


ACTIONS TO COMBAT CHILD LABOR IN NATAL/RN IN THE FIELD OF SPORT AND LEISURE

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ABSTRACT: This article traces an analysis of the trajectory and legitimization of child and adolescent protection laws in Brazil; the panorama of child labor in the State of Rio Grande do Norte, according to the National Household Sample Survey 2016-2019; programs, projects and actions to prevent and combat the problem of child labor in the city of Natal/RN; approaches in the field of sport and leisure, childhood and the right to play and public sport and leisure policies in Natal/RN. With the aim of highlighting the importance of public sports and leisure policies from an intersectoral perspective as a tool for preventing and combating child labor. The conclusion reached is the indispensability of intersectoral articulation between the social protection network and public sports and leisure policies. To achieve the proposed objectives, bibliographic and documentary research was carried out.

KEYWORDS: Child labor. Child and adolescent statute. Public policies.

ACÇÕES DE ENFRENTAMENTO AO TRABALHO INFANTIL EM NATAL/RN NO CAMPO DO ESPORTE E LAZER

RESUMO: O presente artigo traz a análise da trajetória e legitimação das leis de proteção à criança e o adolescente no Brasil; o panorama do trabalho infantil no Estado do Rio Grande do Norte, conforme a Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios 2016-2019; os programas, projetos e ações de prevenção e enfrentamento a problemática do trabalho infantil no município de Natal/RN; aproximações no campo do esporte e lazer, infância e direito ao lúdico e as políticas públicas de esporte e lazer em Natal/RN. Com o objetivo de ressaltar a importância das políticas públicas de

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esporte e lazer na perspectiva intersetorial como ferramenta de prevenção e enfrentamento ao trabalho infantil. A conclusão a que se chega é a imprescindibilidade da articulação intersetorial entre a rede de proteção social e as políticas públicas de esporte e lazer. Para alcançar os objetivos propostos, foram realizadas pesquisas bibliográfica e documental.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Trabalho infantil. Estatuto da criança e do adolescente. Políticas públicas.

Introduction

In Brazil, child labor is a current constant issue of debates. However, fighting against it is something complex, which involves the ability to construct mediations, such as the implementation of child and adolescent protection laws.

The problem of children and adolescents marginalized by society has emerged as one of the main phenomena produced by the process of globalization of capital. The matter of childhood and youth in Brazil has been outlined in order to guarantee the rights of children and adolescents, thus changing the vision of “minor delinquent” and “abandoned” to that of subjects of rights considered people in the process of development. However, from the trajectory of the 1927 Minors Code to the enactment of the Child and Adolescent Statute - ECA (BRASIL, 1990) - a moment in which they began to be seen in fact as subjects of rights and recipients of full protection - the path was tortuous.

By defining them as people entitled to rights, however, ECA provides the guidelines and actions that must be followed, as a way of defending and guaranteeing the rights of these individuals. In this regard, it enables the defense and guarantee of their basic social rights to be ensured, through the expansion of public policies aimed at young people and their families, although, in practice, what is observed is their insufficiency in meeting the demands required by the population, in particular, within the child and youth spectrum.

Therefore, it is important to analyze the social, economic and political context permeating the lives of children and adolescents in child labor situations. Considering that the situation in which they find themselves is marked for the most part by inequalities and social marginalization, a life context that is characterized by several social situations, linked to the challenges of contemporary society that often become difficult to overcome.

It is essential to universalize rights, so that everyone can have access to services with integrity. For this to actually happen, however, a political articulation between society and the Government is necessary, in order to develop proposals and strategies meeting the desires, needs and demands of the population, in search of effectively implementing public policies that guarantee citizen access to social rights.

Aware of the challenges and possibilities, the question arises: what are the actions to combat child labor in the city of Natal, state of Rio Grande do Norte (RN), in the field of sport and leisure?

The purpose is to highlight the importance of public sports and leisure policies from an intersectoral perspective as a tool for preventing and combating child labor in the city of Natal/RN.

Thus, this paper proposes to analyze the trajectory and legitimization of child and adolescent protection laws, highlighting the socio-historical context of children and adolescents in Brazil, since the emergence of the Minors Code, the legal scholars of which was supported by the irregular situation of child and adolescents until the creation and implementation of the Child and Adolescent Statute (ECA); to present the panorama of child labor in the State of Rio Grande do Norte and in the city of Natal, highlighting the programs, projects and intersectoral actions to prevent and combat child labor in the city, with an emphasis on public sports and leisure policies.

It is of great importance to carry out an analysis of the situation of children and adolescents in child labor situations, highlighting the relevance of public policies, as it makes it possible not only to understand the problems, but, above all, to get closer of the reality in which these children and adolescents are living.

Therefore, it is essential to analyze the trajectory and legitimization of child and adolescent protection laws in Brazil to understand the path taken so far in which children and adolescents begin to be seen as subjects of rights in the process of development.

The Trajectory and Legitimation of Child and Adolescent Protection Laws in Brazil

A trajectory that cannot be rescued and understood without situating the socio-historical context in which the laws were built, nor without presenting social questions, under which they were processed, that is, the conditions that determine their emergence, inflections and its historical limits. In other words, problematize the protection of children and adolescents in Brazil, highlighting their fundamental rights, that is, place it in the historical movement of Brazilian reality, pointing out the concrete determinations for its emergence.

To this end, it is important to analyze the consolidation of child and adolescent protection legislation, highlighting the political trajectory until the enactment of the Child and Adolescent Statute in the ninety's decade.

Consolidation of Child and Adolescent Protection Legislation in Brazil: The Importance of the Child and Adolescent Statute

The Minors Code, also known as Mello Matos Code, created in 1927, marks the beginning of the trajectory and consolidation of child and adolescent protection laws in

Brazil. It is in the Statute of Children and Adolescents enacted on July 13, 1990, however, that the Legal Scholars of Full Protection is consolidated, by recognizing them as subjects of untransferable and indispensable rights, providing them the quality of holders in a particular condition of development.

Thus, ECA stands out as an important instrument in guaranteeing and enforcing laws to protect children and youth in Brazil.

The socio-historical construction of children and adolescents in Brazil dates back to the colonial period, marked by the stigma of exclusion and social rejection. At that time, the Jesuits, through the Catholic church, were responsible for “taking care” of indigenous children in order to teach them literacy and teach them the “good customs” considered at the time.

Slavery represented a form of exploitation of human life, given the precarious conditions of work, housing and food to which black people, including children, were subjected. They were seen as objects for the use of labor power and the satisfaction of sexual desires of their slaveholders.

Most of the time, children were abandoned in institutions called “Roda or Casa dos Expostos”, because many were children of adulterous relationships or represented a threat to the productivity of the mother, in addition to meaning an increase in the maintenance costs of slaves.

In Brazil, child labor has been exploited since the colonial settlement. Children were sent for the colony as workers carrying out arduous work, being subjected to physical punishment and sexual abuse. Child labor was legitimized by society and with the arrival of the Jesuits this reality became even stronger (PAGANINI, 2011).

In the Empire, the childhood of children of the nobility began to be seen, but the children of slaves remained, like their parents, being treated as objects and seen as

simple workers. The first Brazilian constitution, from 1824, did not provide any special attention to children and adolescents; they were seen as marginal beings who should be subject to police control (PAGANINI, 2011).

Later, in 1871, the Law of Free Birth was signed, which considered the children of slaves born from that date on to be free from slavery. With the advent of Lei Áurea [Golden Law] (1888), which abolished slavery, the societal and economic transformations resulting from the beginning of the industrialization process aggravated social issues, accentuating the increase in abandonment and social misery of children and adolescents, since they were still seen as subjects without rights (CALIL, 2003).

After the abolition of slavery, Decree No. 1,313 of 1891 came into force, establishing measures to regularize the work of minors employed in the factories of the capital.

Child labor was something natural and standardized, with no concern for the physical and psychological development of children and adolescents, nor for their education, leisure, childhood and right to play.

With the growing increase in child and youth crime, which began to considerably modify the so-called “social order”, discussions emerged in Brazil, between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, between the government, legislative and judicial branches, and welfare institutions regarding the support and the protection of minors (CALIL, 2003).

The need to take a different look at this part of the population favored the emergence of the Minors Code on October 12, 1927. The new law raised concerns about the problems of children and adolescents marginalized by society. The Minors Code or Mello Matos Code, the jurists scholar of which was supported by the irregular situation of children and adolescents, was characterized by the association between

poverty and marginality. Thus, teenagers did not find alternatives to be recognized and respected in a society full of inequalities.

The Minors Code provided the rights of children and adolescents into the Brazilian legal system, submitting the “minor” in a risky or abandoned situation to the competent authority. The code aimed to control poverty, providing work to low-income children as a way of preventing what society at the time considered delinquency (MORAIS and SILVA, 2009, p. 42-43). This brought advances in relation to previous legislation, prohibiting work for children under 12 years old, as well as for adolescents under 18 years old, working in places that are dangerous to their health. In 1979, the New Minors Code was instituted, repealing the 1927 Code, however, the regulation of “minors” in an irregular situation persisted.

It is important to highlight that, at that time, it was not under discussion issues as the generation of employment and income for families with children and adolescents in situations of child labor, creation and expansion of public policies (education, health, sport, leisure, etc.), from the perspective of guarantee equal access to all children and adolescents.

However, nowadays, this situation becomes visible when children, adolescents and their families are held responsible for their actions, without taking into account that part of this culpability is due to the lack of responsibility of the Government regarding social matters³ (VOLIC; BAPTISTA, 2005), the insufficiency of basic social policies

³ The *genesis* of the *social issue* in bourgeois society derives from the collective character of production opposed to the private appropriation of human activity itself – work –, the conditions necessary for its realization, as well as its fruits. It is inseparable from the emergence of the “free worker”, who depends on the sale of his/her labor power as a means of satisfying his vital needs. Thus, the *social issue* condenses the set of social inequalities and struggles, produced and reproduced in the contradictory movement of social relations, reaching the fullness of their expressions and nuances in a time of fetish capital. The settings assumed by the *social issue* integrate both objective historical determinants that condition the lives of social individuals, and subjective dimensions, the result of the actions of subjects in the construction of history. Therefore, it expresses an arena of political and cultural struggles in the dispute between societal projects, informed by different class interests in the conduct of economic and

(food, health, housing, sport, leisure, education, among others) and the failure to implement social rights guaranteed by law to all Brazilian citizens.

Brazil is among the founding members of the International Labor Organization (ILO) and has participated in the International Labor Conference since its first meeting (1919). ILO Convention No. 138, on the minimum age for admission to employment, was approved at the 58th meeting of the International Labor Conference (Geneva - 1973), and became into force at the international level on July 19, 1976. In Brazil, approval took place following Legislative Decree No. 179 of December 14, 1999; ratified on June 28, 2001 and Decree No. 4134, which was enacted on February 15, 2002.

Following the provisions of ILO Convention No. 138, Brazil established the minimum age for work, eighteen years; the transitional minimum age, sixteen years; and the exceptional minimum age, fourteen years old for the status of trainee (MORAES and SILVA, 2009, p. 45-46).

In 1943, with the Consolidation of Labor Laws (CLT), standards for protecting the work of children and adolescents were presented in Chapter IV, in articles 402 to 441. For CLT, a worker aged between fourteen and eighteen years of age is considered a “minor”. At the age of fourteen, he or she is permitted to work as an apprentice (Law No. 10097/2000, which amended provisions of CLT regulating the Apprenticeship Contract, establishing, among other points, the duration of work as a trainee will not exceed six hours per day, with extension and compensation of the working day being prohibited).

Since the enactment of the Federal Constitution in 1988, there has been recognition of children and adolescents as citizens/subjects of rights, with a concern

social policies, which bear the seal of national historical particularities (IAMAMOTO, 2008, p. 156, emphasis added).

with their training and education, contrary to what was stipulated in the Minors Code of 1927, where they were seen as a social problem that should be corrected by the Government through work.

In 1998, Constitutional Amendment No. 20 changed section XXXIII of art. 7th of CF, raising the minimum age for child and youth work to 16 years old, as well as increasing the minimum age for working as a trainee to fourteen years old.

Given this entire trajectory, it was only with the process of redemocratization that took place in the 1980s, that certain industries of Brazilian society committed to the issue of human and social rights of children and adolescents engaged in struggles and mobilizations in favor of guaranteeing and implementing of the rights of this segment. Process that resulted in the approval of the 1988 Federal Constitution, guaranteeing Brazilians the recognition of their rights, as stated in its Art. 5th “All people are equal before the law, without any distinction whatsoever. Brazilians and foreigners residing in the country are ensured the inviolability of their right to life, liberty, equality, security, and property” (BRASIL, 1988) .

Art. 227 of the aforementioned law provides for the fundamental rights of children and adolescents, giving them the status of holders of inalienable and indispensable rights for their subsistence, as well as the peculiar condition of people in the process of development.

This is the result of a broad process of social mobilization, which was intensified in Brazil during the period of redemocratization of society (1980s), in favor of the rights of children and adolescents, a situation worsened by the increase in social inequalities experienced at the time that compromised the lives of many low-income working families, forcing children and adolescents to seek their own survival on the streets (SALES; ALENCAR, 1997).

In the midst of the redemocratization process, marked by the strong participation of civil society, in the search for a system to promote and defend the rights of children and adolescents, it is worth highlighting some players of fundamental relevance to this achievement: at the national level, political participation of the National Movement of Street Boys and Girls (MNMMR) denouncing violence and mistreatment against children and young people. Composed of young university students, with participation in social movements; social workers and students who worked in Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), players directly linked to the daily lives of children and adolescents; and, Pastoral do Menor, constituted by the Catholic church, which together with MNMMR developed programs aimed at this public (SALES; ALENCAR, 1997).

The Child and Adolescent Statute represented the pinnacle of organization and social mobilization in the country, enacted in 1990, in the form of special law No. 8069, opposing the anachronistic and correctional Code of Minors and the Minors' Welfare Policy, extinguishing the concept of “irregularly staying minors”. Committing to the policy of full protection for all children and adolescents, regardless of gender, color, religion, social class and race, which means absolute priority for this segment, now considered, according to Art. 2nd of the aforementioned law, as children the individual up to the twelve years old, and adolescents are those between twelve and eighteen years old (BIDARRA; OLIVEIRA, 2007).

In order to promote social development by guaranteeing freedom and dignity, as well as the social and personal rights of children and adolescents, ECA establishes guidelines that provide opportunities and favor the guarantee of these rights.

The guidelines expressed in the Statute provide for the formulation of social policies that guarantee the rights of children and adolescents through the articulation of actions between public authorities and civil society.

In this regard, it is possible to deduce that care for children and adolescents in child labor situations requires an intersectoral and interdisciplinary approach through the implementation of public policies for family care (social assistance, education, health, culture, sport and leisure, public safety, among others), aimed at the comprehensive fulfillment of human rights, working from the perspective of prevention and social protection.

Thus, when it comes to the demands and struggle to guarantee and enforce the rights of children and adolescents, the approval of the Child and Adolescent Statute constituted an extremely relevant and strategic achievement from the point of view of defending the rights of the Brazilian child and youth population.

In view of this, analyzing the panorama of child labor in the State of Rio Grande do Norte becomes essential to understand the process of confronting and eradicating child labor in the city of Natal/RN.

Overview of Child Labor in the State of Rio Grande do Norte

Within the scope of the State of Rio Grande do Norte, data show that in 2019, 21,727 children and adolescents aged 5 to 17 were in child labor, which is equivalent to 3.2% of the total number of children and adolescents from Rio Grande do Norte, according to the National Forum for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor (FNPETI), based on data released by PNAD 2016-2019 (FÓRUM ESTADUAL..., 2020).

It can be observed that in the state of Rio Grande do Norte, the number of working children and adolescents was below the national average, which was 4.6% of the total, in 2019 (FÓRUM ESTADUAL..., 2020). Although the numbers in the State show a decrease, however, in order for the social rights of children and adolescents to

be effectively implemented, it is necessary to create and expand public policies meeting the assumptions established in current legislation (Federal Constitution, Child Statute and of Adolescents and etc.), which respond to the desires of the child and youth population combined with the process of critical political formation of society.

Working children and adolescents in Rio Grande do Norte dedicated 17.1 hours of their time to work activities in 2019, according to the data presented (FÓRUM ESTADUAL..., 2020). And this is worrying, since it can leave physical, psychological, educational and social consequences and damage. In educational terms, access to education may be compromised, leading to low academic performance. If compared to age and schooling, many find themselves uneven - outside their average schooling age range - dropping out of school and not completing the initial years of basic education, with few people being able to complete high school.

Long working hours directly affect the learning of children and adolescents in child labor situations. A situation that could worsen, due to the socioeconomic impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the lack of effective public policies to protect children and adolescents in situations of vulnerability and/or personal and social risk. Furthermore, once time is dedicated to carrying out work activities, experiments in the field of leisure and sport decrease; and consequently, playfulness, which is a striking expression at this stage of life, is no longer experienced.

The research reveals not only data, but above all a reality of denial and violation of the rights of children and adolescents, subjects of rights considered people in a peculiar condition of development. These are lives that add up to a sad social reality that drastically affects countless Brazilian families in the most varied municipalities. Understanding that children and adolescents are subjects of rights is essential to guarantee and implement social rights for this segment.

Therefore, it is necessary to implement actions that consist of coordination between departments to develop state and municipal actions to combat child labor, including: monitoring state and municipal programs and projects; planning and organization of continuing education actions for workers from intersectoral departments involved in coping actions; Coordination with the planning and budget departments to prepare the State and Municipal Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and protection for working teenagers and assistance to their families, among other actions relevant to the reality of each municipality, become essential to achieve success facing this problem.

It is important to understand that children and adolescents are subjects of rights in the process of development and that it is up to the State, the family and society to look after/care for/protect them from all forms of violence and/or negligence (BRASIL, 1990). To this end, coordination is necessary between the Support Network (Child and Adolescent Rights Guarantee System - SGD); Human Rights Defense Bodies (Childhood and Youth Court, Labor Court, Labor Prosecution Office, Public Prosecution Office, Public Defender's Office, Specialized Police Stations, Child Protective Councils and Ombudsman's Offices) and Rights Promotion Bodies (Social Assistance Reference Center - CRAS, Specialized Reference Center for Social Assistance - CREAS, Municipal Department for Labor and Social Assistance - SEMTAS, Department of Health, Sports and Leisure and Secretariat of Education, Civil Society Organizations - OSC), among other public and private institutions of extremely important for children and adolescents to truly have their rights guaranteed, as recommended by ECA.

In this regard, CRAS is configured as a public unit of the National Social Assistance Policy (PNAS), an initial support for families of children and adolescents in

child labor situations. The partnership between other public policies (health, education, sport and leisure, among others) is extremely important.

Facing and eradicating child labor is not an easy task, coordination between the protection network is essential, being mandatory in this process for cooperation between the most diverse bodies in the system to guarantee rights, since as a set of entities, professionals and institutions, they work to guarantee and protect the rights of children and adolescents within the scope of full protection.

To this end, it is necessary to enhance programs, projects and intersectoral actions aimed at fighting against this problem, intensifying public policies aimed at children and youth as a framework for protecting vulnerability and/or personal and social risk in which they are inserted.

Therefore, sport and leisure policies are configured as a possibility/feasibility in the process of confronting and eradicating child labor, considering that they work from the perspective of access to leisure and sport practices, enhancing opportunities.

In view of this, the articulation between education policy, social assistance and sports and leisure policies becomes essential to successfully face this reality. It is worth highlighting that this need for intersectoral coordination arises from the complexity of combating child labor, with the system guaranteeing the rights of children and adolescents being a fundamental part of the process to achieve the expected results.

Overview of Child Labor in Natal/RN

According to data from the report “Data on families and people with indications of Child Labor, children and adolescents, with the years 2019 and 2020 as a reference period, in the municipality of Natal/RN”. Silva (2022, p.31) presents information from the Single Registry for Social Programs of the Federal Government (CadÚnico) and the Monthly Activity Reports (RMA's), the Protection and Specialized Assistance Service

for Families and Individuals and the Specialized Service in Social Approach (SEAS) offered by the Specialized Social Assistance Reference Center (CREAS) in the city of Natal/RN (SILVA, 2022, p. 31).

Silva (2022, p.31) highlights that the number of families with children and/or adolescents in a situation of child labor included in the Specialized Assistance Service for Families and Individuals (PAEFI) is an indicator that cannot have the monthly values added together, Since they are inserted, monitored and/or disconnected from the service on a monthly basis, for comparative analysis, data from December 2019 and 2020 were analyzed as reference years (SILVA, 2022, p.31).

Thus, it is observed that there was a drop in the total number of families with children and/or adolescents in a situation of child labor monitored by PAEFI from 2019 to 2020, in total values. However, there is a drop in the North and South administrative regions and an increase in the East and West regions, as reported by Silva (2022, p. 31).

It should be noted that the largest number of families with children and adolescents in a situation of child labor accompanied by the Specialized Assistance Service for Families and Individuals in 2019 was registered in the Western administrative region, totaling the number of 21 families accompanied for 50 children and/or teenagers accompanied. In 2020 it increased to 23 accompanied families and 53 children and adolescents accompanied in 2020 (SILVA, 2022, p. 32 *apud* NATAL, 2022).

According to Silva (2022, p.32), the Eastern region of Natal/RN showed an increase in the number of families with children and adolescents in a situation of child labor, with 11.11% and 84.6%, respectively, growth from 13 to 24 in the number of cases – information regarding the number of children and/or adolescents in child labor situations monitored by PAEFI. While the South and North regions showed a decrease

in the number of cases related to work issues (SILVA, 2022, p. 32 *apud* NATAL, 2022).

With regard to the identification of families with children and adolescents in a situation of child labor, monitored by the Specialized Service in Social Approach (SEAS), Silva (2022, p. 33) highlights that from January to December of 2019 and 2020, the South Region had the highest number of families approached with children and adolescents in child labor situations, 211 families were identified. In 2020, the Eastern Region had the highest number, totaling 65 families. It is possible to observe an increase during this period in the North Region, from 4 families in 2019 to 12 families in 2020 (SILVA, 2022, p. 33 *apud* NATAL, 2022).

Silva (2022, p. 33), highlights that the number of families with children and adolescents in child labor situations were referred to CREAS in 2019 was higher in the Eastern Region, 111 families referred to CREAS; and in 2020, for the South Region, 26 families were referred (NATAL, 2022).

The analysis of the data presented by SEMTAS, according to Silva (2022, p. 34) on child labor, between 2019 and 2020 shows that the number of children and adolescents in a situation of child labor increased by 1.25%; the data demonstrated that the Western Region has a greater number of families and children and/or adolescents in a situation of child labor in the respective period; the decrease in the number of child labor cases in the North and South Regions does not match reality, since the pandemic scenario and the imposition of social isolation in the period of 2020 may have hidden records; The child labor rate is subject to a high rate of underreporting, since the engagement of the protection network and society is necessary to encourage reporting so that the consequences do not worsen (SILVA, 2022, p. 34 *apud* NATAL, 2022).

It is clear that this is a reality faced by many children and adolescents who are

socially vulnerable. They are people in a peculiar condition of development with weakened, violated rights who are often unaware of their rights.

In the following topic, the programs, projects and actions developed in the city of Natal/RN will be presented, from the perspective of preventing and combating child labor.

Programs, Projects and Intersectoral Actions to Prevent and Combat Child Labor in Natal/RN

It is important to highlight that although there are actions to combat child labor being carried out in the city of Natal/RN, these are disjointed and have not effectively contributed to the eradication of child labor.

The Local Authority of Natal/RN, through the Municipal Department of Labor and Social Assistance (SEMTAS), with the aim of working to prevent and combat child labor, carried out intersectoral actions in 2019 to combat child labor in municipal schools in city.

Actions to combat child labor in schools were carried out in partnership with the Municipal Department of Education (SME), in municipal schools; Social Assistance Reference Centers (CRAS); Specialized Social Assistance Reference Centers (CREAS) and Occupational Health Reference Center (CEREST) of the State Department for Public Health of Rio Grande do Norte (SESAP/RN), through the School Citizenship and Youth Protagonism Squad Project (complementary education project, developed by the Municipal Department of Education of Natal in partnership with other bodies and entities in the city that carry out citizenship, health and youth protagonism actions).

In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of children and adolescents begging in Natal/RN increased. Faced with this fact, the State Forum for the

Eradication of Child Labor and Protection of Working Adolescents (FOCA/RN⁴) launched an educational campaign to raise awareness among the population. Campaign that extended until 2021 with the aim of raising awareness among the population of Natal that begging, unlike what many people think, is child labor, being considered a crime as stated by law (FÓRUM ESTADUAL..., 2020).

Nevertheless, socio-educational actions need to be linked to public sports and leisure policies, since other policies such as the National Social Assistance Policy, based on the Child Labor Eradication Program, are articulated, adding to programs, projects and Actions such as the City Sports and Leisure Program and the School Citizenship and Youth Protagonism Squad Project can contribute to combating child labor.

Public policies are configured as actions and programs developed by public authorities to guarantee social rights to citizens as guaranteed in the 1988 Federal Constitution. In view of this, as a strategy to combat child labor, the Child Labor Eradication Program (PETI) presents the following axes: training and mobilization; identification of child labor; protection; defense and accountability and monitoring (BRASIL, 2005).

According to Rodrigues (2011, p. 14) public policies, are “resulting from political activity, require several strategic actions designed to implement the desired objectives [...] they consist of decisions and actions that are covered by the sovereign authority of the government”. In this regard, it is up to the State to “diagnose social demands and needs, plan the appropriate means, instruments and resources, in order to meet the desired ends” (RODRIGUES, 2011, p. 23).

⁴ Forum is made up of several public and private entities, including the Municipal Department of Labor and Social Assistance (SEMTAS), through the Child Labor Eradication Program – PETI.

Inserted in the Organic Social Assistance Law (LOAS), it is characterized as an intersectoral program, part of PNAS, which comprises: income transfers; social work with families and offering socio-educational services to children and adolescents who are in a situation of child labor, such as the Service of Coexistence and Strengthening of Bonds (SCFV) (BRASIL, 2013).

PETI is recognized as a strategy that articulates a set of intersectoral actions aimed at combating and eradicating child labor, it is developed in an articulated manner, its actions are agreed between federated entities (States and Municipalities) with the participation of civil society and aims to remove children and adolescents aged 7 to 15 years of age from activities considered dangerous, unhealthy, painful or degrading, in addition to ensuring direct transfer of income to families, through the payment of grants (money) to families who remove their same as work.

It offers children, adolescents, young people and their families inclusion in guidance and monitoring services, through training and income generation activities, encouraging the expansion of the universe of knowledge of children and adolescents, through cultural, sporting and of leisure, in the period complementary to regular education (after school shifts), encouraging changes in family habits and attitudes, in a close relationship with the school and the community (BRASIL, 2013).

The adoption of public policies combined with monitoring and inspection carried out by the Labor Prosecution Office, the Prosecution Office, Child Protective Councils and SGD bodies are important measures in combating child labor.

As a result of advances in inspection, the 2010 IBGE census showed a reduction in child labor in formalized sectors. Therefore, child labor is currently found in informality, in family production, in domestic work, in family farming and in unlawful activities (BRASIL, 2014).

It is observed that the programs, projects and actions developed in the city of Natal/RN, however, are insufficient to meet the demands of the population. It is noted that public sports and leisure policies specifically aimed at combating child labor are still non-existent in the municipality, when they should exist with greater priority.

In view of this, it is necessary to develop intersectoral public policies, with emphasis on sport and leisure, aimed at raising awareness among the population regarding the impacts and consequences of child labor in the lives of children and adolescents, so that it is not seen as dignifying.

Public Policies on Sport and Leisure in the city of Natal/RN

With regard to sport and leisure, these are rights ensured by Art. 6th, Art. 227, § 3 of the Federal Constitution (BRASIL, 1988), as social rights of all Brazilian citizens. Rights also guaranteed by Art. 8th, Art. 146 and Art. 157 of the Constitution of the State of Rio Grande do Norte (RIO GRANDE DO NORTE, 2007) and in Art. 170 of the Organic Law of the Municipality of Natal/RN (NATAL, 2021b).

It is known that public policies are instruments for confronting the expressions of social issues, given that the Government creates programs, projects and actions that meet the demands made by the population. Sport and leisure have great relevance in people's lives, and thinking about public policies in the area as public management, whether at Federal, State and/or Municipal level, is essential to provide the well-being of the population and here in particular, children and adolescents.

From this perspective, the City Sports and Leisure Program (PELC) stands out - a Federal Government Program (Ministry of Citizenship – Special Department for Sport) municipalized by the local authority of Natal/RN, through the Office of Sport and Leisure (SEL), which provides the practice of physical, cultural and leisure

activities that involve different age groups and includes people with disabilities (PWDs), contributing to sport and leisure being treated as public policies.

The purpose of the Program is to guide actions aimed at different audiences (according to age group, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, people with disabilities, among others) in leisure and recreational sports centers; encourage participatory management among local players directly and indirectly involved; to encourage the implementation of a participatory and democratic methodology for the development of intersectoral public policies for leisure and recreational sports; to promote initial training and encourage continued training of social agents and municipal managers of leisure and recreational sports; to value and strengthen local culture in appropriating the right to leisure and recreational sports; promote the redefinition and qualification of public leisure and recreational sports spaces and equipment; to democratize access to leisure and recreational sports, privileging less favored communities (BRASIL, 2017).

Having as target audience children, teenagers, young people, adults, the elderly and people with disabilities. In Natal, the program is part of the actions developed annually by SEL, with actions that serve hundreds of citizens, from the most varied classes, age groups and gender who live in the four zones of the city (NATAL, 2021c).

In addition to PELC municipalization, Natal has a calendar of sporting events (annual actions). In 2019, editions of Cíelo Natal, Football Cups, editions of Viva Natal were held on the urban beaches of the city (Ponta Negra, Miami and Redinha), sports of public officials and parasports (NATAL, 2021a).

Not to mention the successful project Pelotão da Cidadania Escolar e Protagonismo Juvenil, created by the Municipal Department of Education (SME), in partnership with other bodies and entities in the city, which despite not being configured

as a sports project and leisure, develops educational actions in schools (coordination between the Department of Education and the Department of Labor and Social Assistance), based on workshops and educational lectures with the aim of providing citizenship training to children and adolescents (NATAL, 2019; NATAL, 2020).

Actions are important, however, they are insufficient to solve the problem. Although there is an effort on the part of the local authority regarding the revitalization of sports structures, holding sporting events and actions in schools in neighborhoods with an incidence of child labor, it is notable that there are no specific public policies for sports and leisure to combat child labor in the municipality.

The creation of specific policies in the area of sport and leisure, linked to other intersectoral policies, will contribute to meeting the desires and needs of the child and youth population, since public policies are configured as essential tools in tackling this problem (NATAL, 2021c).

From an intersectoral perspective, sports and leisure policies can contribute to broadening the “perspective” of children and adolescents in situations of child labor, strengthening weakened family and social bonds. And through networking, bringing the school closer to the family group, understanding that the family is a key player in the process of raising awareness of the cause (NATAL, 2021c).

Always keeping in mind that the Government is responsible for creating/drafting employment and income generation policies aimed at families with children and adolescents in child labor situations. Recognizing that the creation and expansion of programs and projects aimed at the most vulnerable classes in society is the means to address situations of social inequalities.

Working on the protective dimension aspect is the shortest path to eliminating child labor. The challenge is to break the cycle of poverty, which leads countless

families to rely on income support from their children and adolescents to supplement the family budget. Fighting poverty is crucial to combating and eradicating child labor.

In view of this, sport appears as a valuable factor in the training process of children and adolescents, considering it is a sociocultural phenomenon that manifests itself in the daily life of society, providing health promotion, recreation, leisure and socialization. Guaranteeing access or return to school, integration into social and professional programs for adolescents as apprentices, combined with the creation of income transfer programs, guaranteeing food in schools will result in significant impacts in combating child labor.

In the next topic, we will analyze public sports and leisure policies in the city of Natal/RN, highlighting the right to play in childhood.

Public Policy on Sport and Leisure in the city of Natal/RN: The Right to Play in Childhood

In the Federal Constitution and the Child and Adolescent Statute, public policies on sport and leisure not only gain importance but also become the duty of the State to guarantee and encourage sport and leisure as a form of social promotion. From this perspective, it is important to highlight the National Sports Policy, approved on June 14, 2005, by Resolution no. 05 of National Sports Council. The Special Office for Sports of the Ministry of Citizenship is the main national body responsible for formulating and implementing public sports and leisure policies.

It is important to analyze the social, political and economic context in which public organizations must act, defining strategies and actions appropriate to each social reality, articulating support with the community and the social protection network, in

order to truly guarantee that children's rights and adolescents are ensured, as they have the right to leisure and not to child labor.

Playing, in addition to being a right guaranteed by law, is essential for the development of children, considering that they are human beings in the process of development and subjects of civil, human and social rights, as assured by ECA, in its article 15.

Children and adolescents in situations of child labor, in addition to being deprived of their childhood, the right to education, sport and play, can have serious consequences for their adult life, a situation that can contribute to perpetuating the cycle of poverty (REDE PETECA, 2021).

Even though social rights are guaranteed by law to every child and adolescent, the data reveals a contrary scenario. The employment level of children and adolescents between 5 and 17 years old, despite showing a decrease between 2016 and 2019, according to the PNAD, still persists in the Brazilian reality.

It is clear that child labor impacts the childhood, when they are denied the right to play and are replaced by hours of daily work.

The right not to work exists so that children and adolescents can study and play, as well as develop fully, without premature obligations and responsibilities, which are not theirs and, as a rule, belong to the family, society and the State, tripartite responsibility in guaranteeing integral development (MOREIRA, 2014, p. 24 *apud* CUSTÓDIO; ZARO, 2020, p. 436).

Public prevention and social protection policies are necessary so that children are guaranteed a healthy and free childhood than oppression and denial of social rights, which are guaranteed by law. It is necessary to understand that children have the right to play, recognizing that playfulness contributes to their learning process.

Playfulness understood herein according to Carvalho; Bizzotto (2022, p. 87) as “the principle of children’s relationships with the city, assuming play as a language and as a way of perceiving their place in the world.”

Leisure, in turn, is understood as a “human need and dimension of culture that constitutes a field of social practices experienced playfully by subjects, being present in everyday life at all times, places and contexts” (GOMES, 2014, p.14) ; It is a factor that contributes to a better quality of life and social well-being of individuals, based on the playful experiences experienced in everyday life. Therefore, it is necessary for public management to take a closer look at public policies, in order to ensure that children and adolescents are guaranteed and enforced their social rights; since leisure is also a social right guaranteed in the 1988 federal constitution.

In this regard, analyzing public sports and leisure policies in Natal/RN is extremely important in the dialogue to eradicate child labor. Since it is configured as an interdisciplinary field of studies capable of establishing interdisciplinary dialogues.

Conclusions

Combating child labor is not a simple task; to be successful, it is necessary to integrate the social protection network. One cannot just think about carrying out actions, given that they are characterized as punctual, it is necessary to create articulated public policies that develop projects, which are continuous, long-term and that effectively contribute to changing the reality and development of the subjects involved.

Much has already been achieved after the advent of the ECA, of the protection laws approved over the years, in terms of guaranteeing and enforcing the rights of children and adolescents. However, it is necessary to pay attention to the change in concept, attribution and methodology of action present in the Statute and for this to

come true, it is necessary to apply it through public policies, focused on keeping children and adolescents in school, creation, maintenance and supervision of income transfer programs, sports and leisure practices, cultural training and awareness raising of the population regarding the fight against child labor, thus ensuring that children have the right to live their childhood with dignity, guaranteeing these to have the right to build your learning through play.

It is essential that public policies aim to develop strategic actions against the exploitation of child labor, sensitize families that child labor is not beneficial for children and adolescents, nor for society, through socio-educational campaigns as strategies to raise awareness of population regarding violations of the rights of children and adolescents, as well as encouraging complaints is essential to changing this reality.

In this regard, within the scope of the management of the municipality of Natal/RN, it is indispensable to provide greater incentives for the provision of specific public policies on sport and leisure through the Municipal Department of Sport and Leisure, integrated with other municipal policies in combating child labor (intersectoral actions between departments, public bodies, private institutions and Civil Society Organizations, linked to the social protection network), based on prevention programs and projects that contribute to promoting economic, political, social, sporting and cultural strategies in preventing and combating child labor.

It is important to highlight that, although Natal has the City Sports and Leisure Program and the Citizenship Squad Project, these actions are not capable of carrying out consolidated work in the field of intersectoral actions to combat child labor. This work is incipient. And, in this regard, it points to an expansion of these public policies, in addition to others that, acting together, enable coordinated and intersectoral actions to contribute to the eradication of child labor in the city of Natal/RN.

Therefore, the relevance of the programs and projects to be developed by the Municipality of Natal through the Municipal Department of Sport and Leisure and other departments is highlighted, using sport and leisure as tools that can contribute to the formation of critical citizens, participatory and transformative of their realities, since providing sports and leisure activities contributes to human development, physical and emotional well-being, in addition to adding knowledge about sport as an educational actor that adds values such as teamwork, respect, discipline and responsibility strengthen emotional, family and social bonds.

In view of this, the proposals/suggestions for municipal public management in the field of sport and leisure stand out, strategies to be used in the context of the reduction/eradication of child labor: the construction of an intersectoral agenda expanded in an integrated and articulated way, with the policies of health, education, social assistance, culture, sport and leisure, with a view to enhancing efforts in the identification, care and follow-up/monitoring of children and adolescents in child labor situations and their families, bearing in mind that the work must be carried out together with the family and institutions that make up the system that guarantees the rights of children and adolescents (protection network).

The Government must ensure the formalization of public policies aimed at generating employment and income for families, in order to guarantee the necessary means for the survival of the family group and specific sports and leisure policies as strategies to combat child labor, strengthening health services. coexistence and strengthening bonds (investment in basic social protection), with cultural, sporting and leisure activities after school for children and adolescents, promoting preventive measures aimed at avoiding the increase/reproduction of situations of vulnerability and/or personal risk and society in which they find themselves.

Therefore, it is essential to stimulate social insertion that enhances the democracy of social life, based on knowledge of the way of life of these subjects, since this knowledge will allow the establishment of new actions to expand the generation of public policies and thus meet the needs of needs of those considered on the margins of Brazilian society, which were the focus of this paper: children and adolescents in child labor situations.

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