



## Formación de adultos trabajadores en Europa y en Brasil. Entre la educación emancipadora y el reciclaje para el mercado.

### Training of Adult Workers in Europe and Brazil. Between Emancipatory Education and Recycling for the Market

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#### RESUMEN.

Este artículo investiga las concepciones sobre educación y formación de adultos trabajadores, forjadas en dos contextos educativos muy diferenciados, como son Europa y Brasil. Teniendo en cuenta las diferencias entre los factores históricos, económicos, políticos y sociales relevantes en los países europeos y en Brasil, ha sido posible identificar algunas influencias relevantes de la concepción europea de educación de adultos sobre la evolución histórica de la educación brasileña. En todo caso, existen rasgos peculiares de la realidad brasileña, derivadas de la baja tasa de escolaridad y de la situación de exclusión educativa, vivida por los trabajadores brasileños hasta el momento actual. Esto implica una fuerte diferencia entre la realidad europea y la de Brasil, debido principalmente al desarrollo de la formación profesional en Europa como estrategia de educación permanente. Tras la fase histórica de la educación permanente, que se desarrolló a mediados del siglo XX, los enfoques actuales sobre la educación a lo largo de la vida precisan ser debidamente contextualizados, para evitar el riesgo de las generalizaciones conceptuales, que tienden, históricamente, a ocultar y legitimar las políticas educativas excluyentes. Este artículo discute también las tensiones y contradicciones entre dos enfoques educativos presentes en la actualidad en la educación de adultos: uno orientado a la emancipación y otro guiado por la concepción de la formación como adaptación instrumental de los adultos a la sociedad y al mercado.

#### PALABRAS CLAVES.

Educación de Adultos, formación de trabajadores, educación permanente, educación a lo largo de la vida.

#### ABSTRACT.

This article investigates conceptions about education and training of adult workers, forged in two very different educational contexts, such as Europe and Brazil. It has been possible to identify some relevant influences of the European conception of adult education on the



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historical evolution of Brazilian education, taking into account the differences among historical, economic, political and social factors that have influenced European countries and Brazil. There are peculiar features of the Brazilian reality, derived from the low rate of schooling, and the situation of educational exclusion experienced by the Brazilian workers up to the present. This implies a strong difference between the European and Brazilian reality mainly due to the development of vocational training in Europe as a strategy of permanent education. After the historical phase of permanent education, which developed in the mid-twentieth century, current approaches to lifelong learning need to be properly contextualized, to avoid the risk of conceptual generalizations, which historically tend to conceal and legitimize exclusionary educational policies. This paper also discusses tensions and conflicts between educational approaches conditioned by emancipation, and by instrumental adaptation to the labour market and society.

#### KEY WORDS.

Adult Education, training of workers, permanent education, lifelong learning.

#### Introduction.

Lifelong Learning and continuous training are of major importance to individuals and groups. Schuller (2011) notes that lifelong learning plays a crucial role, allowing the individual to manage the key moments of transition in the course of life, even in the transition to death. In this sense, it is of great importance to distinguish between chronological age and biological age, since they do not always correspond to each other (Cruz and Jiménez-Gómez, 2017). Thus it may be that a person may find himself in a vital perspective that does not necessarily correspond to his chronological age, which will require specific educational needs. By this, we mean to record the importance of the type of learning in a person's life, since it covers all the vital perspectives, not only those related to learning of an instrumental or work type.

The concept of Permanent Education is closely linked to Lifelong Learning. Today there is a global political consensus around the term, although this has taken some decades of work. The first initiatives on the subject emerged in the 1970s, following the report "Learning to Be", carried out by UNESCO's Education Commission and led by Edgar Faure, who was Prime Minister of France, and later Minister of Education. Initially, this approach was the product of modest initiatives by different national governments.

In the field of adult education and training, this conception of lifelong learning is taken up in documents from the 1990s, produced by international organizations in conferences, and is more relevant from the V International Conference on Adult Education, promoted by Unesco in 1997 in the German city of Hamburg. However, the understanding that educational processes precede and succeed only at school time is not recent. Mészáros (2005) identifies historical precedents of this theme as early as the sixteenth century, in thinkers such as Paracelso, who affirmed that "learning is our own life, from youth to old age, in fact almost to death" (Mészáros, 2005: 23).

We must therefore consider, as Mészáros (2005) warns us, this perspective of learning as equivalent to our own life:



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Yes, "Learning is our own life," as Paracelsus said, five centuries ago, and many others, who made their way, but we've probably never heard of their names. But to turn this truth into something obvious, as it should be, we must claim a full education for life, to make it possible to put into perspective the formal part, to develop also in the formal dimension, radical reform. This can not be done without questioning the currently dominant forms of internalization, strongly consolidated in favor of capital by the formal educational system itself (p. 55).

Mészáros raises, therefore, a very important issue for education and training of adults, in the current context: to conceptually think of education throughout life, it is necessary to confront the *dominant forms of internalization*, they challenge us to understand what has been the education and training of adult workers in different contexts, particularly with respect to confusion over training and instruction. This will allow us to better evaluate a proposal of full education for life.

Moved by this challenge of knowing what constitutes a dominant conception of adult education and training, in the different European and Latin American experiences, and more specifically in Brazil, we propose in this article a synthesis of the reflection carried out on this issue, from the review of the literature on the subject in our recent historical contexts. This leads us to identify the main issues of theoretical and conceptual debate, with reference to lifelong education, a concept currently advocated to better understand the education of working adults.

In our contribution, we begin by highlighting the relationship between experience and learning, trying to identify how experience converts or transforms into genuine learning. Subsequently, we formulate the distinction between educating, training and instructing, following the systematization proposed by different researchers. We end the article by addressing the implications of the concepts addressed for the specific experiences of workers' training, in face of the challenges of our current society, characterized by cognitive capitalism and neoliberal globalization (Castells, 2002, Sádaba, 2016).

### **1. Education and training of adult workers and discussions on experience.**

In the first, place we would like to emphasize that adult learning is an experience-based learning. In fact, the adult does not reach a process of teaching - learning as a *tabula rasa*, because he or she comes with a series of experiences and educational and social experiences. It is important to take into account all this baggage, since it will condition from the beginning the whole process. But not any kind of experience is educational. There is a fourth knowledge, as well as knowledge, know how and to know how to be. This fourth knowledge is experience, the ability to learn from everyday life, experience as a practice and as everyday learning, the so-called "everyday learning". It is not the result of the sum of the other three, because it has particular characteristics, such as depth of thought and generative relationships with the world (Reggio, 2010).

In general, everyday learning is related to the perception of social and cultural reality, which is the framework of everyday life and, unfortunately, is often overlooked. Therefore, as Cabello states:





It is necessary to problematize the obvious, to question what has been said and not said, which is part of daily life, as a means of reflection, to feel reality from different perspectives and to be able to re-signify the meanings bestowed on our surroundings. It is even necessary to ask how powerful current "forms" of relating to reality act as mediations capable of conditioning our perception of the real and the possible (Cabello, 2003, cit. In Etcheverría, 2009: 20).

Experience-based learning is not academic or scholastic learning. It comes from everyday life, from relationships and from the social. Through the passage of time educational experience grows slowly in the individual knowledge and consciences that make us to be knowledgeable experts of a subject. In this sense it is fundamental to problematize and question the daily realities that come to us, and from that reflexive problematization generate our own interpretation of everyday experiences from a critical perspective, generating an awareness of the issue.

This conception of learning by experience can be identified, in territorial terms, in the practices of popular education, a term already used in the context of Latin America in the 1950s and 1960s. Such experiences attached great importance to learning by experience, especially for impoverished populations to perceive themselves as carriers of knowledge and with the capacity to continuously learn.

In Latin American countries, this conception of what was learned through popular knowledge suffered in the attempt to survive the impositions of the military regimes implanted in the region in the 1970s and 1980s. The present emancipatory and liberating perspectives in Paulo Freire (1965) and Pierre Furter (1966a, 1966b), suffered a sharp setback due to the dictatorships that were implanted in those years. What survived for more than twenty years in these countries was not precisely this aspect forged in the experiences of the popular movements, which thought not only of formal school knowledge, but also and above all the knowledge that transcended the curricula and that materialized in the daily knowledge and in the learning derived from the experience.

We must ask ourselves why the educational experiences that took place in these countries were so dangerous, to have suffered the direct intervention of the military governments. Part of the answer to this question can be found in one's own understanding of the principles governing learning. In the words of Reggio (2010: 39-43), the experience that educates is governed by a series of principles:

- **Reality:** They must be experiences with a real dimension, through direct contacts with the sources of knowledge. It is important to touch reality with our hands, which makes learning more effective.
- **Continuity:** A simple event, although very important, can not be considered an experience. Experience is a complex process of learning, which requires contexts and situations interrelated to each other, which enable the interconnection of distant moments in time and space.
- **Problematicity:** That is, the presence of problematic aspects. But not only as moments in which we have to overcome a difficulty, but as a situation that leads us to assume a critical approach, capable of asking questions about the situation and about ourselves. In other words, perceiving reality as a problem that confronts man



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and leads him to ask questions.

- Complexity: Experience is not an event that is limited to a single question, but leads to consider the issues from a multiplicity of perspectives, from cognitive, emotional, relational, etc.

The production of learning is often initiated intuitively, taking into account different and fragmented elements. We come to understand things by establishing connections between different events and experiences that occur at different times. Also of great interest is the contribution of Paulo Freire on the role of experience and how it influences adult education processes:

The reflection on experience is also connected with the development of consciousness, with "awareness" as a process of recognition of the position of man in relation to the world, capable of interacting with him, of seeking scientific and critical explanations of phenomena (Freire, 1971, cit., In Reggio, 2010).

Andrés (2001) summarizes various authors on the characteristics of adult learning. For adults, the accumulated experience is very helpful because they carry in their personal history a large load of knowledge, information and skills. This leads them to develop a certain behavior, based on those experiences, that work well in their day to day endeavors. It is for this reason that we consider it fundamental that the methodology used for adult learning brings together what has already been learned in the past with the new. The motivational aspect is also important in adult learning within the work environment as they are not only driven by curiosity to learn new things, but also have many thoughts such as "being up to" professional demands, not being outdated but also capable of adapting to change. In them there is not only a professional motivation to receive a promotion, but also a great spur to their own cultural concerns. In this sense, whenever training is oriented to these motivations, it will be much better internalized and assimilated.

On the other hand, age leads us to develop more defensive and resistant behavior (Andrés, 2001). It is much more difficult to change habits and mental structures during adulthood than during childhood. It is very complicated to change a behavior with which an individual has lived successfully for years. From a psychological perspective, for changes in behavior, attitudes, etc., it is essential that the adult feels involved and motivated by the training in which he participates. That is, when a formative activity, however interesting and exclusive it may seem, is not freely chosen by the adult, but is imposed, it will have little or no effectiveness.

Other considerations on adult learning are the reduction of abilities and the fact that adults require that they be treated more respectfully from the beginning of the teaching-learning process without detracting from their abilities, age or difficulties. In other words, training with a group of adults can not replicate academic or scholarly models.

Thus, we consider that in the case of adult education, in general, and the training of workers in particular, scholasticism has no place as a learning methodology, since it would only reproduce instructional models of other times not valid to develop adults.



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## 2. The continuing challenges of understanding adult education and training.

Adult education (AE) takes place in many facets and vital settings, such as the family, the community to which we belong, the company in which we work or the association in which we participate. Now, it is important to distinguish between adult education and merely adulthood. In our opinion the former empowers the individual to make his own decisions, to think for himself and to grow as a human being. Collado, Pérez and Lucio-Villegas (1994: 123) comment that "AE is a process in which adults learn, with an appropriate methodology, to give personal answers to situations that one can find."

However, there are many occasions in which a formative process is necessary as a consequence of the emergence of a new technology in the work environment or the implementation of a new productive system in a company. In this case we would not be talking about adult education but about adult training. Not for this do we mean that this type of training is not necessary, otherwise we would be stuck in the productive realities of a given moment. As a result of their own future, of scientific research and innovation and development, companies are changing and their needs are changing with them, which requires a continuous adaptation of all the elements that integrate it: workers, managers and employers. In the end, adaptation to change is nothing but learning a new reality. By this we do not mean that all changes are good, or that they have to be accepted and adapted, without forgetting any critical conception about them. What is evident, in our view, is that the reality of the world of work and of companies changes continuously, and the worker would be responsible to himself and his personal reality if he did not adapt to the eventual changes in his company, without for that reason stopping to try to change those issues that he considers inappropriate or unfair.

In Collado et al. (1994), it is not adult education that is compulsory, such as military training, or business training that is not freely chosen by the worker. Likewise, that training that aims to replicate answers designed by others can not be considered adult education, but adult training, regardless of whether or not it has been received in prestigious business schools.

These reflections refer again to Mészáros (2005), when he problematizes the fact that adult education and training are subject to the effect of internalizations that could jeopardize the realization of integral human formation. Therefore, this author argues that educational spaces, whether formal or not, must question the factors that may impede access and autonomous production of knowledge, especially taking into account the limits imposed by the interests inherent in a Capitalist society (Mészáros, 2005: 55).

Another fundamental aspect of adult education, and therefore the training of workers, is the methodological question. Usually one tends to think that the training must take place in person, in a classroom. Other types of methodologies are usually perceived as substitutes, or of a lesser quality, and are further removed from reality. Collado et al. (1994) make the following consideration on the education of adults:

We define AE as a process within a human rights framework in which adults interact with their experience, their culture, their individuality and their belonging to a community, by their own decision, in any place whether school or not, guided by an educator, whether professional or not, or by adults themselves, either in presence, at a distance or by special materials organized within a methodological



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paradigm that must be decided and assumed by the adults to achieve an improvement (Collado et al., 1994, p. 123).

In this context, it is important to note that, in the case of an individual, training of workers, as well as lifelong learning and adult education, the question should be approached from this perspective. There are many possible methodologies for achieving the ultimate purpose: to educate or train the individual. In this sense, it must also be remembered that people who are engaged in a job, have little time available after finishing their working day, so it becomes more necessary, even if it is far from easy, to innovate methodologically and to use solutions that allow them to reconcile family life, work and training as the individual is in continuous process of learning, throughout life, in Permanent Education.

Sarrate (1997) comments that there has traditionally been a major confusion between the idea of education and schooling, mistakenly thinking that only schools (face-to-face training) can respond to learning needs. Another common mistake has been thinking that as the best age to learn is during childhood, educational processes are more appropriate for children than for adults. This is not true as a means, since much of the learning during childhood must be reworked and restructured from the perspective of adulthood, that is, based on experience. Freire (2001) corroborates this perspective starting from the idea that there is no confusion between education and schooling, but draws attention to the fact that even the school, in its classroom training, must assume that the school is a continuous process of learning:

We should not call the people to school to receive instructions, postulates, recipes, threats, rebukes and punishments, but to participate collectively in the construction of a knowledge, which goes beyond knowledge derived from mere experience, which takes into account its needs and make it an instrument of struggle, enabling it to be the subject of its own history (Freire, 2001: 35).

The new social order in which we are immersed, where "a few are those who produce and amass more and more wealth, and many who become impoverished every day, has given rise to new social and educational needs" (Alheit, 1997, cit. In De Prado and Hernández, 1997: 6). Today, the big problem is not only the high unemployment rate and the lack of resources that leads to the absence of work, in our view the big problem lies in the lack of expectations and the future that propitiates not to have a Plan to face and deal with this situation. Here is a contribution of Cabello (2009) that supports this perspective:

The problem at present is not even in the lack of clarity that produces an adverse situation in the labor field. The difficulty is that the mechanisms by which this situation can be addressed and overcome are also unclear. Among the repercussions that this entails, perhaps the most worrying thing is that the young people live without being able to realize a plan of life in the medium or long term, with the consequent uncertainty that generates this situation (Cabello, 2009: 247).





Consequently, education, and especially that which takes place during adulthood, must respond to these new needs, not only focusing on the instructive aspect. It should promote strategies that help individuals to cope with the situation of instability and lack so that the future that arises as a consequence of the absence of work and perspectives will be able to cope with it. This also affects people of high qualification who sometimes realize that the education received at the university does not exactly match what is demanded in the labor market.

In 2004, the Fundación de Conocimiento y Desarrollo (Knowledge and Development Foundation) conducted a survey of Spanish companies to evaluate the relationship between the company and the university in Spain. The study concluded that there was almost no relationship and little recognition of the company towards the role of economic development engine that should be exercised by the university (Cámara, 2016: 113).

As we have said before, this type of education must be based on a methodology that is substantially different from that used in the education of children. It should be a methodology that seeks to rediscover the potentialities of learning in the daily life of adults and, based on these, systematizing the experiences. Nor should we forget that it must be an educational process, not merely a trainer. That is, people should be trained to give answers for themselves, not to repeat the responses issued by others. This does not mean that there can not be, also, an instructional component; what we mean is that this should not be the protagonist but the educational process.

Thus, we can not present Adult Education as a merely instructive process. In it, adults should be the protagonists, based on their interests and needs, and select the most appropriate methodologies to respond to them. Otherwise, there is the risk of leaving aside those learning times dedicated to reflection and the search for common solutions, not being able to systematize the experiences or share the learning. The use of a methodology with a scholastic and academic approach, which expropriates the person from his adulthood, understood as the ability to make decisions in a responsible, autonomous and mature way.

Alheit (1997) cit in De Prado and Hernández (1997) develops a simple typology on Adult Education in Europe, which shows the different peculiarities that this has in terms of the different geographical areas in which it takes place.

The **Scandinavian Type** (typical of Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland) represents a type of modern adult education and community, based on a conception that comes from the long local Scandinavian tradition and labor movements. It is currently institutionalized and highly professionalized.

The **Central European type** (typical of Germany, Austria, Holland, etc.) also corresponds to the characterization of a modern but much more individualized type of adult learning. In addition to being supported by the state, it is financed and organized through a kind of highly professionalized collaboration between churches, unions, local authorities and, increasingly, private companies.

The **UK Type** (which includes the British, Scottish, Welsh and Irish) is characteristic of a "semi-traditional community, supported mainly by community-based and private semi-professionalized adult education foundations also engaged in university activities Long



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duration (university extension, developed by external departments, etc.).

The **Mediterranean Type** (typical of Spain, Italy, Greece ...) could be characterized as more traditional, community oriented, strongly connected with social movements and, above all, not professionalized.

The **Type of Eastern Europe** (typical of the former socialist countries) represents, in part, the most modernized version of adult education, characterized by a centralized organization and a strong emphasis on professional training.

This typology of European experiences differs substantially from the reality of Latin America in an aspect that is fundamental for adult education. Most of these countries do not suffer from serious problems stemming from high levels of illiteracy and low levels of education for workers, a problem still very evident in Latin America.

The Brazilian case is perhaps the most emblematic to illustrate this reality, since it is a continental country that has reached the twenty-first century with enormous social inequalities, as a result of a long history of expropriation and exploitation of workers, including the denial of the right to access and entry in formal education. This translates into the fact that Brazil, according to census data (Brazil, 2010), has around 13 million illiterate people over 15 years of age and 65 million young people and adults who have not completed twelve years of schooling, corresponding to basic education in this country.

This condition of low educational level represents a challenge to continue thinking about the education of working adults in the country, in accordance with the approach of permanent education that we discuss in this article. In order to understand how Brazil achieves this condition, it is necessary to go through the history of the educational offer for adults, which materialized in the last decades of the twentieth century, especially from the military regime. In this context, we turn to Touraine (1965), who according to Paiva (1985) will defend the opinion that in post-industrial societies, what was at issue was the question of social class, as well as access to goods produced by culture. This is manifested in Touraine's (1965) comments on the new context of industrial society:

In so far as it is fully formed, it is impossible to speak of classes; We can speak of a class situation on the condition that an individual can be found in a plurality of class situations (...) it would be more correct to speak here of interest groups (Touraine, 1965: 151).

This condition of interest groups, not class condition, will be the germ of the debate of Brazilian theorists, including Trigueiro (1969) and Corrêa (1973), who will have a decisive influence on the political decisions of the Brazilian governments on Adult education. The first author mentioned is heir of national and developmental thinking, while the second is the representative of the Brazilian Movement of Literacy (MOBRAL), of which he was president between 1974 and 1985.

Trigueiro, in an article published in the Brazilian Journal of Pedagogical Studies in 1969, entitled "A New World, a New Education", reveals in his reflections an idealism that conceives education as the engine of social change without contextualizing this education in the whole of the actions of the State, influenced by the current capitalist system. He says: "We are going to suffer an irreparable delay in relation to our own time and our own society if we do not move quickly towards lifelong education" (Trigueiro 1969, 10), while defending



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the ideals of modernity issuing from the industrial bourgeoisie, he criticizes the backwardness of the commercial and agrarian bourgeoisie, pointing to education as an instrument of national development. It is the bourgeois-democratic view that identifies permanent education as a national and developmental project.

The reflections of Arlindo Lopes Corrêa, published in later years, are linked more to the field of the economy of education than to the national-developmental project. The arguments revolve around the prospect of an education that ensures the improvement of the quality of life of people, while calling for an education system that responds to the evolution of science and technology. For Paiva (1985), Corrêa's proposal is:

[...] permanent education, presented as a transformation of adult education. Its proposal is quite specific: it was the integration of the school and professional networks, through two mechanisms: the choice of the profession and the complementary education, so that their joint operation allows, at all times, the educational and occupational promotion of the individual, either to prepare him for effective work, or to return to the school system (Corrêa, 1973: 9). Emphasis is thus placed on the training of the labor force necessary for the capital-intensive industry, which alone requires the retraining of its workers (Paiva 1985: 30).

Adult education in Brazil has inherited this mentality: a proposal for the alleviation of general education, through the reduction of school time and knowledge produced in short courses and through a conception of vocational training understood as "recycling" and as "training". Far from resorting to the conception forged in popular education experiences of emancipatory bias, what prevailed after two decades of dictatorship was the design of a permanent education in the service of "late capitalism", which will soon reveal the disposable nature of this semi-skilled workforce, with advances in technology and technology in the late twentieth century.

To question this perspective of a poor education for the impoverished population is to confront what Mézáros had called internalizations, consolidated in favor of capital, which seem to have been well explained in the statements of Trigueiro and Corrêa. The clearest result of these internalizations is to treat youth and adult education as a residual policy and towards extinction, even though the educational system continues to "produce" young people and adults who do not complete schooling and who will therefore return in other contexts, seeking the completion of studies, increasingly facilitated by low-quality courses and certification exams offered without due rigor in design and application.

The conceptions that have survived from the experience of adult courses since the 1970s, in the sense that the study can be rapid and realized in any way, coincide with an impoverished idea of the subject which implies that an individual is less protagonist of its own formative trajectory. In this sense, the point of view of the alienation of young people and adults, who will be offered a "second category" education, is confirmed. In this sense, the concept of inclusion needs to be questioned. Then we ask ourselves: include, in what, in a sub-culture ?, in a pseudoformation ?, as Adorno (1995) would say.



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Addressing these internalizations over the past two decades has been precisely one of the main tasks of the approach called "Youth and Adult Education" (YAE). This is an educational proposal that tries to overcome the lightened and reduced design of the courses, in favor of a conception of education throughout life and as a right. This point of view is evident already in 2000 and is manifested in the curricular guidelines for the YAE, approved by the National Board of Education, in particular by the emphasis given to the new YAE as a modality of basic education:

The term modality is the Latin diminutive of *modus* (mode, manner) and expresses to measure within a proper form of being. Therefore, it has its own profile, the special embodiment in the process considered as a reference measure. It is, therefore, the form of being with its own characteristic. This special feature is connected to the principle of proportionality, and as such is so to be respected. Proportionality, as a procedural orientation, in turn, is a dimension of equity, which has to do with the application of justice adapted to the circumstances, which prevents the deepening of differences when they discriminate against people. It prevents the increase of inequality through unequal treatment of unequal conditions, in order to eliminate discriminatory barriers and become equal in the case of others who had opportunities in relation to an indispensable good, Such as access to formal education (Brazil, 2000: 26-27).

We will refer to two other official documents that guide educational policy in the twenty-first century in Brazil, expressing this attempt to change the paradigm for adult education. First, we mention the PROEJA, el Programa Nacional de Integración de la Educación Profesional con la Educación en la Modalidad de Educación de Jóvenes y Adultos (National Program for the Integration of Professional Education with Education in the Mode of Adult and Youth Education, created in 2005), which explains the human formation concept of the EJA (Brazil, 2007):

In this sense, what is really intended for human training, in its broad sense, with access to the universe of scientific and technological knowledge and know-how produced historically by humanity, integrated into a professional training that allows for an understanding of the world, to understand the world and to act in the world, seeking the improvement in living conditions for all and the construction of a socially just society. The prospect should be, therefore, in life and for life training and qualification not only in commerce and the market (Brazil, 2007: 13). The second document was made in the context of the preparation of Brazil as the site of the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (VI CONFINTEA VI), held in 2009, where we find a position on the conception of education for young and working adults:

the EJA, as a law, presupposes in its practice that the work done guarantees the access, development and reconstruction of knowledge that contributes to the humanization and the emancipation of the human being "(Brazil, 2008: 28). This recovery in the Brazilian context of the discussion on Permanent Education and the confrontation with the referred documents, makes us once again resort to Mészáros, to say that the greatest challenge for adult education today has to do with the response to these questions: how to be "socially



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transformative political action"?, genuine education without being reduced to mere schooling; How to be a school that challenges the "currently dominant forms of internalization" present in the educational system? Or even: how to reduce recycling or training? Despite the differences and peculiarities of each of the conceptions of adult education, both European and Brazilian, there are a number of common trends, among which we highlight the following:

- Reduction of public funding.
- Growing substitution of public funds for privatization and marketing formulas.
- Exclusive consideration of professional training as the central function.
- Consideration of the needs of general education and political education as minor issues, relegated to the background.

These questions can be clarified if we look more closely at the reality of vocational training, which is the subject of the following section.

### **3. Lifelong training as a tool for personal and professional development in the European experience.**

The current changing situation in the political, economic, labor and business spheres makes it essential for the individual to be in a continuous process of learning and adapting to new realities, far beyond their formal schooling and education. Otherwise you run the risk that your knowledge is quickly outdated and not sufficient to be able to adapt, participate and interact with a continually changing world. From a work perspective, in addition, if that individual were not in permanent formation, it would be possible for their knowledge and skills not to be adapted to the business and productive needs of each moment.

On the other hand, if not, we would be talking about a person who is not part of the decision making about his personal, social and professional life; adrift, victim of the avatars and vagaries of the market, issues that escape from your area of action. In short, it would be at the expense of decisions taken by third parties.

There is no doubt that this pressure to form and adapt to continuous changes often comes from the labor market itself, but at other times the system itself induces the individual to worry about this training, generating a continuous concern for training.

At present, it is possible to see that labor training becomes more relevant, considering human capital as a fundamental element to generate innovation, but several experts in the field work out that it is linked to labor competitiveness (Pérez, Zambrano & Gómez, 2016: 140)

According to Requejo (2003), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) incorporated the concept of lifelong education due to the fact that society is in a state of continuous change, especially from an economic point of view. Therefore, the educational model could not be circumscribed to a closed model in space and time. Equally, the OECD justifies the existence of lifelong education due to the continuous changes in the labor market: the increase of the services sector to the detriment of the industrial sector (tertiarization of the economy), the phenomenon of globalization and the penetration of new Information and communication technologies in all areas of work and society.

Sometimes we hear voices suggesting that the training of workers should be limited to



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instrumental aspects related to production. In our opinion, the training of workers must be viewed in a holistic way, since at the present time it is not feasible to define where work life ends and where personal life begins, since both are interrelated in a continuous manner. This statement has even more weight since the emergence of new resources that make the worker take his or her work home, such as the internet, e-mail, laptops and mobile phones, which connect us 24 hours a day to our company, As well as many other tools that have been driven by the eruption of "the cloud" or cloud computing.

Regarding training as a specific process, Requejo (2003) makes the following reflection on the interconnection of training in the work environment and training in the personal sphere:

Training as a specific process has to do with both the personal and social reality of the person as well as his work perspective. It is necessary to integrate both because they precisely converge in what has been termed life-long learning (Lifelong Learning) and that in a more operative way we can concretize in the processes of continuous formation "(Requejo 2003: 189).

Also interesting in connection with this example is the following contribution by John Dewey: "In a vital experience it is not possible to split the practical, the emotional and the intellectual, and establish the properties of the one regarding the characteristics of the others" (Dewey, 1995, pp. 65-6, quoted in Reggio 2010).

In times of economic prosperity in which a large part of the active population dedicates 40 hours a week to work, with the consequent presence in the same physical place, it becomes necessary to rethink the methodologies through which these professionals will be formed. Faced with this, in stages of crisis in which having a job is a difficult task or almost impossible mission, these educational processes must be accompanied by appropriate programs to increase the employability of people and their personal and professional recycling, adapted to the progress of new technologies, innovative production processes and the consequent professional orientation.

In this way, lifelong learning is essential, either in the world of work or in one's own personal life, to provide individuals with the necessary tools to cope with the dizzying changes that characterize current societies. Likewise, a methodological approach and an epistemic starting point that is in harmony with the principles of adult learning and that allows the individual to reconcile the time dedicated to production with those dedicated to the personal life, the cultural growth and leisure. In short, there is no doubt that learning throughout the course of life offers a series of opportunities and possibilities that are reflected in the many paths open to the people who are being formed (Evans, 2007).

It is often the case that government policies on adult education and training in companies have different goals. They aim to help, through continuing training, to increase employability and worker mobility among firms and sectors, while workers are more interested in training for high-level jobs and on more specific issues related to work (CEDEFOP, 2011).

Today there is a broad consensus that continuous training has a fundamental impact on the growth and prosperity of companies and their workers. That is why many companies offer perfectly planned and systematized training, either through programs financed by governments, or through programs funded wholly or partly by the companies themselves.

Normally training plans are part of the corporations' strategic plans and their human



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resource management plans. The field of training and development enjoys a broad tradition within the area of management and management of human resources in Europe. There is no doubt that the training plans of companies systematize and enhance the learning of ability and skills towards professional performance, as well as for the progress and sustainability of the same.

However, there is sometimes a fear on the part of companies to use economic resources to train workers because of factors such as the cost involved, the possibility that once the worker is trained, he or she will move on to another company, and the difficulty of having a metric to quantify the result of the investment made in training. This is called ROI (Return of investment).

In relation to the costs that make up a training plan in the company, we could distinguish between direct costs: teachers, educational materials, didactic resources, classrooms; and indirect costs: hours of management and administration of the training plan, etc. On the other hand, there is an opportunity cost for both the company and the worker. In the case of training during working hours, this cost would be borne by the company, since there is a decrease in productivity during the time in which the worker is dedicated to training rather than to production. However, if the training takes place outside of working hours, the opportunity cost is assumed by the worker, since instead of being dedicated to his personal issues, he is dedicating himself to training for production.

The European Social Charter, signed in the Italian city of Turin in 1961, establishes the right to vocational training through the commitment of the parties in Article 10, calling on them to ensure the technical and vocational training of all persons, after consultation with the organizations professionals and employers. This Charter calls for the facilitation of training in order to carry out a specific task and even identifies consultation of business associations and trade unions as mandatory.

Likewise, the signatories of the European Social Charter undertake to facilitate and arrange what is necessary for the training of adult workers, thus assuming the peculiarities of the training of this group. The Charter also recognizes the need to train for retraining, and is also concerned with encouraging policies to meet the costs of training, without creating an additional economic burden on the worker, as well as the fact that the training takes place during working hours when this is an employer's decision.

The Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers, signed in Strasbourg in 1989 by the Heads of State or Government of the so-called European Community, states in Article 15:

Every worker in the European Community must have access to and be able to benefit from vocational training throughout his or her working life. In the conditions for access to such training, no discrimination based on nationality may be given. The competent public authorities, companies or social partners, each within the scope of their competence, should establish mechanisms for continuous and on-going training to enable everyone to recycle, in particular by means of training, improvement and acquisition of new knowledge, taking into account, in particular, technical developments.



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As we have seen, the Charter gives workers the right to be trained throughout their working lives, that is, not only in the initial training necessary to perform a particular job, which is a recognition of the need to form and recycle continuously. On the other hand, it is important to emphasize the role it assigns to the public authorities as well as to the social partners (among them the Business Associations and the Trade Unions) in order to bring this provision to fruition.

For its part, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, signed in Nice on 7 December 2000, also contains in its article 14.1 the right to education and to vocational training on a permanent basis. Already in our days, the treaty establishing the European Community provides in Article 150 that the Community must develop a vocational training policy that strengthens and complements the actions of the Member States. It should also facilitate adaptation to industrial change and facilitate access to vocational training.

In this way, the European Union is entrusted with the development of a policy on the training of workers, which strengthens the Member States' own policies aimed at that end. It also corroborates the focus of these policies on professional retraining and lifelong learning, as well as on cooperation and exchange of experiences and information among states, companies and schools.

In short, we have seen along the last lines how the vocational training, both in its initial stages of initial qualification for the performance of a particular position, and in its permanent aspect, such as professional retraining and adaptation to industrial changes and technology, has been part of the political agenda and legislation in its social field, both in Spain and in Europe. In other words, these regulations establish that the permanent formation forms part of the main policies directed to the economic and social evolution of the towns.

We believe that active employment policies and lifelong learning contribute to overcoming the economic crisis, both from a personal perspective of learning to live with a new reality, and from the perspective of raising awareness of the citizenry to transform this reality and seek new forms of management and organization of the same. In times of crisis and cuts, there are many voices that are raised by questioning the public funds that are used for these purposes.

First, it is important to be clear that the funds used in the Training for Employment are finalist funds, that is, they are collected for this purpose. Therefore, that money would not exist in the "common box" if this formation did not exist. In times like the present, where everything is called into question, especially if it has an economic cost, as in the case of workers' training, it is important to keep in mind not only the contribution of workers to the development of individuals, society, business and the economy, but also the right to it as an important and necessary social criterion.

The Treaty of Rome of 1957, the European Social Charter of 1961, the Spanish Constitution of 1978, the Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers of 1989, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union of 2000 are just a few of the norms and ordinances of great depth that protect this formation. In this sense, then, it has a legal support that justifies it at the European level.

The consultation of associations of employers and workers with regard to training (European Social Charter, Turin, 18 October 1961, Art. 10.4) is also considered to be mandatory in this regulation and calls for the development of policies leading to finance it economically. The



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European Union also promotes the development of active policies concerning the training of workers.

All this experience of agreements among the different parties involved, which takes place in European countries, is very different from the working conditions of the Latin American countries, characterized by a still unskilled labor force, sometimes conditions of semi-slavery, a real presence of child labor in some sectors and the existence of low wages and long working hours. All these questions refer us to the processes of expropriation of the workers at the beginning of the process of industrialization of the European continent.

### Final Considerations.

This article has been proposed to critically examine adult education, and in particular the training of workers, from a Lifelong Learning perspective and starting from a conception of training and learning based on experience and daily life. The demand for an experiential and liberating educational model has led us to indicate some components of this model, present in the pedagogies arising from the contributions of Paulo Freire, Jack Mezirow and other pioneers of adult education. Our focus of geographical interest has been constituted by Europe and Brazil. Taking a comparative perspective, we have contrasted European developments in adult and worker education with the Brazilian context. The historical, economic and political differences explain that important attention has been paid in Europe to the normative development of a legal framework that favors the training of adults and workers within the so-called social dimension of the European Union. On the contrary, in Brazil, despite the revolutionary ideas and the contributions of liberation in education promoted by Paulo Freire and by popular social movements, the weight of the Brazilian dictatorship and the subsequent disinterest of successive governments have produced an oversight and disinterest towards adult education. In this context, there are current transformations in Brazil, both in society and in education, which are helping to change the subordinate position of adult and worker training. In this sense, they begin to develop incipient networks of educators and academics working to shape the field of adult education as a specific field of research and intervention.

We believe that transnational networking, both of adult educators, researchers and academics, can help document the strengths and weaknesses of different national or geographic contexts in relation to adult and worker training, helping to identify, propose and to apply sound practices, guided by the principles of adult learning rooted in the subjectivity and identity of the adult in formation and oriented to their personal, social and professional development. As we have tried to show above, we think that professional and personal training must necessarily complement each other, so we reject the models that oppose these two perspectives.

The case of Brazil and its historical backwardness in terms of literacy and adult education reveal the need to create and develop a specific field for research and intervention in adult education, based on existing realities, and at the same time, seeking the emergence of favorable contexts to deepen research and intervention in Youth and Adult Education (YAE), so that it is possible to share the results of this process in congresses, seminars and publications.



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We need more reflections in a comparative perspective, to better understand our field of work, creating the conditions for a horizontal and dialogical transnational collaboration, which dilutes mutual prejudices, to nullify the temptations - whether explicit or implicit - of Eurocentrism and neo-colonialism; to learn in a reciprocal way and to open up horizons to develop high-quality research and intervention in all areas of adult education. From this perspective, it is clear that in the coming years we need to deepen the relationships between different geographical, linguistic, and disciplinary contexts to ensure on a global scale innovation and emancipation as core values of youth and adult education. In this context, the training of workers constitutes a field of work that requires a strong epistemological and methodological renewal, to adapt these formative processes to a society where change accelerates in a progressive way, and where uncertainty becomes a trait central to social and identity processes.

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