



MANIFESTO OF THE FORUM ON THE MEDICALIZATION OF EDUCATION AND SOCIETY

Brazilian society is living through a growing medicalization process at all levels of life.

Medicalization is understood as the process that artificially turns non-medical issues into medical problems. Different types of problems are presented as “diseases”, “disorders”, or “disturbances,” concealing the larger political, social, cultural, and emotional issues that affect people's lives. Collective issues are taken as individual; and social and political problems are turned into biological ones. In this process, which generates psychic suffering, the individual and his/her family are held responsible for the problems, while governments, authorities, and professionals are exempted from their responsibilities.

Once classified as “sick”, people become “patients” and, consequently, “consumers” of treatments, therapies, and medications, which change their own bodies into the problems that, in the logic of medicalization, shall be solved individually. Many times, families, professionals, authorities, politicians, and policy makers are exempted from their responsibilities regarding social issues: so that individual people are the ones who have “problems”, who are “dysfunctional”, who “do not adjust”, who are “sick”, and who are even, judicialized.

Learning and ways of being and acting – areas of great complexity and diversity– have been the preferred medicalization targets. It must be highlighted that, historically, it is from dissatisfaction and questioning that the possibility of change is built into the forms of the social order, to overcome prejudice and inequality.

The speech of inclusion, causes a stigma and a secondary exclusion to those already socially, emotionally, and educationally excluded. In this way, medicalization has been fulfilling the role of controlling and subjugating people, repressing questioning and discomfort; it fulfills an even more perverse role of hiding physical and psychological violence, turning people into “hosts of behavior and learning disorders”.

In Brazil, the critique and confronting of medicalization processes is still in the early stages.

It is in this context that the Forum on the Medicalization of Education and Society was created, whose purposes are to align those entities, groups, and people in whose interest it is to confront and overcome the medicalization problem, and to mobilize society to critique the medicalization of learning and behavior.

The Forum has a political and permanent character, as articulated by its participants, and decisions will be preferably made by consensus. The Forum is comprised of entities, movements, and people who have an interest in the subject and are in general agreement with the its goals.

The Forum is based on the following principles:

- Against the medicalization processes in life.
- Defense of victims of the medicalization process.
- Defense of human rights.
- Defense of the Child and Adolescent Statute.
- Right to free public education, which is democratic, secular, of high quality, and socially relevant to everyone
- Right to health and defense of the Sistema Único de Saúde - SUS and its principles.
- Respect for diversity and particularity, especially in the learning processes.
- Valuing a multidisciplinary approach to understanding the phenomenon of medicalization.
- Valuing popular participation.

The Education and Society Medicalization Forum proposes the following challenges:

I. Enlarge the democratization of the debate

- Establish mechanisms for interacting with civil society
- i. Popularize the debate, without sacrificing scientific integrity.
- ii. Multiply the means of communication, including literature, sites and arts in general.
- iii. Build strategies to obtain media space.
- Establish mechanisms for interacting with the academy
- i. Increase discussion among professionals from several areas;
- ii. Build strategies to obtain space in the initial and continuing education courses of professionals from several areas.
- iii. Support curricular proposals for the humanization of education and health practices.
- Socialize the understanding of medicalization and its consequences
- i. Recognize the needs of families who experience medicalization processes.
- ii. Clarify drug addiction risks - illegal and legal drugs - as a consequence of medicalization.
- Increase comprehension of the diversity and historicity of human learning and developmental processes.

II. Build strategies which subvert the medicalization logic

- Enlarge the theoretical production in the field of the critique of medicalization.
- Intervene in the formulation of public policies, providing the bases for new conceptions of the human being and society.
- Support hosting initiatives and the strengthening of families, demystifying the pretense of benefits of medicalization.
- Support inter-sector actions which confront medicalization.

MEMORY OF THE OF THE MANIFEST AND FORUM'S CREATION

From November 11th and 13th, 2010, approximately a thousand professionals of the Health and Education, students and entities' representatives participated in the 1st. International Seminar “The Medicalized Education: Dyslexia, TDAH and other alleged disorders” in São Paulo.

As the political action of this event, it was launched the Forum on the Education and Society's Medicalization, with on-going action, which aims at articulating entities, groups and people to face and overcome the medicalization phenomenon, and to mobilize society to criticize the medicalization of learning and behavior.

During the Forum's launching it was approved the Manifest, which at the time, was adhered to by 450 participants and 27 entities. This document highlights the Forum's goals, its guidelines and action proposals.

The Forum's meetings are taking place every month as of December 18th, 2010.

FORUM'S EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

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To sign the manifest access: <http://www.medicalizacao.com.br>