - Federal University of Lavras - UFLA, Fagammon, and Unilavras.

The universities are important because it provides us with a library, provides us with a sports center, staff, trainees... people to help us work. It gives me good support within the community because they [the academics] study the program, they give their opinions, sometimes I accept some suggestions. So I consider the university first.

The interviewee also reinforces other partnerships that make the public policy effective: “We also have volunteers who help us in their own way: people, professionals, teachers, doctors, seamstresses... everyone! They help more by working with children, guiding a child to learn something”. These testimonials reinforces the concept that social actors would be the subjects that play an active role in the policy execution. She points out that it is precisely these covenants that make Cedet stand firm and work solidly.

She also reports that there have already been a large number of programs designed by the government, but they don’t keep continuous by the lack of adequate professionals. This also emphasizes on the agreements with the universities.



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Out of those resources, there are “punctual collaborations as we always look for. The City Hall has helped. I never met a mayor who would not help”. Other forms of resources that maintain the center are all from that Aspat seeks in the community. The founder reports that

the facilitators are often joking that Aspat's main source of resources is me. Everything we need here is at home, but in fact, this is necessary, it may be a very close task because the money from Federal Government is very directed, we already know where it goes.

One point of divergence that hampers the maintenance of the Cedet is the absence of the state to foment this public policy. According to the interviewee, the students of the state schools add up more than the students of the schools of the municipality in Cedet. In this way, the scanty resources of the municipality are divided with the obligations of the state, and in this way, Aspat needs to contribute even more with its own resources. The founder reports that there is indecision about state participation, “the government used to give us five people assigned, but they fought so much, so much so that we now have only one”.

According to the interviewee, the volunteers perform a fundamental work to support the center, both in the execution and in the quality of what is offered. She reports that “it would be impossible to work with these students only with teachers because one of the most capable children's challenges is that they become more demanding with teachers and begin to have conflicts because of their high demands”.

According to Fleith (2007), there is a great lack of preparation for the education of this sort of students. According to this author, the gifted student is usually viewed with awe by teachers who feel unprepared, pressured by questions or comments that are made by these students. In this sense, recruiting professionals of the highest level to be volunteers, as those within the universities, this type of situation is softened, she says:

having that capable volunteering, which is handpicked, makes a lot of difference. Many people want to help and can help, but to work directly with that contents they should know that matters well above the average population



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The interviewee also adds: “What we see is that we can not reduce the quality of the volunteer, because it is not a donor who gives us 100 reais a month and we do what we want; is a volunteer who has to be there”. She further compliments that all these volunteer qualified work only increases the prestige the center has.

Another point addressed by the interviewee was the current scenario for public policies of special education for gifted and talented in Brazil. According to her “in Brazil, the first major defect is the lack of continuity or the first is the excess of law, or both are tied. Our legislation has no end and is contradictory”. For her, most teachers are aware of the guidelines of the Ministry of Education (MEC) in dealing with these students, but most do not understand the proper procedures to do so. She says, “I do not understand. I am reasonably intellectually prepared, I have above average intelligence, but I do not understand what MEC is talking about, because it does not make sense”. She reports her view on the waste of resources that are spent on teaching materials that is not used. According to her, “the situation is even worse when they spend a fortune for expensive publications, which all go to waste. It is distributed to everyone, but nobody reads it and throws it away. This is of no use”.

According to the founder understanding, the preparation of teachers to work with students who need special education is inadequate. She says, “I do not like the way they [(MEC)] do the mass preparation of teachers because it has no effect. If there was care taking person by person and made everyone work with the children, something would have yielded”.

This evaluation contradicts one of the most recent public policies created for this purpose, the Inclusive Education Program: Right to Diversity, launched in 2013. This program aimed to promote the training of managers and teachers throughout the country, so that everyone would be better qualified to handle those in need of special education. However, according to the interviewee, this work with the students has improved only slightly.

The founder finally complements, that if one takes into account the Brazilian statistics of gifted and talented students, Cedet already attends all the students who need this education in the city of Lavras, but still, Brazil is far behind in this scenario. In questioning the



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interviewee about what are the future prospects for Cedet, the founder says that it is at a good production level and it is attending all the schools of Lavras. The next step is to further improve the process of identifying those students who will be served by this public policy.

The coordinator

The professional in the role of coordinator has worked at Cedet for approximately twenty years and has followed all the growth and all trajectory that the Center has gone through. In addition to taking care of the routines, she takes care of the parents and guardians of the students. The coordinator is responsible for the relationship between Cedet and the Municipal Department of Education, as well as dialogue with the founder about all the actions that take place in the center.

The interview began by questioning why to encourage the potential and the talent of the students. The coordinator replies that it is the same reason to have to teach the less able students to learn and reports: "the better able to learn more, then the school is little for these students." Fleith (2007) points out that these students need this supplementation and that they need to have a favorable environment conducive to the development of the endowment.

Many of the issues raised by the founder in her interview were reiterated by the coordinator, such as Aspat's role in articulating with the network of partners. The coordinator highlighted the partnerships with universities, which provide access to departments, laboratories and have a free transit within the institutions. "Unilavras in the part of the biological sciences, public health (...) these things in the area of health, Unilavras is stronger and more present with us. In other areas it is UFLA. "

The coordinator also reports that without these partnerships, activities could all be held at Cedet's headquarters and the team would seek out resources from volunteer professionals rather than institutions. However, it complements that the activities would be less enriching with the absence of laboratories and all the infrastructure that the universities offer. The interviewee also placed great emphasis on the role that volunteers have in the center. The volunteers, she says, are the main actors:



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Cedet's differential lies precisely in voluntary work. Public power would be unable to carry out the work we are accomplishing with the methodology that is applied here. The basis of it is the volunteer! And for 25 years it is a very pioneering work in Brazil with volunteering.

Costa e Silva (2006) treats this participation through association as a way of taking part in the dynamic processes that constitute and modify society, so that this participation allows to take part in its historicity. According to the authors, this means taking part in the complex set of relations, interests, and decisions generated by the action and transformation of society, in the field of political and organizational systems. The participation of the company through Aspat no Cedet makes this whole work to be carried out. According to the coordinator, "Cedet's greatest asset is precisely the volunteers".

The coordinator points out that nowadays Cedet lives a scenario that has never experienced before. She reports that the center has already had fifteen professionals who were facilitators, but now only eight. She reported that there is a negotiation with the education department that will bring more professionals to Cedet.

When questioned about the process of finding volunteers, she informed that it is through the students' demand that the professional be sought. She reports:

We go to the community on behalf of Cedet and Aspat and use this to make an invitation to these people, according to the need of the moment, of the semester; we work every six months. Then from the moment that I have the interest of the child in hands, I go to the community on behalf of the association to seek this volunteer.

According to the interviewee, Aspat plays a fundamental role so that Cedet remains and continues to carry out the work with special education because without the association there would be no covenants with the institutions as well as the recruitment of the volunteers. Still, in this sense it complements,

I am a municipal public official, but I go on behalf of the Association. I volunteer a term of volunteer work for the Association and he comes to work at Cedet because this is where the children are! The children are in the Cedet and in the school that is part of the public power. There is this double way between the Association and Cedet as a public agency.



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The interviewee was questioned about the use of multifunctional resource rooms, which is the proposal of the MEC of inclusive education written in Decree No. 7,611 of 2011. She was against this policy as well as the founder. According to her

This child inside a school environment, which they call resource rooms, he is taking the student out of a room, which has a wallet, a picture and putting him in the same school in another room. What is the worldview? What will expand in your life to move from one room to another? Will you expand anything?

The coordinator also adds that gifted students need to live with their peers

Cedet is not a group, but these interest groups that happen here are important for students to get along with peers, people who like the same things. Therefore, the students are grouped by interest, so they can get along with people who like the same things.

The interviewee ends by emphasizing the constant need to study the identification of gifted students and exposes,

I hope we can improve each day to identify this most capable child so that we can give opportunities to all who need to be here. Because when I say I need it is who needs to "need to be"!

A key point in the interview with the coordinator is the format of the policy that is carried out by Cedet. She says that the center is not a social project but an education project for the gifted, and complete:

My main goal here is really to be committed to making a good identification, bringing the children here and giving them, especially those from the periphery schools, give them an opportunity to know and to broaden their world view, for them to see that there is a possibility of being good people, of seeing themselves as gifted, that they are able to be more than good people, but to build a better humanity.

This view of building a better person through the education offered by Cedet was unanimous in all data collections. There is a common belief that allows the center to make this public policy exceptionally. Finally, she recounts and expresses the sentiment of Cedet's mission and the expectations of a better future,

Because those who have more can give more, and the most capable children, I would like these to be our rulers with good thoughts, that could



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contribute to making a country more honest, more just, that could give opportunities for many.

The facilitators

Interviews were also conducted with all CEDET facilitators. These interviewees compose the whole number of teachers the center has. They are called "facilitator" because these professionals are responsible for guiding students throughout the period of engagement in the center. It is they who make the visits to the schools and accompany them in the accomplishment of the activities. They are also responsible for seeking volunteers since all facilitators are effectively involved in ASPAT.

In the interview, questions regarding the operation, organizational structure, and staff of the center were discussed, as well as questions related to the network of relationships with the communities of Lavras. Interviewee 5 reports:

We have our mentor who is the founder, here comes the coordination, who makes a connection between CEDET, founder and Secretary of Education and then comes the facilitators, who are the teachers; each has a background. It is a multidisciplinary team that will work with the students, which is whom that will accompany the students in the schools. The schools will eventually get into this process because the student is actually from the school and we do the educational supplementation.

All the facilitators, due to the long period that they are in this context, as well as the close contact with the founder, share a common understanding of the subject, as another interviewee reports:

The whole team works together, it's a very consolidated team, so we already know how to do it, because we've been together for a long time. The latest one has been here for four years... and this study, it is always developed with us, the founder studies with us.

Another facilitator interviewed reveals the humanist vision that underlies the work of the center "we can not waste these talents and they will be able to collaborate a lot with humanity". The first interviewee also shares this thought and complements, "this generation



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that is now receiving this intervention, in the future, they may be part of a network of people who will transform the world for the better."

The interviewee 1 reported that the center was incorporated to the prefecture in 1993 and that Cedet has since counted on the resources from the municipality, but she also explains the other pillars that support the center: "We are supported by this network. We are supported by the community, by Aspat, and by the city hall". She classifies the types of support provided by each of its supporters. "The city hall is more the maintainer. It is who keeps us at the level of the professionals who work here, the transportation, the lunch we receive, the basic materials that we have (...) [ASPAT], which is our parent association, who gives the whole support for CEDET in the sense of implementation, in the sense of what to do." Interviewee 2 also reports that "ASPAT complements or supplements those things that the city hall does not have. Many resources come from donations, book sales, parents do not contribute necessarily, just spontaneously. "

Pires and Gomide (2014) addresses the discussion on civil society contribution to public policies as technical-administrative capabilities and political capacity. These, in turn, are the results of relations between bureaucracy, social participation, political representation, and control, all of which are aimed at the results of implementation. These institutional arrangements are the means to achieve good public policy results.

Therefore, social participation in the public policy promoted by the CEDET is an aspect that stands out in the interviews. The interviewee 2 reports:

Since the beginning of CEDET, the community has always been an important pillar. It started with the Rotary Club back in the early days. It is impossible to maintain this only by public power. It is not ideal, nor is it what we seek. You have to have these other partnerships, not just economically, but it's much healthier to have students interact in the community where they are.

The interviewee 6 complements this information, "one of the bases of our tripod is the community and the community involves all this [Cedet]". It is precisely in this sense that Aspat performs its role in Cedet, of bringing the community to the center and furthermore, promoting and coordinating the processes. Respondent 7 reports on Aspat as follows: "Aspat



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gives us some flexibility in our work. What I see is that Aspat favors the work of Cedet in all aspects". This flexibility relates to the promotion of the activities offered by the center since it is the Aspat that recruits the volunteers and signs agreements with several institutions. Interview 3 reports, "Through Aspat we have recruited volunteers. That is not possible - this recruiting - if it were not for the association".

In the interviews with the facilitators, it is observed that the volunteer in the CEDET plays a fundamental role for the effectiveness of the public policy. The volunteer, as the founder approached in her interview, has the role of making the activities to be much more in-depth and of better quality than any teacher could perform. Interviewee 6 cites

For example, a student arrives for me and in his individual plan, he says: "Ah! I have an interest in astronomy!" What do I know about astronomy? I'll meet the most capable student and who wants to go deeper, who wants to know more about it?

At this point, she emphasizes the main issue of seeking the volunteer, the quest for the quality of what can be offered, and complements:

If I do not have this knowledge, who enters is the main actor, the volunteer, who will do it for me. I'm going to get a person in the community who has that knowledge, who has good principles, who is an example as a person... because it ends up that the student will somehow mirror him. So we can not just get a volunteer. This volunteer needs to be well chosen.

In this last speech, the interviewee still emphasizes the volunteer's need to be an example, in order to contribute to the student's moral construction. Still, in this context, the interviewee 1 reports, "we always cherish the search for people who are admirable, who are good people, who will bring something good to the boys".

These participatory arrangements promotes not only the strengthening of local public policy, but it also fosters a civic culture of participation in society. The study of Cedet shows that the involvement of civil society improves the implementation and, in addition, the performance of public policies. This whole arrangement is based on a quite distinct conception of humanity, which guides the actions of the actors around these policy in order to promote to the maximum the human potential.



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On the other hand, when it comes to the relationship with state organizations, the evaluation of respondents is no longer so favorable. All the interviewees made critical comments regarding the participation of the state government in the policy conducted by CEDET. Unlike the municipal government, the state government does not provide personnel or resources to finance Cedet's activities. Although the center is a municipal body, subordinated to the municipality's education department, the work is not only carried out with students connected to the municipal education network, as there is also the service provided to schools maintained by the state, which add up to a third of the students which has the education supplemented. The interviewee 3 reports, "we attend the students of the state schools, all care is done just as we do in municipal schools." Interviewee 1 states that the center's thinking is not the "A" or the "B" student, but everyone who needs the care is the responsibility of the municipality or the state. The interviewee 4 points out the need to attend to all students, "because there are a large number of more capable students within the state schools of Lavras".

Finally, respondents were asked what are their future prospects for CEDET. In accordance with the approach made by the founder, the interviewee 1 reports that always seeking to study the identification of these students and says "it is something between us that is constant". The interviewee 5 mentions,

This is a very beautiful job because our goal is to show the student that he can be a much better citizen than he imagines. Our goal is to work with the citizen (...) our goal is to make all our students use their intelligence, which is above average, for positive purposes.

In the same question, the interviewee 4 said that she expects that CEDET will grow and that it will serve even more children and justifies it in the context of the city of Lavras, recognized as the city of schools, "because Lavras is a city that stands out in the educational scenario, by so many schools and universities! Our children here need this care".



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The Association of Parents and Friends for Talent Support - ASPAT is an association of civil society and recognized as a public utility. Aspat was born from the need to congregate parents of children demonstrating endowment and talent, families, people, institutions, community, in order to provide the base of assistance and support to the program developed by Cedet. Aspat was born in October 1993 along with the Cedet initiative. The association operates without its own headquarters and stays inside the founder's residence where monthly meetings are held.

We held an interview with the current president of Aspat. She is a former Cedet facilitator who has moved away from her activities as a public servant but maintains her link with the center through the association. She has been the president of the association since the year 2016. According to the president, Aspat is part of the center. The interviewee explains how the association is composed: "All parents! The son has joined Cedet, and he is already part of Aspat! We have the people who also participate in Aspat, like volunteers, the general community that may be part of it". The association brings the family closer to the project so that it can show the parents the real ability of their children, who are mostly overlooked by the family or interpreted as a disability.

The president explains that Aspat is the basis of Cedet, because the center works through the association, and this relationship of the association with the community in the search for resources, volunteers and covenants. She further emphasizes, "then it is through this volunteer, that we get this supplementation, because otherwise it would remain like an ordinary school." She highlights the work of the facilitators with all the follow-up activities,

The work of the facilitator in Cedet is very important! But it is a very interesting thing, because it is a human contact that makes a lot of difference. So go to school, or accompany that boy not only in the cognitive, but also in everything!

The President claims that one of the dreams of the Cedet facilitators was an enlargement of the headquarters, but that it has recently undergone a reform with all the expenses coming from the association. But she emphasizes, "what we really dream is student learning, you



know? The more volunteers we have the better, satisfy, supplement the student! I think it's the main goal for us".

Again, it reinforces the whole perspective of the other interviewees who want these students to have more opportunities in life. In this sense, all this structure that is based on the CEDET, with the participation of the society together with ASPAT, and the association as a tool to bring the volunteers and sign agreements as well as bring financial resources, makes public policy happen effectively. In this way, one can see how civil society directly assists the municipal government that legalizes this project and fosters with the basic maintenance of the center as well as all the people engaged in the Cedet.

All these arrangements allow the public policy of special education to gifted happen in Lavras-MG and be an example in Brazil as a whole through a pioneering initiative in this segment

Conclusion

The present research made it possible to analyze the role that a Civil Society organization, Cedet, have in the implementation of the special education policy to the gifted and talented students in the city of Lavras. This study reveals the participation of civil society through the association - ASPAT and its articulating function that catalyzes a series of possibilities for the beneficiary population of the policy.

We tried to describe the conditions, that is, the structures, practices, and values that allowed the governance of the special education policy with the participation of the population. Through a broad network of social actors, Cedet promotes the execution of public policy in an articulated way with the city government, the state government, and a wide network of volunteers. The coordination of these actors is carried out by Aspat. The format in which the CEDET was created and then the promotion of parental participation in the composition of Aspat was a successful strategy that has made the policy uninterrupted for 25 years and has become a national and international benchmark if dealing with this theme.



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Concerning the policy design, we saw that all the methodology that was built by the founder Dr. Zenita Guenther supports this work and makes it successful in identifying and supplementing these students. The word volunteer already explains the whole methodology of the center. Through the action of Aspat, a huge network of cooperation is articulated among the population, public servants and other social actors. The search for admirable and available professionals to dedicate themselves voluntarily only improves the pedagogical proposal of CEDET. The support given by universities adds positively to this work, with the provision of laboratories, sports courts, libraries and other rooms that the infrastructure allows the activities to be carried out.

Aspat sustains and represents Cedet in the face of needs that unfortunately the public power is not able to supply. In addition, it is Aspat who brings the community and civil society to the center, demystifying and breaking many myths about these students and about the role of the State on policy implementation.

The work done by Aspat contributes to the education that the parents can offer the students, since, by identifying and showing the parents the capacity of the students, they can direct to the appropriate education. The center performs a work with the students that allows them to be encouraged and motivated. They improve in all aspects, both in school life with supplementation and in personal life with improved self-esteem. The commitment with which Cedet treats these students and the efforts to become productive citizens and use their high capacities for positive purposes confirms Cedet's concern and objective.

One point that needs to be addressed and improved is the State's support in a more effective and meaningful way since the center plays a role that would be the State's obligation.

This study allowed us to analyze that public policies are not always carried out by the State itself, but many social actors may be fundamental for a policy to take effect. In the case study, we realize that Aspat plays a fundamental role in the articulation of social actors and resources necessary for the policy to be put into action.



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