

Brazilian Media Education Strategy - A National Policy Born from Listening¹

Estrategia brasileña de educación en medios – una política nacional que nace de la escucha

Estratégia brasileira de educação em mídia - uma política nacional que nasce da escuta

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Abstract: This article presents the Brazilian Media Education Strategy (EBEM), a public policy formulated through consultations with civil society, designed to address the challenges of the digital environment in Brazil. The main pillars of the strategy are analyzed, including teacher training, integrating media education into schools, and collaboration with various ministries and international organizations. EBEM aims to ensure that media education is considered a basic right and promotes a critical and participatory approach to media and technology usage.

Keywords:

Media Education, Public Policy, Digital Environment, Brazil, Critical Training, International Collaboration

Resumen: Este artículo presenta la Estrategia Brasileña de Educación en Medios (EBEM), una política pública formulada a través de consultas con la sociedad civil y diseñada para responder a los desafíos del entorno digital en Brasil. Se analizan los principales ejes de la estrategia, que incluyen la formación de educadores, la incorporación de la educación mediática en las escuelas,

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y la colaboración con diversos ministerios y organismos internacionales. La EBEM busca garantizar que la educación mediática se considere un derecho básico y promueve un enfoque crítico y participativo en el uso de los medios y la tecnología.

Palabras clave:

Educación mediática, Políticas públicas, Entorno digital, Brasil, Formación crítica, Colaboración internacional.

Resumo: Este artigo apresenta a Estratégia Brasileira de Educação Midiática (EBEM), uma política pública formulada por meio de consultas com a sociedade civil e projetada para responder aos desafios do ambiente digital no Brasil. Analisam-se os principais eixos da estratégia, que incluem a formação de educadores, a incorporação da educação midiática nas escolas e a colaboração com diversos ministérios e organizações internacionais. A EBEM busca garantir que a educação midiática seja considerada um direito básico e promove uma abordagem crítica e participativa no uso da mídia e da tecnologia.

Palavras-chave:

Educación mediática, Políticas públicas, Ambiente digital, Brasil, Formación crítica, Colaboração internacional.

“One of the most regrettable things for a human being is not to belong to his time. And to feel like an exile in time”.

- Paulo Freire

1. Introduction

The end of 2022 was a critical year for Brazil after four years in which we had a pandemic, infodemic, hate speech, and misinformation - to the point of impacting vaccination levels in Brazil, considered a model in the world. In the period of government transition, civil society experts and representatives, invited to working groups in their respective areas, realized the need for an instance in the Federal Public Administration to formulate and coordinate public policies related to the digital environment.

The Secretariat for Digital Policies (SPDIGI)⁴ was then created and linked to the Secretariat for Communication of the Presidency of the Republic. Its responsibilities are the promotion of a plural and diverse digital environment, defending reliable and quality information, and protecting people's communication rights (including children and adolescents in the digital world). To this end, two departments were created in SPDIGI: the Department for the Promotion of Freedom of Expression (DLIB) and the Department of Network Rights and Media Education (DDEM). The General Coordination of Media Education (CGEM) was created in DDEM To articulate and coordinate these actions with an eye on Education.

For the construction of the Brazilian Media Education Strategy (EBEM) to be carried out in a transparent, participatory manner and respecting the diversity of the Brazilian territory, a public consultation was held between June 19 and 30, 2023, six months after the new government took power. Four hundred eighteen contributions were received, which were considered when proposing the strategy. These contributions are expected to be reviewed every two years in light of the changing global and national context, the advancement of technologies, and the demands of society.

2. What do we mean when we talk about media education?

Before moving forward with the Brazilian Media Education Strategy, it is worth clarifying what is meant by media education so that there are no doubts about what paths it intends to follow – together with the Brazilian population – in the construction of a public policy that considers this area as a fundamental right for all. As Freire et al. (2022) already said in the quote that opens this text, the strategy allows Brazilian society to belong to its time, to take advantage of the technologies that emerge, understanding them as "expressions of human creativity and of the science developed by the human being" (p. 36), without ceasing to ask who and what they are serving and constantly exercising the critical dimension of knowledge.

For the General Coordination of Media Education of the Secretariat of Digital Policies of the Secretariat of Communication of the Presidency of the Republic of Brazil, media education refers to Education about the media, not only with the media but also through the media. It is not just about educational technology, although it is possible to use technology and the digital. It is understanding the digital environment as a medium and an object of learning and developing

⁴ Competencies stipulated by Decree No.11,362, of January 1, 2023.

skills to address the set of information, behaviors, and social practices in the digital environment in a critical and meaningful way.

In his book "Manifiesto on Media Education", the British researcher David Buckingham (2022) clarifies that media education consists of showing how the media works. He draws attention to the fact that there is a lot of instrumental emphasis on technology in schools. Still, little attention is paid to the dimension of media education in terms of public policies and rights.

The media, social networks, and the digital world are (almost) everywhere, and we need to learn to interact with them and their way of producing information, doing business, and communicating more critically and less naively.

Furthermore, according to the latest results of TIC Kids Online Brasil (Comitê Gestor da Internet no Brasil, 2024), a higher proportion of children accessed the Internet for the first time up to the age of six. That is, the age at which Brazilian children first access the Internet is happening earlier and earlier in recent years. According to the survey, 24% of respondents started connecting to the Internet in early childhood, compared to 11% in 2015. Still, according to the results, 95% of the population aged 9 to 17 are Internet users in the country, representing 25 million people. The mobile phone is the access device for 97% of users and the only means of connection to the network for 20% of respondents.



Figure 1. Themes of Brazilian Media Education. (Source: Own Elaboration)

This data raises a red light regarding the need to advance school media education as an integral dimension permeating all disciplines. Primarily since media education refers to how people and groups are represented (or silenced) in the media; discussing culture, diversity,

stereotypes, misinformation, the process of constructing news; digital media; videos, photographs, and their angles; platforms, algorithms, information bubbles, infodemic, among other possibilities, etc. This study of media forms representing people and groups reinforces the reasons for creating public policies in partnership with other ministries so media education is guaranteed for all students and seen as a right for all Brazilian citizens.

Finally, it should be noted that media education does not mean imposing specific points of view or restricting freedom of expression and interpretation of content. It does not seek to direct students to adopt certain opinions but rather to encourage the development of a repertoire to understand the dynamics of the media environment.

3. Brazilian media education strategy - Where are we and where are we going?

After the public consultation, the central axes to be worked on in the media education strategy and the construction of public policies in Brazil were defined as primary education, training of educators, use of screens, and social participation. It was then decided that EBEM would work in collaboration with the Brazilian Ministry of Education (MEC), especially connecting media education with digital Education and comprehensive Education and supporting the ministry with specific curricular guidelines in this area, in addition to working groups against school violence (online) and training in media education.

The first edition of the Brazilian Media Education Week, the national edition of UNESCO's Global MIL Week, was also held in an unprecedented way in the country, with the participation of 24 (out of 27) Brazilian states; more than 400 activities registered; 54,000 estimated participants; creation of an accessible pedagogical repository, available on the SECOM website and an international webinar.

In addition, for the first time in Brazil, media education is now part of the federal government's Multiannual Plan (2024 to 2027), with plans to train 300,000 education professionals and 400,000 health professionals in media education and media education was also included in the call for proposals for the MEC's National Educational Books Program - PNLD, which means that the books that will be in Brazilian primary education schools will include this content for the first time, supporting educators to develop this topic in the classroom.

It is also worth highlighting a partnership that will bring together MEC, SECOM, the University of Brasilia (UnB), and the Federal University of Uberlândia (UFU) for training in

Media Education and Human Rights aimed at 5,400 educators.

It is important to highlight that EBEM does not exist alone but in conjunction with different ministries such as Education (MEC); Health; Science, Technology and Innovation and Human Rights, among others; international agreements with organizations such as UNESCO, the European Union and embassies of the United Kingdom, France, Denmark, and Finland, recognized for their media education policies.

In addition, several initiatives have already been created, such as the collection of courses in the MEC virtual learning environment, which were only possible in collaboration with civil society organizations, recognizing and valuing the experience of Brazilian social actors.

In July 2024, in collaboration with UNESCO, a mapping of media education initiatives in Brazil was carried out, which received more than 450 responses - currently under analysis. Now (October/2024), the country is expecting the second edition of the Brazilian Media Education Week and the first edition of the Brazilian Media Education Olympiad, as is already the case with other subjects such as mathematics, geography, science, physics, and Portuguese.

What does this mean? What is expected is that, soon, media education will be in basic education classrooms, in books, in universities, in the training of trainers, in commemorative weeks, in family conversations about screens, the digital world, and technologies; the importance of freedom of the press; the fight against disinformation and the perception of communication and media education as a right for all.

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