

## Education and Public Policy

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Education and public policy go hand in hand as pillars for building more democratic, equitable, and inclusive societies. While education shapes critical individuals capable of understanding and transforming reality, public policy guarantees the objective conditions for this right to be realised in different social contexts. This relationship proves to be strategic in times of intense social, economic and technological change, in which the promotion of active citizenship and the reduction of inequalities are urgent challenges (Silva; Souza 2024).

Scientific production in the field of education, linked to the debate on public policies, allows us to highlight gaps, propose solutions and assess the impact of the actions implemented. In this sense, research and reflections that emerge from this axis become fundamental to support the formulation of programmes and strategies capable of promoting greater social justice, educational inclusion, and the strengthening of democracy. By bringing academia closer to social practices, space is opened for a fruitful dialogue between knowledge and experiences that contribute to the realisation of rights (Marconi et al., 2021).

In view of this, education represents a fundamental vector for sustainable development, citizenship, and the reduction of social inequalities. In Brazil, public education policies are constantly revised to address historical challenges related to access, retention, quality, and school inclusion, impacting various regions and population groups (Brazil, 2025; Dias, 2025; Ramos, 2024). This field articulates government practices and social demands, constituting a priority for the construction of an equitable and sustainable society (FHC, 2025).

Coordination between different levels of government is considered essential to overcoming structural inequalities, especially in the most vulnerable regions (Brazil, 2025). Cross-cutting territorial development, which integrates health, infrastructure and social assistance, is gaining ground in public policies, with resources being allocated to peripheral, indigenous, *Quilombolas* and *Ribeirinhas* communities (Brazil, 2025). The strengthening of the three pillars of teaching, research and extension in public universities reinforces the role of education in local development (FHC, 2025).

The VII International Symposium on Science, Health and Territory, held at the University of Planalto Catarinense, facilitated this exchange of ideas, presenting studies that address education as a driver of social transformation and the formulation of public policies as a means of guaranteeing and consolidating such transformations. The works linked to Axis

IV reflect the plurality of perspectives and methodologies, reaffirming the importance of an interdisciplinary and critical approach in the face of contemporary challenges.

Thus, this edition of the Latin American Journal of Environment and Health (rLAS) brings together contributions that reinforce the understanding that education, in constant dialogue with public policies, is an essential tool for building a more just, inclusive, and democratic future.

### Declaration regarding the use of artificial intelligence

The authors confirm that did not use artificial intelligence tools to prepare texts nor to create images or any other element of this manuscript.

### CRediT author statement

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