

Section: SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

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Listening to silenced voices: popular education with incarcerated women

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INTRODUCTION: Growth of Brazil's incarcerated female population, together with overcrowding and inadequate health services, demonstrates the urgent need for educational alternatives that promote citizenship and empowerment. Popular Health Extension, grounded in active listening and appreciation of popular knowledge, has emerged as an effective strategy. The 'Para Elas' project, developed at the women's APAC facility in Itaúna, Minas Gerais, had positive effects on student development and on the reintegration of incarcerated women. This study therefore assessed the feasibility of replicating the project in prisons in the Greater ABC region of São Paulo, which have severe structural and healthcare deficiencies. **METHODS:** This qualitative methodological case study was based on documentary analysis of institutional and scientific sources from 2018 to 2024. The analysis followed Bardin's technique and included documents from the Itaúna APAC, reports from the São Paulo State Penitentiary Administration Secretariat (SAP-SP), project records, and publications on Popular Extension. Feasibility criteria and adaptation strategies for São Paulo's traditional prison system were defined. **RESULTS:** The 'Para Elas' experience revealed a participatory method centered on the needs of women serving sentences, with positive effects on health, behavior, and academic development. Severe deficiencies, including overcrowding and a shortage of services, were identified in the Greater ABC region. The proposed adaptation included modular workshops, team training, and criteria for participation and evaluation. **DISCUSSION:** Replication requires methodological and ethical adjustments to address the limitations of the conventional prison system. Freirean pedagogy proved applicable even in unstable settings, and coordination with universities and public agencies is strategic. Flexibility, active listening, and hybrid technologies are essential to sustain the proposal. **CONCLUSION:** Replicating 'Para Elas' in the Greater ABC region is both feasible and desirable, provided that local characteristics are respected. The initiative strengthens health, autonomy, and critical education while creating links between higher education and vulnerable populations. Pilot implementation is recommended, with continuous evaluation and the potential to become a replicable model.

KEYWORDS: Social vulnerability; Community extension; Incarcerated population; Universal healthcare.