

Educational Policies For Multigrade Schools In Mexico: Relegated By Graduated Education

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Abstract

The objective of this article is to analyze the existence of specific policies for multiserial schools promoted by the contemporary Mexican state. By means of a documentary research, an analysis was carried out of the educational policies in force since 1995 to date, analyzing whether public policies exist for these schools or whether they have been subordinated to the educational policies for graduated schools. Such genealogy required the analysis of documents such as the Lei Geral de Educação, or the Educational Development Program 1995-2000, or the National Education Program 2001-2006, or the Sectoral Education Program 2007-2012, or the Educational Model for the Ensino Obrigatório 2012- 2017 model Nova Escola Mexicana. Since the graduated schools were established as hegemonic, the political-pedagogical gestures have not been concentrated in this form of organization, leaving aside the execution of public policies that improve the educational quality in the multi-serial schools. Multiseriated schools have been promoted as a strategy for educational coverage, an aspect that requires the creation of specific policies or the continuity of strategies guided by some previous six-year period.

Keywords: educational policies; multiserial primary schools; Mexico

1. Introduction

In the article *The Fragmented Prince . Mexico: dispossession, violence and commands*, Roux (2016) established that the hegemony of the Mexican state is constantly redefined and reconfigured, it is an incessant struggle of consolidation and dispute. It is a historical process of domination and consensus that through its institutions, laws, routines, rituals and regulations establish repressive and/or doctrinal processes. This continuum, according to Poulantzas (2005), should not be conceived as a simple binomial of repression + ideology; but:

It concerns a series of material practices, which extend to the habits, customs, and way of life of the agents, and is thus molded, as a binding matter, in the set of social practices, including political and economic practices . (p. 27).

This process establishes a correspondence between state and society, which consists of a dialectical relationship in which the dominant class commands and protects, and the subordinate class obeys and is loyal to the sovereign power. This necessarily requires the generation of consensus; that is, the reproduction of the dominant ideology. In the words of Poulantzas (2005), “ideology is not something neutral in society [...] the dominant ideology embodies in the State apparatuses that play the role of elaborating, instilling and reproducing that ideology” (p. 27).

Public policies are a ramification of this process, they are regulations that order and operationalize the actions of the authorities and the actions of the population. The materialization of these policies is the conclusion of the existing tensions and disputes between the dominant and the subordinate. In the words of Torres and Santander (2013):

The role that public policy plays within a society implies legitimizing the State, not only because of its instrumental nature in the provision of basic services or the administration of public goods; They are socio-political bets to solve specific

public problems, individual and collective needs that are defined by society itself (p.15)

For these authors, public policies are the link between the rulers and the population; according to Mendíaz (2004, p. 1) “they are a glass through which transformations in the relations between the State and Society can be visualized.” The public policies that have been established respond to the needs and demands of the context and the political situation of the time. In the 1970s, public policies were aimed at generating development in backward countries. The National Development Plans outlined proposals that would mitigate the poverty and inequality existing in said countries. These problems did not diminish and the change in the economic model in the 1980s “generated new types of precariousness and social insecurity” (Pulido, 2017, p. 21); which forced the state to redefine public policies, promoting social policies aimed at the informal, the poorest and the vulnerable.

Specifically, this work focuses on the school aspect, with the objective of tracking the educational policies that the Mexican state has undertaken to offer optimal instruction to girls and boys who attend multigrade primary schools. We return to the definition of Gómez (2017), who established that:

Educational policies are all those laws created by the state to guarantee education at the national level. [...] They are designed to solve the problems faced by education to transform it into achieving the objectives of quality, efficiency and effectiveness (p.149).

This work seeks to answer the following research question: In the current Mexican state, are there specific policies for multigrade schools? Holding as a hypothesis that these have been subsumed by educational policies for graduated

schools. Schmelkes and Aguila (2019) point out that “the SEP does not have a specific educational policy for multigrade schools, but rather a set of actions, strategies and programs that reach these schools in a non-specific or tacit manner” (p. 205). Through this review (General Law of Education, Educational Models 1995- 2000; 2001- 2006; 2007- 2012; 2016- 2018 and Nueva Escuela Mexicana) we can see that the state has been incorporating certain guidelines for multigrade primary schools; However, these are still the minimum given the demands that these educational institutions require. Undoubtedly, graduated education has been established as hegemonic, leaving aside and omitting any specific policy for multigrade primary schools.

Without a doubt, the fact that there are primary schools in the most remote areas of the country is the result of the concertation between the demands of the population and the state, it is the search for expansion of the educational system; But this expansion has not guaranteed optimal education that allows girls and boys to break the cycle of precariousness that the state should guarantee. Educational policies are designed for graduated education, leaving aside the legislation and application of specific educational policies for multigrade primary schools. These schools work with the pedagogical method , educational materials and under the same management and evaluation regulations to which graduated schools are subject. This is generating greater lag, since equal parameters are requested in unequal social conditions, since primarily, multigrade primary schools are found in regions classified as having a high and very high degree of marginalization; being mainly indigenous; That is, they have their own languages, cultures and traditions.

2. Methodology

This work was based on a qualitative methodology, using the documentary research technique. This technique consists of “a series of methods and techniques for searching, processing and storing information; [as well as] the systematic, coherent and sufficiently argued presentation of new information” (Tancara, 1993, p.94). The information was collected, systematized in worksheets, and the data were analyzed.

3. Results

3.1 Multigrade primary schools: history, characteristics and general data

When trying to trace the origins of multigrade schools we find that the right to education has been a gradual and diverse process; It has been the result of discussions and legal and organizational modifications that have attempted to consolidate an optimal educational system. During the Porfiriato, basic education was taught to groups of girls and boys of different ages; which generated a debate among the most important experts of the time. Pedagogues such as Enrique Rébsamen, Carlos Carrillo, Jesús Flores and Gregorio Torres Quintero debated the viability of implementing graduated education in Mexico similar to that provided in developed countries (Rockwell and Garay, 2014; INEE, 2019a). This objective was consolidated in 1930, the year in which the National Assembly of Education approved graduated education, dictated from a common curriculum for each grade. This process consolidated primary education, the obligation of which increased from three to six years. Clearly, Rockwell and Garay (2014) noted that:

For centuries, elementary school teachers, in Mexico as around the world, served heterogeneous groups of boys and girls without a classification of groups based on age or knowledge. [...] During the 19th century, little by little this tradition of the

single teacher was abandoned and the model of the graduated school was generated (p. 4).

The supremacy of graduated primary education did not eliminate the establishment of multigrade primary schools. This educational structure continues to be maintained in regions far from the capitals of each state and with low population rates. Multigrade schools went from being the common model to an alternative education for the most vulnerable sectors. As Schmelkes and Aguila (2019) point out.

Multigrade schools have been one of the responses of the Mexican State to expand coverage and offer educational services to localities with lower population density in dispersed rural areas and in regions with high rates of poverty and marginalization, which concentrate a large percentage of indigenous population (p. 199).

In the current educational system, multigrade schools are those in which a teacher is in charge of more than two school levels and "are present in small towns, where it is considered that there are not enough students to make it affordable to form a group for each degree. [...] [the teacher] also assumes directive, administrative and maintenance functions, among others" (Estrada, 2015, p. 43). Consistently, Campos (2015) considers that the function of multigrade schools is:

bring education to all those remote areas where complete organization schools cannot be established due to the number of students that exist in the rancherías or towns, since the number of infants does not justify the implementation of a complete system school (p. 12).

Based on the number of teachers, multigrade primaries are classified as unitary, bi-teaching, tri-teaching, tetra-teaching and penta-teaching. As for the population,

they are classified as general and indigenous. According to their financing and affiliation, there are state and federal multigrade primary schools that depend on the Secretariat of Public Education (SEP) and community courses that the National Council for Educational Development (CONAFE) teaches in smaller towns. It should be noted that the multigrade primary education promoted by the SEP is taught by normalistas; On the other hand, the courses offered by CONAFE do not require specialized teacher training (Estrada, 2015; Mejía et al., 2016; Bautista, 2018; Schmelkes and Aguila, 2019; INEE, 2019a).

According to data issued by the National Institute for the Evaluation of Education (Schmelkes and Aguila, 2019), in the 2016-2017 school year there were 97,553 primary schools, of which 59.7% were general, 24.4% were community and 16.0% were indigenous. Of the total general primary schools, 35.1% were multigrade and whose modality was predominant in states such as Zacatecas and Durango. Regarding schools classified as indigenous primary schools, 65.9% of these were multigrade schools, presenting a higher percentage of schools of this type in Durango and Campeche (Medrano et al., 2019). 95.9% of multigrade indigenous primary schools “are located in rural areas; 38.8%, in high marginalization localities, and 55.6% in high marginalization, in addition to the fact that 67.1% of the schools were in isolated areas and 24.7% were close to roads” (Medrano et al., 2019, p.60).

Infrastructure is another important element, since at the national level it:

95.3% of the primaries are built with resistant materials, however 1.4% do not have walls or walls. Community primaries are those with the highest percentage of schools built with drywall, sheet metal or wood (17.8%); This is the case for 9.1%

of multigrade indigenous schools, and these are the ones whose schools do not have walls in 8.3% (Schmelkes and Aguila, 2019, p. 88).

Regarding the internet, “at the national level, 43.1% of schools have [an] internet, but only in 23.3% is this service available to the entire school community, that is, teachers, administrators and students” (Schmelkes and Aguila, 2019 , p. 96).

Various authors (Rockwell and Garay; 2014; Estrada, 2015; Bautista, 2018) agree that multigrade schools – despite serving a significant number of students – are the most precarious and unfinished institutions in the educational system. Both the operational structure and the resources necessary to teach classes have extensive deficiencies and disadvantages compared to graduated schools. Despite this disparity, they must meet the standards of graded education. It is a reality that “students who attend multigrade schools do so in disadvantaged conditions and develop unequal and exclusive educational trajectories. In general, they drop out of school more, complete basic education at a lower rate and obtain lower learning achievements” (INEE, 2019, p. 2).

3.2 General Education Law (LGE)

On July 13, 1993 – during the six-year term of Carlos Salinas de Gortari – the General Education Law (LGE) was published in the Official Gazette of the Federation. This Law has undergone certain reforms, locating the last modification in January 2018. We must contextualize that this law arises in a neoliberal society that began a process of dismantling the welfare state and promoting free market policies. As a liberal state, the prevailing ideology reinforced citizen rights, highlighting respect for freedom of choice and the search for equality. This last aspect is evident in the emphasis that the document places on issues of equity, diversity, inclusion, pedagogical materials in indigenous languages and gender

perspective; that is, the liberal postulate of placing the individual as the center holder of human rights.

In Article 2 of the Law issued in 1993, it was established that the State had the obligation to guarantee equal access, transit and permanence of quality education for girls and boys (DOF, 1993, p. 1). In 2013, this article was modified, stating that “all inhabitants of the country have the same opportunities to access the national educational system” (DOF, 2013, p. 1). In 2016 it was reformed again, guaranteeing the access and permanence of boys and girls to the educational system under conditions of equity (DOF, 2016). Finally, in 2017 and currently in force, it was established that:

Every individual has the right to receive quality education under conditions of equity, therefore, all inhabitants of the country have the same opportunities for access, transit and permanence in the national educational system, simply by satisfying the requirements established by the applicable general provisions. (DOF, 2017, p.1).

Returning to Briceño (2011), we can point out that equality “refers to equal treatment for all, in terms of opportunities and evaluations based on merits or results in a society; while [equity] recognizes the particular conditions of individuals and in this sense gives differentiated treatment” (p. 73). Moving from equality to equity is a modification that at first glance seems minimal, but contains a fundamental element to promote specific policies for multigrade primary education; since this approach conceives that the girls and boys of this type of schools require different demands, since the educational processes are different in multigrade schools than in graduated schools.

The use of the concept of equity points out that the State must offer the necessary means so that boys and girls from each social context have the same opportunities to enter and consolidate primary education. However, this remains only an interpretation of the law, since specifically this right only maintains that the State will guarantee the opportunity of entry and permanence. This postulate carries within itself the inability to guarantee an optimal education for boys and girls in multigrade schools; since said education is far from having the same educational conditions as graduated schools. That is, the law guarantees equality of methods and human and economic resources both for schools with unitary groups and for graduated groups, instituting the same pedagogical methods, the same guidelines and management programs.

As we pointed out in a previous section, educational policies respond to the ideas of the dominant system. Although this document refers to the need to visualize student diversity, whether by ethnicity, disability or gender; Finally, the established law does not offer what is necessary to break with the student homogenization imposed by the dominant system. Without considering the context or the needs of a multigrade classroom, the General Education Law does not force the State to consider multigrade primary education as a modality of education in the country .

3.3 Educational Development Program 1995-2000

The educational model used during Ernesto Zedillo's six-year term addressed both basic education and upper secondary and higher education; However, said document established as a priority to promote and strengthen basic education as a strategy to improve the training and development of individuals. Specifically, the document states that

The Program dedicates special attention to this type of education, since it is where the largest number of students is concentrated, the set of values, skills, knowledge and habits for constant improvement is cultivated and the foundations that will be necessary in the following educational levels (SEP, 1995, p. 137).

The perspective of this government was to provide education to generate development in the country; seeking the establishment of “equity, quality and relevance of education” (SEP, 1995, p. 133). This Program promoted the active education of the student, whose teaching-learning process (teaching performance and student learning) was evaluated. The objective of this model was to expand educational opportunities to all social sectors, seeking to ensure that this right reached the most vulnerable sectors that did not have access to education during previous periods. To achieve this at the primary level, he raised the need to take into account the “deficiencies in very small, isolated and dispersed localities” (SEP, 1995, p. 134); through the “use of more resources, the more intense application of compensatory programs and the signing of the National Agreement for the Modernization of Basic Education ” (SEP, 1995, p. 137).

The National Agreement for the Modernization of Basic Education (ANMEB) was signed in May 1992, and according to Pablo Latapí, the policies established in said agreement were not modified during several six-year periods (Latapí, 2004). With this commitment, “the conditions were established to transfer the responsibility of operating the services to the states; update study plans and programs; improve teaching materials; revalue the teacher's activity and greater social participation ” (SEP, 1995, p. 137). This decentralization process offered states and municipalities greater autonomy to establish local educational policies that opened opportunities for the planning and execution of policies for multigrade primaries. Said agreement

granted the transfer “of all elements of a technical and administrative nature, rights and obligations, movable and immovable property, [...], as well as the financial resources used in its operation” (SEP, 1992, p.7).

It is interesting to note that the 1995-2000 Educational Development Program includes a specific proposal for multigrade schools. This document establishes that educational and government institutions must coordinate efforts to carry out actions that correct the economic inequalities that exist in the most vulnerable regions. In this educational model, it was proposed “to serve primary schools that have multigrade teachers through training, books and appropriate materials” (SEP, 1995, p. 139). However, this was not exercised, since, according to the testimony of a teacher, the books and pedagogical materials remained the same as those distributed in the graduated schools (Tinajero, 1999).

Although, in this educational model we do not find a specific pedagogical or organizational methodology for multigrade primary schools, we do find a central policy: establishing “the conditions to transfer to the states the responsibility of operating the services” (SEP, 1995, p. . 137). This decentralization process allowed various states to undertake specific policies for multigrade schools, without requiring application at the national level. For example, in later years, Hidalgo, Zacatecas, Yucatán , Durango, Guanajuato and Tlaxcala implemented a curricular proposal and the development of educational materials; in Veracruz, Guanajuato and Yucatán they promoted continuous training of multigrade teachers; In Puebla, the multigrade model of Escuela Nueva in Colombia was adapted, and in Yucatán and Guanajuato a system of itinerant advisors and tutors was applied (INEE, 2019).

3.4 National Education Program 2001-2006

The triumph of Vicente Fox represented the first process of political alternation in the country. This succession generated broad expectations about the public policies and form of governance that the incoming elite would implement. It is worth remembering that in previous years, specifically in 1994, an indigenous uprising emerged in Chiapas led by the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN). The emergence of this subversive movement placed the precariousness and inequality in which indigenous populations live in the national and international spotlight. Faced with such an event, a dialogue table coordinated by the Commission for Concord and Pacification (COCOPA) was established with the objective of articulating a document that would allow a constitutional transformation that would recognize the rights of indigenous peoples. This document – known as the San Andrés Larraínzar Accords – was signed in 1996.

Various authors (Goche, 2016; Gómez, 2016; López, 2016) have pointed out that the Agreements were only signed; since neither during the six-year term of Ernesto Zedillo nor with Vicente Fox was there a real will, but rather it was a propaganda action that sought to show their governments as democratic. As Gómez (2016, p. 56) noted, “2001 was the year of the indigenous counter-reform, from abortion to the possibility of fulfilling the San Andrés Accords and promoting peace not only in Chiapas, but throughout Mexico.”

In this context, the government of Vicente Fox developed a National Development Plan and a National Education Program, placing as its backbone the rights of the vulnerable, of indigenous peoples and of respect and promotion of multiculturalism. In a concise manner, the National Education Program 2001-2006 maintained that education should be democratic and rescue nationalist ideologies, to achieve better coexistence among human beings. They established three axes as

educational challenges: “coverage with equity; quality of educational processes and learning levels; and integration and functioning of the educational system” (SEP, 2001, p. 14). It is important to note that this document places the teacher and the director as a key element in the teaching-learning process. The plan establishes that the improvement in educational achievement “depends on the actions or omissions of the leading entities of the system, that is, on institutional management” (SEP, 2001, p. 116).

This educational plan developed policies focused on vulnerable groups, seeing as core groups the indigenous population, the extremely marginalized rural population, the children of migrant agricultural workers, minors who work or live on the streets and children with some type of disability; as well as the application of compensatory programs based on scholarships and teaching materials. Likewise, they proposed the use of information and communication technologies (SEP, 2001).

A redeemable aspect of this educational model is that for the first time the government carried out a specific analysis on multigrade schools, with the objective of a group of experts developing a specific pedagogical method for this type of schools. According to Weiss (2007), Romero et al. (2010), Estrada (2015) and the National Institute for the Evaluation of Education (INEE, 2019a), in 2002 and 2003 the SEP carried out “an exploratory study in 32 multigrade schools located in 11 states of the Republic (Guerrero, Oaxaca, Veracruz, San Luis Potosí , Michoacán , State of Mexico , Hidalgo, Durango, Jalisco, Puebla and Chiapas)” (Romero et al., 2010, p. 4), with the purpose of analyzing the problems and needs of multigrade primary schools. As a result of this diagnosis, the work team prepared the 2005 multigrade educational proposal, which points out the

challenges and riches of multigrade education; It proposed as a methodology “an organization of common content by cycle or level (1st and 2nd, 3rd and 4th, 5th and 6th) and various methodological suggestions for teaching work” (SEP, 2005, p. 19); That is, they propose that the teacher work on a general topic and propose specific work for each grade. This document offers various teaching-learning strategies; work proposals for each of the subjects taught and the promotion of cooperative learning.

According to Estrada (2015), in 2008 the Teacher Training Guides and Multigrade Teaching Guides were prepared ; which emerged from the diagnosis promoted by the 2005 multigrade educational proposal. The purpose of this work was to establish a Multigrade Educational Reform; However, this did not prosper and the work to improve multigrade schools remained in local activities undertaken by the SEP of each state. However, as indicated by INEE (2019a),

The 2005 Multigrade Education Proposal is an important reference for current work in multigrade schools. Although it is not in force, local educational authorities establish its relevance as a precedent for the work they do and teachers with more years of experience indicate that they base themselves on this proposal for the planning and execution of their classes (p. 128).

3.5 Education Sector Program 2007-2012

The educational model promoted during the six-year term of Felipe Calderón had – thinking about the needs and improvements for multigrade primary schools – a significant setback compared to the previous period. Furthermore, there was no longer any continuity in the development of specific educational policies for multigrade schools reflected in the Proposal for Multigrade Education 2005. The 2007-2012 Education Sector Program largely omits strategies for schools of this

configuration. This plan only refers to multigrade schools in two points: 1) the importance in the training of teachers in multigrade schools and 2) the need to “provide teaching materials, computers and school supplies to multigrade schools, indigenous and telesecundaria, located in the areas of greatest social backwardness” (SEP, 2007, p. 33). It should be added that this model raises or mitigates inequality through the expansion of scholarship coverage; promote school management by promoting the participation of all social sectors; as well as support for children and young people belonging to marginalized groups.

Very much in the context of the national and international perspective of envisioning knowledge as the generating means of social development; The educational model during this six-year term established strategies that established knowledge societies, promoting the use of technologies, teacher training and the development of instruments and methodologies that reliably evaluated the learning generated. In this six-year term, it began with the “adoption of an educational model based on competencies”; seeking the generation of comprehensive training, incorporating “the formation of citizen values” (SEP, 2007).

This perspective of progress established a dominant policy that made invisible the existence of indigenous peoples, whose worldview is different from that established by the hegemonic elite. In such a way, that the educational model of the Calderonist six-year term vaguely resumed the education provided to the girls, boys and young people of the indigenous peoples; pointing out that, “the indigenous (mother) language will be used as a didactic tool and Spanish as the national language” (SEP, 2007, p. 32). Likewise, it subsumed the needs of multigrade schools in the educational policies of graduated primary schools.

3.6 Educational Model for Compulsory Education 2012-2017

2012 was a year that ended the political alternation that placed the National Action Party (PAN) as hegemonic power ; This year's electoral process represented the return of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) to the government of the republic. Enrique Peña Nieto's six-year term was characterized by the implementation of various reforms, an action that was called the Pact for Mexico . Gil (2018) pointed out that the educational reform of the Peñista six-year term, combined with the labor reform applied during Felipe Calderón's six-year term, had as its ultimate goal :

Simplify the educational process to accuse and harass teachers; use evaluation as a labor control mechanism, renouncing the exercise of authority; conceive the precarious work of teachers as a condition for the fulfillment of the work to occur; the uncritical option of merit to allocate additional jobs and income (p.303).

In December 2012, the Ministry of the Interior sent the educational reform proposal to the Chamber of Deputies and Senators; which was approved and published in the Official Gazette of the Federation in February 2013. In this way, the General Law of Education (LGE) was modified, mainly in the areas related to teacher training and permanence. The General Law of Professional Teaching Service and the Law of the National Institute for the Evaluation of Education were created . It should be noted that the Professional Teaching Service “ defined the mechanisms for the entry, promotion, recognition and permanence of teachers” (SEP, 2017, p. 26).

Based on this reform, the Secretariat of Public Education (SEP) developed the Educational Model for Compulsory Education , which was published in the Official Gazette of the Federation in June 2017. This document emphasized the importance of offering a quality education that enhances the socio-

emotional skills of girls, boys and young people. The teaching-learning process was established under the humanistic model, seeking to generate meta-learning; that is, a process of learning to learn; learn to be; learn to live together and learn to do. This, added to the fact that the students are perseverant and resilient (SEP, 2017).

This educational model gives continuity to four elements of the previous educational program. As a first element, it maintains the establishment of knowledge societies and the promotion of science and education as engines of social development and essential elements in reducing inequality and breaking the cycles of precariousness of the most vulnerable sectors. Secondly, it preserves the use and promotion of connectivity and access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the development of learning. Third, gender equality policies remain. And, fourthly, they maintain the use of targeted support such as scholarships to alleviate poverty and inequality (SEP, 2017).

This model proposes placing the school as the center of the educational process; element that is applied both for the management and for the development of learning. In the founding document they establish that “schools will be granted an unprecedented margin of curricular autonomy, with which they will be able to adapt educational content to specific needs and contexts” (SEP, 2017, p. 5). Without a doubt, this opens the margin of action for multigrade schools, since it would allow the necessary adjustments for the conditions of each school.

It should be noted that this educational model makes very cursory reference to multigrade schools; it only places them as a type of educational system that allows girls and boys from very distant and marginalized schools to have access to education. However, during this six-year period, a variety of diagnoses and

guidelines were carried out, promoted by the INEE. Documents such as Guidelines to improve multigrade education (2019), Comprehensive Evaluation of the Multigrade Education Policy (2019) and Multigrade education in Mexico (2019), offer a deep analysis of the needs and possible lines of action to improve educational quality in multigrade schools. However, these documents have remained as reports that have not been considered to apply specific educational policies for multigrade schools.

3.7 New Mexican School

On July 1, 2018, the election for president of the republic in Mexico was held. After competing in three terms (2006, 2012 and 2018), the candidate of the National Regeneration Movement (MORENA), Andrés Manuel López Obrador, consolidated himself as president of Mexico. During the campaign period, López Obrador spoke with the teaching sector that felt damaged by the educational reform promoted by the Peña Nieto government; proposing the revocation of this and the establishment of a new proposal. In this way, on May 15, 2019, the new educational reform was published in the Official Gazette of the Federation (DOF), in which the punitive evaluation of teachers was eliminated, repealing the INEE Law and establishing the National System of Continuous Improvement of Education, which will serve as a decentralized public organization that will carry out diagnoses and determine indicators (Aristegui, 2019; DOF, 2019).

The document strengthens Article 3, which states that “every person has the right to education.” Furthermore, it establishes that the State has the obligation to offer universal, inclusive, public, free and secular education. Education must be taught from a gender perspective, promoting the sciences and humanities; along with the values of fraternity and equality; and the principles of interculturality and

excellence. Inclusive and transversal policies will be carried out that support students who live in vulnerable conditions (DOF, 2019).

Due to emerging situations such as covid-19, the educational model promoted in this six-year period has not yet been fully designed. In such a way that at the beginning of the government, documents were developed in which the Undersecretary of Basic Education (SEB) establishes:

We are currently in a period of curricular transition, full of changes and opportunities. A relevant situation is that the progress of the application of the 2017 curriculum is suspended, which gives the opportunity to thoroughly review, with the participation of teachers, the curricular proposal. [...] [In the] first and second year of primary school [...] the 2017 curriculum will be applied. In the third, fourth, fifth and sixth year of primary school [...] the 2011 curriculum will be applied, and the components of “Curricular Autonomy” and “Personal and Social Development” of the 2017 study plan (SEB, 2019b, p.46).

One of the central elements of the New Mexican School is to provide an education in accordance with the needs and conditions existing in each school and region; in such a way that, they start from the principle of planning and diagnosis, which consists of the development of the School Program for Continuous Improvement (PEMC). The purpose of these diagnoses is to center education on the student to design goals and plan actions that allow the consolidation of an excellent education. (SEB, 2019; SEB, 2019a; SEB, 2019b).

It is possible to see that the documents issued by the SEB do not make any reference to the multigrade school system; The policies and strategies that the current government plans to establish for this type of school system are null. However, two approaches could optimize multigrade education. Firstly, the

PEMC will allow the teacher to plan activities based on the school heterogeneity that he has. And, secondly, the current government indicates that it will offload administrative work to teachers so that they can focus primarily on classroom work (SEB, 2019b).

4. Conclusions and discussion

Through this work it was possible to glimpse that there are no delimited educational policies for multigrade primary schools. According to Moreles (2011), there are two types of policies: 1) public and 2) governmental. The first are established through debate and negotiation between the government and civil society. The second are unidirectional policies established by the government. Latapí (2004) complements this classification, adding that there are State policies, understanding these as those that “confer greater temporal stability, greater reliability, respect for compliance and, in general, greater commitment of all the actors involved in them. particularly political parties ” (p.4).

Returning to these definitions, it can be seen that, of the five six-year periods reviewed in this work, only one, Vicente Fox's educational model, promoted a specific program. This program did not have continuity, despite the development of strategies, pedagogical materials and methodologies for multigrade schools. Subsequently, until the six-year term of Erique Peña Nieto, the INEE carried out diagnoses and outlined lines of work to optimize education in schools under this modality.

Why haven't policies been established for multigrade schools? Navarro (2011) returns to the barrier model developed by Cobby and Elder to understand the agenda formation process. These authors point out four barriers that must be overcome for a problem to be part of the political agenda. The first barrier is that

the wishes are formalized in a public demand . Second, that some representative take up said demand. Third, that it is not approved by the authorities. And fourth, that it is implemented incorrectly. According to this model, when an issue passes barriers one and two, it is already part of the agenda. Returning to this, it can be seen that the establishment of concrete policies for multigrade primary schools has been an issue considered irrelevant for the ruling elite.

During the six-year terms of Vicente Fox and Enrique Peña Nieto, both SEB and INEE carried out diagnoses and methodological , pedagogical and management proposals with a theoretical and analytical basis that gives them viability; However, these have not been able to insert themselves into the political agenda so that initiatives can be formalized. One reason for this is that they have not managed to pass barrier two of the Cobby and Elder model, that is, no representative has been a spokesperson for the specific problems and characteristics of multigrade primary schools. There has been no political continuity to the analyzes and diagnoses made.

Although multigrade schools offer education to an important sector of boys and girls, these strategies have remained fragmented, reduced to the good intentions of the government in power. It is necessary to establish mechanisms and regulations that establish State policies for multigrade schools; That is to say, they must be durable, extend beyond six-year periods and oblige each ruler to promote specific policies.

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