

The third issue of the magazine *Work, Education and Health* deals with five subject areas: precariousness and suffering in the world of labour; the concept of (work) activity; the funding of secondary teaching and of professional education; professional training in health; and public policies (on health).

Precariousness and suffering are issues of interest for the fields of training and work in the area of health, not only because they are closely related to the research on the workers' health in the context of the (new) capitalism, but also due to their significance for the reflection on the organization of contemporary labour, in which both "health workers" and "work in the area of health" are inserted. The subject is discussed in two articles: Márcia Leite, using approaches that come originally from the sociology of work, deals with work precariousness in the context of the restructuring of production. She demonstrates how contracting-out processes affect, in a different manner, the different levels of the production chain and the various social groups. Acacia Kuenzer, taking as reference the contradictory and practical character of work, explores the real situation faced by health and educational workers, a situation marked, on the one hand, by a higher level of suffering at work and, on the other, by the possibilities of developing strategies to confront social inequalities.

The notion of activity, second theme in this issue, is dealt with in two papers. In the essay, Beth Brait, using the Bakhtinian dialogical approach, analyses the constitution of both subject and identity as a discursive activity in the context of contemporary capitalism. Yves Schwartz's article discusses Marx's concept of labour and the correlate notion of activity with the help of issues raised by the service sector. When these two papers explore the crossing between discourse, subject and human activity — all related, in the last instance, to the very fabric of history — they are clearly contributing to a renewal of the concept of work and to the studies on "work in the area of health".

The section entitled *Debate* deals with the third theme — funding of professional education and secondary teaching — in three different texts. José Marcelino Pinto, having as a starting point the presentation of the official figures on the pupil/year costs, discusses the financial resources necessary to guarantee an improvement in the quality of teaching offered today. Nicholas Davies draws a panorama of some structural and contingent challenges for the funding of state education, in particular secondary teaching, proving that past governments' expenditure per pupil have tended to decrease, a trend that is being repeated in the present federal administration. Jailson dos Santos shows how, besides the adoption of macroeconomic adjustments, the transfer of resources to implement a policy of universalization of basic education has also seriously affected the budgets of

the federal units of professional training (CEFETs and ETFs), and this has led to a situation that the author calls, metaphorically, “a policy of robbing Peter to pay Paul”. Although the three texts differ in their approach to the phenomenon of education, it should be noted that all three point to the shortage of resources for secondary teaching and professional education, and to the need to improve current funding mechanisms.

Professional training in the area of health — fourth theme in this issue — is addressed by four texts. In the section *Artigo* Isabel Brasil discusses curricular trends in the Technical Schools of the SUS and their relation with the demands of the labour market, challenging the preconception that “experience” is the touchstone of professional education. In the section *Relato*, Renata Reis, Maria das Graças Tonhá and Martha Padoani look at the constitution of the Network of Technical Schools of the SUS, an important initiative, the objective of which is to give support to the implementation of policies on secondary level training in health. Rita Sório, in the section *Memória* focuses on the important role played by the teacher Izabel dos Santos, a pioneer in the implantation and development of a large number of projects in the education of health professionals in Brazil. The section *Entrevista* continues retracing this recent past and Izabel dos Santos herself recovers important aspects of the history of training in this area. The main contribution of this set of texts is to discuss, register — and, in the last instance, turn into history — the huge number of conceptual and practical challenges that professional education in health have encountered in its path.

Finally, the article by Lenaura Lobato looks at the assessment of social public policies. In her analysis, the author argues that the proposals in this area are restricted to the specific objectives of programmes and projects and that this implies neglecting their true “political” dimension. Lobato also discusses some of the theoretical difficulties associated with the definition of criteria for the evaluation of social public policies, criteria that, in fact, become a type of challenge for health and education professionals.

This issue also publishes three reviews of books dealing with the above mentioned subjects: one by Edgar Bedê, about the book *Educação profissional no Brasil*, by Sílvia Manfredi; a second by Mônica Vieira, about *Saúde Paidéia* by Gastão Wagner; and the third by Maristela Botelho, on the collection of texts *Linguagem e trabalho*, edited by Maria Cecília Souza-e-Silva and Daniel Faïta.

*The Editors*