



POLICY BRIEF

THE TRANSITION OF YOUNG PEOPLE FROM EDUCATION TO WORK IN BRAZIL

 **FGV DGPE**
DIRETORIA DE
DESENVOLVIMENTO
DA GESTÃO PÚBLICA E
POLÍTICAS EDUCACIONAIS



التعليم فوق الجميع
Education Above All

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1. Context

Young people represent a strategic segment for the social and economic development of any nation. Simultaneously, it is a stage of life marked by intense and complex transitions, especially when viewed through the lens of social inequalities. More than a chronological phase, youth can be understood as a social construct marked by plural and unequal trajectories, especially when it comes to the transition to adulthood and the world of work.

Specialized literature on youth highlights that the transition from education to work has become longer and more heterogeneous over the last few decades (Barbosa, 2022; Silva, 2021). The condition of "prolonged youth" reflects, on the one hand, the increase in the time spent in school and, on the other, the increasing difficulty of entering the formal labor market, especially among the poorest youth. Instead of a linear path from school to work, there is an alternation between periods of employment, unemployment, inactivity and return to education, often motivated more by necessity than by choice.

This scenario highlights the challenges of the school-to-work transition in Brazil. While a significant portion of low-income youth experience an early and abrupt transition to adulthood, beginning their work careers and assuming family responsibilities before even completing basic education, young people from middle and upper classes, on the other hand, often extend their stay in school until graduate school, postponing their entry into the workforce and enjoying better opportunities in the future.

1.1. Youth in Brazil

Brazil is currently experiencing a unique moment in its demographic history, marked by the presence of a demographic bonus. This phenomenon occurs when the proportion of people of working age (15 to 64 years old) is greater than that of dependents (children and the elderly), creating a window of opportunity for social and economic development. According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), the country currently has just over 48.5 million young people between the ages of 15 and 29,

representing about 25% of the Brazilian population. Although this number is still significant, it is in continuous decline: in 2012, there were almost 52 million young people in this age group, signaling an ongoing process of population aging, as can be seen in Graph 1 below:

Graph 1: Evolution of the number of young people aged 15 to 29 in Brazil



Source: IBGE – Contínuos PNAD 2023. Prepared by: Research and Evaluation Center of the Roberto Marinho Foundation. Available at: <https://juventudesetrabalho.qedu.org.br/retrato-das-juventudes/>

The progressive decline in the proportion of young people in the Brazilian population reinforces the strategic and transitory nature of the demographic bonus. This is a limited window of opportunity that requires urgent and assertive public decisions, especially regarding valuing young people as an active force for national development. The potential of this population can become an engine of social, cultural, and economic growth, but this will only happen if objective conditions for their full social, educational, and productive inclusion are guaranteed.

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About the unequal conditions of Brazilian youth, it can be observed that more than 30% of young people between the ages of 15 and 29 live in poverty, of whom more than 70% are black, as shown in Graph 2 below.

Graph 2: Proportion of young people aged 15 to 29 living in poverty in Brazil

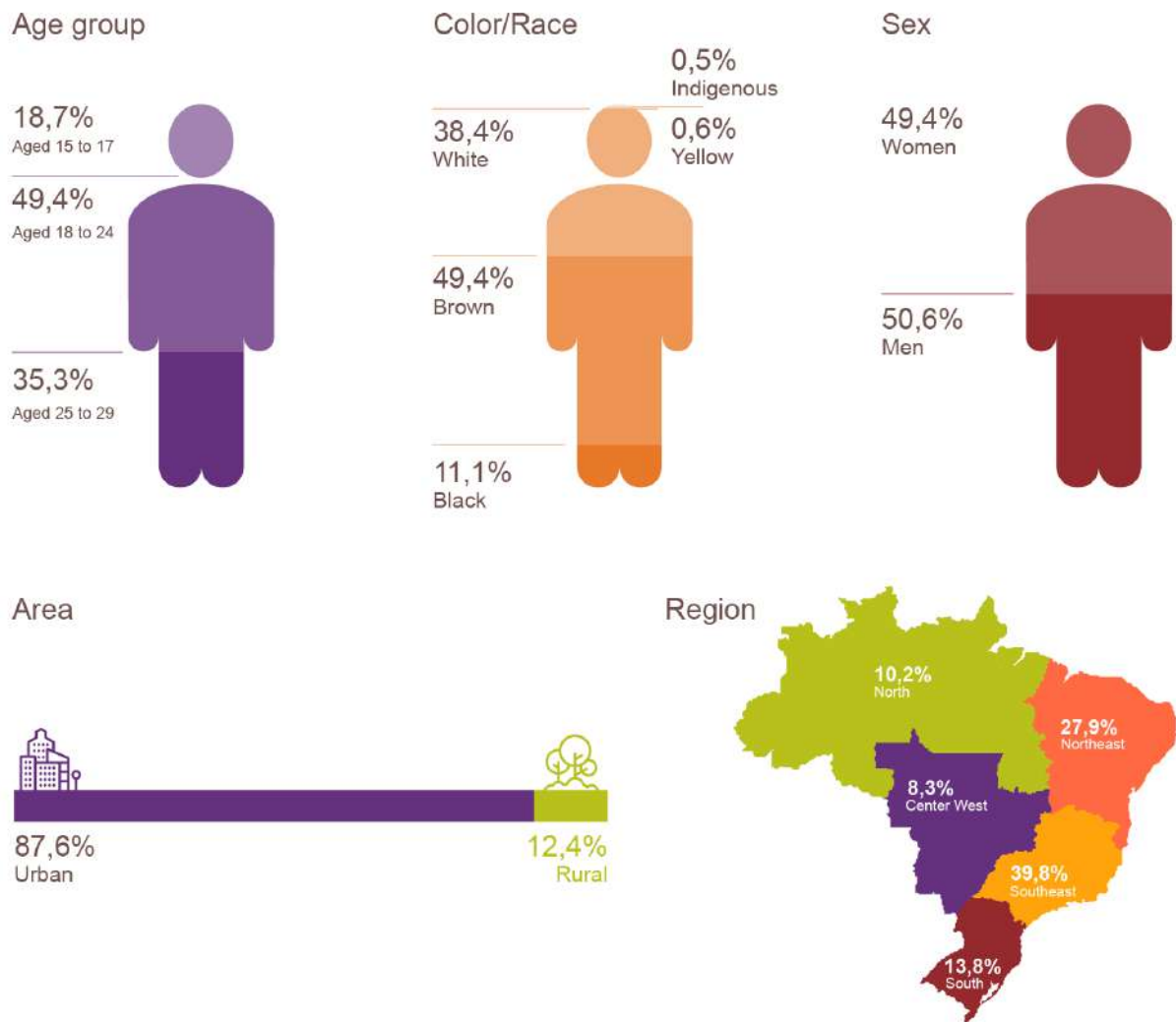


Source: IBGE – Continuos PNAD 2023. Prepared by: Research and Evaluation Center of the Roberto Marinho Foundation. Available at: <https://juventudesetrabalho.qedu.org.br/retrato-das-juventudes/>

In Brazil, the young population is mostly black. Estimates show that around 31 million young people say they're black or brown, according to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (2022). However, this significant presence does not translate into equity in the various dimensions of social life, as pointed out throughout this study. It is found primarily in urban areas (87.6%), with the highest concentration in the southeast (39.8%) and northeast (27.9%) regions. Gender distribution is balanced, as shown in Figure 1 below.

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Figure 1: Summary profile of Brazilian youth – 2023



Source: IBGE – Continuous PNAD 2023. Prepared by: Research and Evaluation Center of the Roberto Marinho Foundation. Available at: <https://juventudesetrabalho.gedu.org.br/retrato-das-juventudes/>

1.2. Youth and education

The educational and professional trajectories of Brazilian youth are deeply marked by inequalities of class, race, gender, and location, as already pointed out in this study. Black, from the periphery, indigenous, quilombola, and rural youth face greater barriers to

accessing and remaining in school, as well as greater difficulties in obtaining formal, skilled jobs with guaranteed rights.

Recent data from the Continuous National Household Sample Survey (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, 2023) show that, among young people between 18 to 24 years old, 36.6% did not complete high school and are not studying, while only 22% managed to complete this stage and enter higher education. Among 19-year-olds, only 63% completed high school at the expected age. This data reveals a pattern of persistent and structural exclusion, as can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – School status of young people aged 18 to 24 in Brazil (2022)

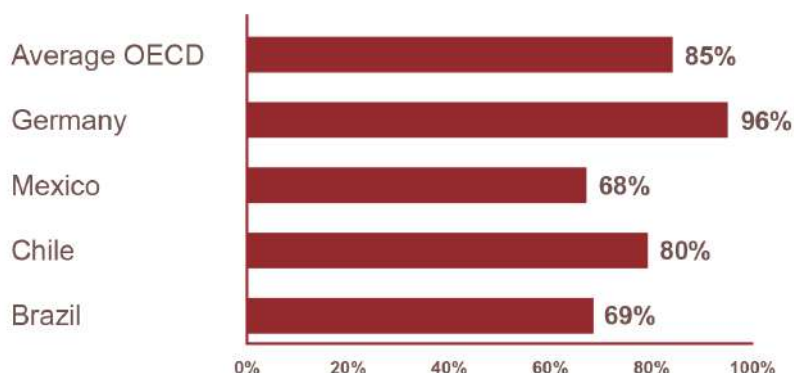
School status	Percentage (%)
Completed high school and is in college	22,0%
Completed high school and is not studying	15,4%
Did not complete high school and is not studying	36,6%
Still attending high school	20,0%

Source: Prepared by the author based on data from Continuous PNAD (IBGE, 2023).

The high school completion rate at age 19 is lower among black youth (58%) and among youth in the North (53%) and Northeast (56%) regions of the country. In the South and Southeast regions, the percentages are 71% and 69%, respectively. These regional and racial inequalities highlight the cumulative effects of educational inequalities since early childhood education.

These inequalities are even more evident when compared internationally. While in Brazil only 69% of young people between the ages of 25 and 34 have completed secondary education, this percentage is 85% on average in OECD countries, reaching 96% in Germany (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2023). Figure 2 illustrates this disparity:

Figure 2 – High school completion rate (25-34 years old) – International comparison



Source: OECD (2023), Education at a Glance 2023: OECD Indicators, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/e13bef63-en>.

In 2023, 9.2 million (20%) young people were out of school without having completed basic education. Of these, 39.4% have not completed elementary school, 24.4% have completed elementary school but did not advance to secondary education, and 36.3% dropped out of secondary education.

The need to devote themselves to work was cited as the main reason for young Brazilians leaving formal education before completing basic education, accounting for 41.8% of this group. Lack of interest in studies (23.5%), pregnancy (9.6%), completion of the desired level (6.1%), and domestic chores or caring for vulnerable people (4.4%) also contribute to the interruption of schooling, as well as excessive repetition (2.8%) and structural issues in the educational system, such as: lack of schools in the territory (2.1%), schools not adapted for people with disabilities (0.9%), or lack of vacancies (0.7%). (Continuous PNAD 2023, available on the QEDu platform).

An analysis of youth trajectories in Brazil reveals that the challenge of remaining in formal education is deeply intertwined with the social, economic, and cultural conditions of young people. Bernard Charlot (2000) highlights that students' bond with school is built on a "sense of knowledge," that is, how they interpret the value of knowledge and schooling in

their lives. For many young people in vulnerable situations, marked by material deprivation, unequal access to rights, and uncertainty about the future, school does not always offer a meaningful project capable of dialoguing with their aspirations and concrete experiences.

In the context of contemporary youth, José Machado Pais (2003, 2011) proposes the idea of “transits” or “passages” to understand the multiplicity of experiences and rhythms that mark the transition to adulthood. This transition is neither linear nor homogeneous, and is shaped by movements between inclusion and exclusion from the worlds of education, work, family, and leisure. In this process, school is not only a space for formal learning, but also a territory for socialization, identity construction, and disputes over meaning. Its ability to retain young people depends, among other factors, on the articulation between educational policies and broader strategies for social protection, recognition, and productive inclusion.

School dropout, therefore, should not be seen solely as the result of an individual decision or a supposed lack of interest, but as an expression of structural inequalities that impose barriers to the right to education. Many young people are forced to work at an early age, take on family responsibilities, or deal with daily violence that directly interferes with their relationship with school.

1.3. Youth and work

An understanding of work throughout history reveals its central role in shaping social life and individual identities. According to Antunes, cited by Borges and Yamamoto (2004), work should not be understood as a natural object, but as an essential action that mediates the relationships between human beings and nature, as well as between individuals and society. It is, therefore, a socially constructed practice, marked by the material, symbolic, and cultural conditions of each time and place.

This understanding is reinforced when one considers that work—and the way it is thought about—is deeply rooted in the socio-historical conditions experienced by each individual. According to Borges and Yamamoto (2004), the meaning of work depends on

factors such as access to technology, natural resources, know-how, position in the social structure, control over one's own activities, the prevailing culture, and symbolic references present in the social environment.

With the advent of capitalism, these mediations have become even more visible and complex. The value and place of work, as well as the requirements related to worker training, have undergone significant changes. In the contemporary context, phenomena such as globalization, economic volatility, hyper competition, demographic changes, and the explosion of information and knowledge have caused profound reconfigurations in organizational structures and workforce management.

Such transformations directly impact young people. Faced with an unstable and increasingly demanding job market, training and professional qualifications have come to occupy a central place in strategies for including young people into the labor market. However, the promise that qualifications alone can ensure professional success is often illusory. As Borges and Yamamoto (2004) point out, qualifications take on a symbolic weight that masks structural inequalities in the world of work, attributing sole responsibility for success or failure to the individual.

In this scenario, it is essential to reflect on the implications of these transformations for socially vulnerable youth. The way work is organized, the criteria for accessing and remaining in the labor market, and the growing demands for qualifications have an unequal impact on young people, especially those who face structural barriers related to class, race, gender, and territory.

From the perspective of entering the labor market, the scenario is also marked by precariousness and informality. According to QEdu Juventudes, in 2023, 46% of young people between the ages of 18 and 24 were employed, but only 17% of them had a formal contract. In addition, informal work is more common among young people with low levels of education and those living in regions with less economic dynamism. Informality directly affects income, social protection, and the ability to plan for the future, keeping many young people in cycles of vulnerability.

Figure 3: Comparison of informality rates among young people and adults – Brazil 2023



Source: IBGE – Continuou PNAD 2023. Prepared by: Research and Evaluation Center of the Roberto Marinho Foundation. Available at: <https://juventudesetrabalho.qedu.org.br/retrato-das-juventudes/>

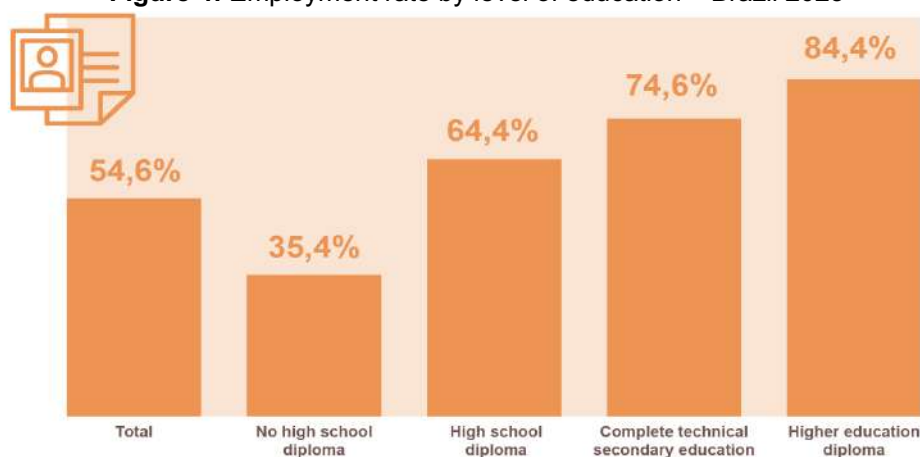
In the context of contemporary transformations in the world of work, the flexibilization of labor relations and platformization have profoundly reconfigured the conditions for productive inclusion, especially for adolescents and young people. As pointed out in the report *The Future of the World of Work for Brazilian Youth* (Itaú Education and Work et al., 2023), these processes have produced a scenario in which informality takes on new expressions and intensities. The flexibilization of labor rights has favored the growth of the number of Individual Microentrepreneurs (MEIs), which, although offering some administrative formalization, has also led to the exclusion of a significant portion of workers from the guarantees provided for in the Consolidation of Labor Laws (CLT). In this scenario, young people—particularly those from historically underprivileged groups—face more fragile employment relationships, uncertain wages, and limited access to basic rights such as vacation, end-of-year bonus, and social security.

The platformization of work, in turn, has shaped a “new version of labor informality,” marked by work relationships mediated by apps, algorithms, and volatile goals. This logic has direct effects on young people's experience with the world of work: long hours, lack of

stability, greater exposure to risks, and low monthly earnings become commonplace. For adolescents and young people, such conditions imply not only the weakening of rights, but also increased material and emotional instability at a stage of life already marked by transitions and uncertainties. Furthermore, as the report highlights, this process reinforces structural inequalities by limiting opportunities for entry into protected occupations and more stable career paths, disproportionately affecting low-income youth, black youth, and residents of urban peripheries. These elements highlight the urgent need for public policies that recognize the centrality of work in young people's lives and address the new forms of precariousness that are emerging in this century.

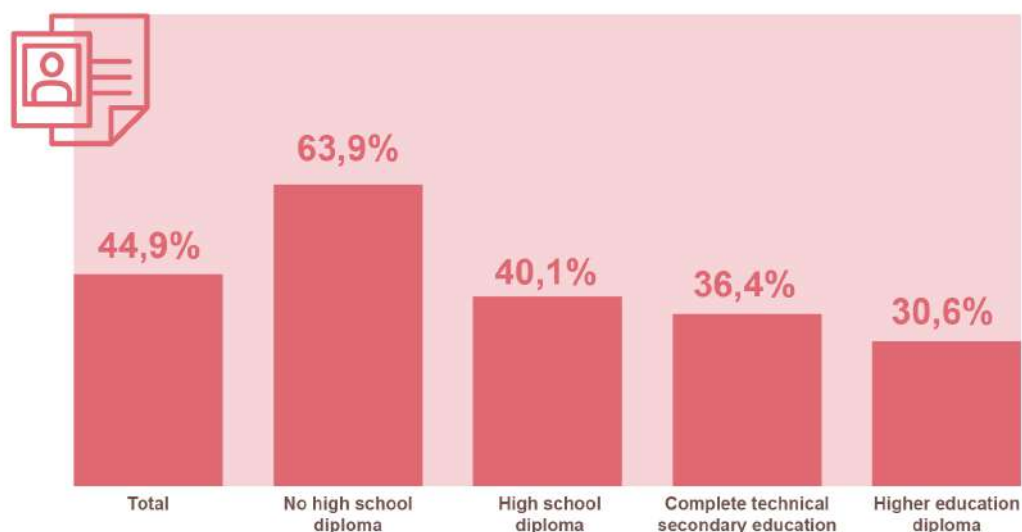
The data also reveal a close relationship between education and employment. Young people who have not completed high school are less likely to find formal, quality jobs. Completing high school and, above all, accessing higher education—which remains restricted for the poorest segments of the population—are decisive factors for more promising trajectories, as can be seen in Figures 4 and 5 below.

Figure 4: Employment rate by level of education – Brazil 2023



Source: IBGE – Continuous PNAD 2023. Prepared by: Research and Evaluation Center of the Roberto Marinho Foundation. Available at: <https://juventudesetrabalho.qedu.org.br/retrato-das-juventudes/>

Figure 5: Informality rate by level of education – Brazil 2023



Source: IBGE – Continuous PNAD 2023. Prepared by: Research and Evaluation Center of the Roberto Marinho Foundation. Available at: <https://juventudesetrabalho.gedu.org.br/retrato-das-juventudes/>

The difficulties faced by young people in entering and remaining in the formal labor market, combined with inequalities in access to and permanence in education, reveal the existence of trajectories marked by discontinuity and exclusion. In this context, it is important to analyze the group of young people who are neither in school nor working, often labeled as “no-no”¹. More than a statistical condition, this situation expresses a set of social and institutional vulnerabilities that limit the possibilities for comprehensive development and the construction of life projects. Below, we examine this phenomenon in light of recent data and analytical perspectives that seek to understand its multiple causes and implications.

¹ The use of the expression “no-no” has been advocated by researchers and civil society organizations as a more accurate way of describing the phenomenon, shifting the emphasis from individual responsibility—often suggested by the term “nem-nem”—to the adverse social and economic conditions that shape this experience. Among others, the expression appears in the 2021 Youth Atlas (www.atlasdasiuventudes.com.br) and in the report The future of the world of work for Brazilian youth 2023 (<https://observatorioept.org.br/conteudos/o-futuro-do-mundo-do-trabalho-para-as-juventudes-brasileiras>).

1.4. “No-no” youth

An analysis of the living conditions of adolescents and young people who do not study, work or seek employment — often referred to as “no-no” — highlights the depth of social inequalities that structure youth trajectories in Brazil. Far from being an individual choice or a transitory moment, this condition reflects persistent structural barriers that limit access to education, productive inclusion and the exercise of economic autonomy.

According to the *Atlas of Youth* (National Youth Council, n.d.), approximately 23% of young Brazilians between the ages of 15 and 29 were, at the time, out of school, out of work, and not seeking employment. Of these, 71% were women and 64% identified as black, which highlights the centrality of gender and racial inequalities in shaping this condition.

The latest data reinforce the magnitude of the problem. According to a survey by the QEDu Youth, Education and Work platform, based on the 2023 Continuous National Household Sample Survey (Continuous PNAD), 26.8% of young people between the ages of 18 and 24 and 23.3% of those aged between 25 and 29 were out of school and not in the labor market that year (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, 2023; QEDu, n.d.).

International comparisons reinforce the gravity of the situation in Brazil. According to the International Labor Organization (2022), the rate of young people who are “no-no” in Brazil is higher than in countries, such as Bolivia (13.7%), Uruguay (20.3%), Chile (20.9%), and Argentina (22.3%), surpassed only by Colombia (27.6%) and Guyana (39.1%) in Latin America. The OECD's *Education at a Glance* 2022 report highlights that, among the countries analyzed, only South Africa (46.2%) had higher percentages than Brazil (36.9%) for the 18-24 age group in 2022 (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2022).

In addition to structural inequalities, other intersectional factors mark the experience of young people who are “no-no.” As pointed out by Silva et al. (2021) and Freire and Saboia (2021), this condition is more prevalent among young women—especially

mothers—young black people, residents of the North and Northeast regions, rural areas, low-income areas, and households headed by parents with low levels of education. Teenage pregnancy is one of the main causes of school dropout among girls, and the problem is exacerbated in single-parent households, where care and provision fall on a single person (Abramo et al., 2021).

The lack of public care policies, such as daycare centers and full-time schools, intensifies young women's domestic overwork, making it difficult for them to remain in school and in the labor market. Even those who are not mothers end up taking on responsibilities for caring for children, the elderly, or sick family members, which distances them from educational and professional opportunities (Abramo et al., 2021). The international community, in turn, has warned that young people in this situation are at risk of social exclusion, living on incomes below the poverty line and with limited access to skills development that would enable them to overcome this situation (International Labour Organization, 2023).

The simultaneous withdrawal from school and work by a significant number of young people highlights not only gaps in existing public policies, but also the urgent need to rethink support mechanisms for young people in more vulnerable contexts. More than a symptom of exclusion, this condition points to the fragility of the bridges that should ensure a safe and dignified transition between the stages of school life and entry into the world of work.

Understanding the reality of young Brazilians in relation to education and work requires not only the analysis of local data and experiences, but also the observation of trends and models adopted in other countries. The international context offers relevant elements for the debate on public policies aimed at young people, especially regarding strategies to address educational and labor inequalities. Comparison with OECD countries, for example, allows us to identify patterns, challenges and solutions that can inspire adaptations to the Brazilian context, while highlighting the structural specificities that condition the school-to-work transition in different territories. Below, we present

international data and reflections that address the dilemmas faced by Brazilian youth and help to broaden our view of the possibilities for productive and social inclusion in early adulthood.

1.5. Transition from education to work

It is important to understand the transition to work as a complex process that goes beyond simply entering the labor market. This transition involves building a professional identity, accessing formative experiences, integrating school and work, creating networks, and the structural factors that influence the type of occupation young people are able to achieve. As pointed out by the International Labor Organization (2023), this transition is marked by instability and multiple inequalities — of class, race, gender, and territory — which make it difficult for many young people to build professional trajectories, as they face problems such as interrupted schooling, lack of public policies that meet their needs, and few opportunities for skilled employment.

In this context, the concept of social capital, developed by Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988), and expanded by Putnam (2000), becomes relevant. Social capital refers to the networks of relationships and trust that people build throughout their lives, and these networks are essential for access to employment opportunities and professional development. For young people, especially those in vulnerable situations, access to these networks can be crucial for inclusion in the labor market (Abramovay et al., 2002; International Labour Organization, 2022). Public policies that promote the strengthening of these networks, whether through family, school or community support, have the potential to reduce inequalities and increase opportunities for entry into the labor market.

In this sense, it is important to consider the ideas of Maria Sidalina Almeida (2011, 2019), who sees the transition to work as a social process influenced by structural factors, such as the division of the educational system and the labor market, in addition to cultural issues that attribute different meanings to work and youth in each context. The author emphasizes that the transition is not just a change from one system to another, but a journey full of symbolic and material obstacles that determine who has more or less

chances of making this transition successfully. In this process, schools play an ambiguous role: they can be a space that reinforces inequalities, but they can also be an opportunity for transformation, if they manage to support young people more effectively.

Barbosa (2022), Pais (2003; 2011) and Silva (2021) argue that, in a context of economic changes, job insecurity and longer schooling, these stages have become more unstable, prolonged and non-linear. Youth, therefore, should be understood as a period of life marked by diverse and unequal trajectories, with many uncertainties, especially when it comes to the transition from school to work.

For many young Brazilians, especially those from lower income families, black people, indigenous people and residents of urban and rural outskirts, these structural obstacles hinder access to basic rights, such as quality education, decent work² and a social safety net as observed by Barbosa (2022):

The results showed that most of the interviewed graduates perceive themselves as adults. It is noteworthy that, for some, it was not possible to experience youth due to a process of early adultification related to work and marked by difference markers such as social class or origin, which make the boundaries between childhood, youth, and adulthood even more fluid. In general, professional trajectories begin early and in informal employment, involving the need to balance work and study (Barbosa, 2022, p. 10).

In Brazil, it is possible to identify five categories of young people in transition from school to work (18 to 24 years old) in terms of their educational and labor market participation which reveal different realities and challenges that require targeted public policies. These categories and the corresponding percentage distributions (Itaú Education and Work et al., 2023) are presented below:

1. Young people only studying (15% of young people);
2. Young people studying and working (14% of young people);

² The concept of “decent work” was formulated by the ILO in 1999 with the aim of promoting productive and quality jobs, carried out in conditions of freedom, equity, security, and human dignity. It is aligned with SDG 8 of the UN 2030 Agenda and is based on four pillars: respect for fundamental rights at work, promotion of employment, expansion of social protection, and strengthening of social dialogue. To learn more, visit: <https://www.dieese.org.br/outraspublicacoes/2023/dicionarioAtividadeSindical/38.html>

3. Young people only working (39% of young people);
4. Young people studying and unemployed (5% of young people);
5. Young people “no-no” — that is, those who are neither studying nor working (27% of young people).

Each of these groups faces distinct challenges, based on social markers of class, race and territory. For example, young people who are “no-no” face structural difficulties in accessing both education and work, reflecting a combination of social exclusion and lack of opportunities. For these young people, the lack of social capital can further aggravate the situation, since support networks, whether family, community or institutional, are essential to overcoming the barriers that prevent them from entering the labor market.

In addition, the report "The Future of the World of Work for Brazilian Youth" (Itaú Education and Work et al., 2023) emphasizes the urgent need for public policies that address the challenges faced by young people in an integrated manner, including improving education, expanding training opportunities, and encouraging first-time job. The report suggests that creating of more inclusive work environments and programs to support young people in the labor market, such as mentoring and networking, are essential for promoting equity and social inclusion. Valuing social capital, through expanding support networks and mutual trust, can play a central role in overcoming inequalities.

Given this situation, it is urgent to invest in public policies that take advantage of the "demographic bonus" of youth. It is essential to expand educational opportunities, both for professional training and for the development of interpersonal and social skills. To address the effects of recent economic crises and facilitate young people's entry into the labor market, strategies such as career guidance services, first-job support programs, and incentives for employers to hire young people can be adopted.

Social capital plays a crucial role in this process, as support networks and social ties can help young people find employment opportunities, learn new skills, and broaden their perspectives (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000; Silva, 2021). Public policies

that strengthen these networks—through partnerships between schools, businesses, nongovernmental organizations, and communities—are essential to creating an environment that is more conducive to the inclusion of young people into the labor market (Barbosa, 2022). By understanding that access to opportunities is strongly linked to the social relationships that young people can establish, it is possible to devise more effective strategies to overcome inequalities.

In recent years, some actions have sought to address this challenge, combining strategies for school retention with support for inclusion into the world of work and strengthening youth autonomy. In the next chapter, we will explore how public policies and social programs have worked to support young people in the transition to work, focusing on concrete experiences that seek to promote the productive inclusion of vulnerable young people, taking into account the specificities of class, race, gender and territory.

2. Good practices

Given the high rates of school dropout and the disconnect between education and work, public policies that link both fields are essential to guarantee the right to quality education and dignified productive inclusion. Brazil is currently experiencing a window of opportunity generated by the high proportion of people of working age. This context makes it urgent to invest in training and skills development for young people, especially those facing multiple social barriers.

Brazil has been developing policies to encourage young people to stay in school, qualify them for the world of work and support their productive insertion. An example of a policy to encourage young people to stay in school is the Pé-de-Meia Program. Among the efforts to qualify young people is secondary education integrated with vocational education. To support productive insertion, there is the Young Apprentice Program.

- **Pé-de-Meia Program**

This is a recent policy aimed at keeping students in public high schools, with financial incentives linked to attendance and completion of studies. Students receive a monthly financial incentive whenever they achieve a minimum attendance rate of 80% in classes, and an annual financial incentive upon completing the school year. Still in its early stages, the program seeks to combat school dropout rates through educational savings and signals an attempt to align with effective conditional cash transfer models.

- **Secondary education integrated with vocational education**

The model of secondary education linked to vocational education, as in the federal institutions of secondary education and some state schools, shows better indicators of performance, retention, and employability. However, the reach of these institutions in Brazil is still limited and uneven. In 2022, only 11.3% of secondary school enrollments were in courses integrated with technical training (Anísio Teixeira National Institute for Educational Research and Studies, 2022). The data show the importance of policies that promote the expansion of integrated schools.

- **Young Apprentices Program**

Created by the Apprenticeship Law (2000), this program requires medium and large companies to hire young people between the ages of 14 and 24 in formal apprenticeship programs. It is one of the most highly regarded initiatives, mainly because it allows young people to work and study with job security. However, it faces challenges in terms of compliance by companies, difficulties in enforcement and low penetration in poorer regions and among young people who are most socially vulnerable.

An important aspect to highlight is, often, the discontinuity of public policies and their disarticulation. An example of a program that faced discontinuity and now it is being implemented again is the National Youth Inclusion Program (ProJovem). An example of initiative that seeks to promote articulation among different policies is the Youth Productive Inclusion Laboratory (LINC).

- **National Youth Inclusion Program (ProJovem)**

Launched in 2005, ProJovem sought to combine educational training, professional qualifications and citizen participation. Aimed at young people aged 18 to 29 with low levels of education, it combined actions in partnership with local governments. Despite its potential, it faced discontinuities, low coverage and weaknesses in intersectoral coordination. Evaluations indicate that, when well implemented, it had positive effects on returning to school and increasing young people's self-esteem.

- **LINC – Youth Productive Inclusion Laboratory**

The Youth Productive Inclusion Laboratory (LINC) is an initiative launched in September 2023, with the aim of promoting the qualified insertion of young Brazilians, between the ages of 14 and 29, into the world of work. The initiative is the result of a partnership between UNICEF, Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV DGPE), Itaú Educação e Trabalho, Instituto Unibanco and Fundação Arymax. It acts as a reference center for the development and implementation of public policies aimed at the productive inclusion of youth. Its main objectives include: intersectoral mobilization, technical support, training,

mapping of good practices, monitoring of indicators, knowledge production, and recognition.

In April 2025, LINC launched a digital platform that organizes and disseminates knowledge about youth, the labor market, and public policies in Brazil. The tool provides access to evidence, studies, and concepts focused on the productive inclusion of young Brazilians, making it a valuable resource for researchers, public managers, civil society organizations, and others interested in the topic.

It is also possible to highlight good practices within the scope of government coordination and in the context of civil society. The National Pact for the Productive Inclusion of Youth is an illustration of government coordinated activity, and the 1 Million Opportunities Program is an example of practice that counts on civil society's organizations.

National Pact for the Productive Inclusion of Youth

Established by Decree No. 11,853/2023, the National Pact for the Productive Inclusion of Youth is an initiative of the Ministry of Labor and Employment (MTE), in partnership with UNICEF and the International Labor Organization (ILO). The pact aims to promote decent work for youth, through the adoption of concrete, targeted and effective measures and actions by the signatories, in line with the goals of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The initiative mobilizes companies, civil society and governments to generate job opportunities for adolescents and young people in Brazil. The pact is coordinated by the Ministry of Labor and Employment (MTE), the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) – through the One Million Opportunities (1MiO) initiative.

One Million Opportunities (1MiO) Initiative

Launched in October 2020 by UNICEF, the 1MiO initiative is the largest multisectoral effort in Brazil aimed at the productive inclusion of adolescents and young

people between the ages of 14 and 29, especially those living in contexts of poverty, structural racism, territorial exclusion and intersectional vulnerability. Through partnerships with companies, civil society, governments and young people themselves, the program aims to promote opportunities for professional training, citizen participation and decent work. By supporting continuing education and integration into the world of decent work, the program is a relevant response to the structural challenges faced by Brazilian youth.

1MiO initiative operates on four fronts: school retention, training in 21st century skills, access to decent work opportunities and strengthening local youth protection and support networks. To date, the program has generated more than 260,000 opportunities, with the participation of 138 companies, 1,833 municipalities and 32 civil organizations, according to the information available on its platform.

As it is possible to see, there are efforts in place in Brazil to create opportunities for the youth. Some of the initiatives are related to education, as the mentioned Pé-de-Meia Program, that offers financial incentives for high school students to remain in schools. Or the secondary education schools that are integrated with vocational education. Other initiatives are associated to the labor market, and seek to support the productive insertion of students, as the addressed Young Apprentice Program.

Education and the transition of the youth to work are matters that interest all society. That is why government and civil society need to work together to create more social opportunities to the young population. There are good practices in Brazil that can be highlighted, as for instance the National Pact for the Productive Inclusion of Youth. This pact integrates the public and private sectors around the theme, and it is essential to ensure perennity in this partnership.

3. Recommendations

Given the scenario analyzed, it can be said that the transition from school to work cannot be reduced to a single moment in time. It is part of a process of unequal socialization and the creation of expectations that are not always achievable. Hence the importance of public policies and initiatives that link education, work, assistance and culture, recognizing young people as subjects of rights and not just as a workforce trainee.

However, for policies and initiatives to have lasting effects, it is essential that they are linked to the strengthening of basic education, with strategies to keep young people in school and to listen to them in a meaningful way, respecting their diversity and experiences. As Minayo (2005) argues, real and sustainable changes in the living conditions of young people can only be understood and evaluated from their own perspective, considering their trajectories, expectations and forms of resistance.

Thus, the transition from school to work must be analyzed as a complex process, strongly marked by historical and structural inequalities. Remaining in formal education, especially for young people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, cannot be treated as an individual challenge, but as a collective responsibility and a political priority. Understanding the factors that promote or hinder this permanence, and productive inclusion is essential for the formulation of more effective, fair and transformative proposals.

In that direction, we make some recommendations, without prejudice to others that may become relevant in the country's specific contexts:

- **Preventing school dropouts:** Strengthen integrated policies to keep students in school, focusing on the final years of elementary school and high school, especially in public schools and in highly vulnerable contexts.
- **Expanding integrated training paths:** Invest in secondary education linked to technical and technological training, with supervised internships and partnerships with the productive sector, respecting different regional realities.

- **Focus on underrepresented groups:** Develop specific actions for black, indigenous, and disadvantaged youth, young women, and young immigrants, with psychosocial support, cultural mediation, and institutional shelter.
- **Monitoring with disaggregated data:** Improve educational and labor information systems, with data by age group, race/color, gender, territory, and migration status, allowing for continuous monitoring of policies.
- **Intersectoral approach as a guideline for action:** Integrate education, labor, social assistance, youth, and culture policies, promoting flexible pathways that are aligned with the aspirations and needs of young people, especially in highly vulnerable areas.
- **Promotion of care policies and protected time for young women,** with the creation of daycare centers, scholarships and support services for young mothers.
- **Monitoring and systematic evaluation** of public policies and private initiatives aimed at youth, with active participation of young people themselves in the construction of solutions.

Brazilian youth represent enormous potential for the country's development. Ensuring a smooth transition from school to work is not just a response to a social problem - it is a strategy for the future.

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