Brazilian Media Education Strategy

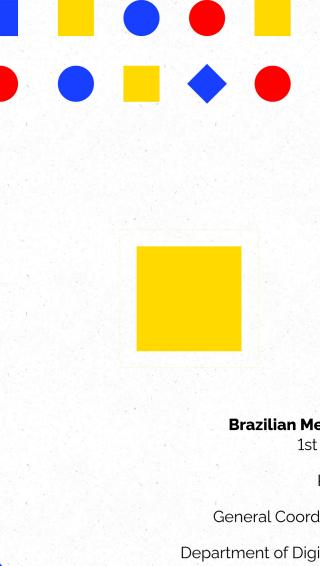
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SECRETARIA DE COMUNICAÇÃO SOCIAL

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Brazilian Media Education Strategy

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Produced by

General Coordination of Media Education

Department of Digital Rights and Media Education

Secretariat of Digital Policies

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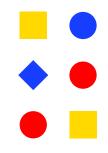
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1. Presentation

This document introduces the Brazilian Media Education Strategy, understood as a set of initiatives developed by the Federal Government under the coordination of the Secretariat of Social Communication of the Presidency of the Republic (SECOM), aimed at promoting media education for the Brazilian population. At the end of 2022, during the government transition, experts and representatives of civil society identified the need for and advocated the creation of a body within the Federal Public Administration responsible for formulating and coordinating public policies related to the digital environment. Thus, the Secretariat of Digital Policies (SPDIGI) emerges, linked to SECOM, with its competencies stipulated by Decree No. 11,362, dated January 1, 2023.

Among the responsibilities of SPDIGI, various fronts are outlined to promote a healthy, plural, and diverse digital environment with reliable and high-quality information while respecting and protecting people's rights. In the pursuit of coordinating these actions with a focus on education, the Coordination-General of Media Education (CGEM) was created within SPDIGI, linked to the Department of Digital Rights and Media Education (DDEM).

To ensure that the formulation of media education actions occurs transparently and participatively, considering societal accumulations and experiences developed thus far, the planning of CGEM's actions underwent a public consultation, receiving 418 contributions between May 19 and June 30, 2023 (BRAZIL, 2023).

The received contributions, coupled with the organization's maturity over the past months, allowed the formulation of consistent and comprehensive strategies aimed at promoting the development of competencies in children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly for understanding, analyzing, engaging, and critically producing experiences with different digital media channels and information in a creative, healthy, conscious, and civic manner.

The process of formulating and implementing public policies is dynamic and cyclical, and we aim to present this Strategy, revamped, in 2025. It will include elements such as the context and diagnosis of media education in the country, principles for media education, guidelines for public policy, and axes of action with



detailed action plans, including the presentation of results achieved so far and goals and milestones for the following years. All of this will be built together with society, ensuring the participation of historically excluded individuals and groups in decision-making spaces.

We hope that this document and the presented public policies can contribute to the construction of a more conscious, critical, and democratic society!



1. Introduction

1.1 Current Context

The agenda for media literacy education dates back to at least the second half of the 20th century, focusing on the political, economic, and social implications of power concentration in mass media. This attention primarily pertained to the consumption of information conveyed through radio, television, and printed newspapers and magazines. Despite persisting dilemmas over decades, the agenda remains relevant, now expanded with new dimensions arising from the emergence of the internet and recent developments with the popularization of portable digital devices (such as smartphones and tablets) and major social media, messaging, and video-sharing platforms.

It is certain that technological advancements in digital tools and, more recently, artificial intelligence, have brought about profound and accelerated social transformations, especially in the communicational and informational ecosystem. While the decentralized and transborder nature of the internet facilitated its access expansion, the last decade witnessed a growing concentration in the use of specific applications, maintained by a small group of companies commonly referred to as "Big Techs." Consequently, the expectation that the digital environment would foster greater diversity and plurality of media, voices, and content has not been realized thus far.

The consequences of user and power concentration include avoidance to innovation, the construction of collective consciousness in private virtual spaces, and the subjection of the Brazilian population to rules imposed by foreign companies from the global North. This detaches the country from the desired digital sovereignty.

The omnipresence of digital platforms in daily life has led to structural changes in communication, resulting in audience fragmentation and decentralization in content production and sharing. Instead of a few information and entertainment channels, a new variety of options for entertainment, news, and personal expression has emerged. Consequently, many individuals have transitioned from mere spectators to content producers on these platforms.

In this new scenario, media education goes beyond the reception and critical analysis of information. As users now act as producers and content disseminators,

they develop new competencies in using technological devices in their daily lives. Therefore, it becomes essential to also encompass the dialogical relationship between production and consumption in a context of media convergence.

It is important to highlight that socio-economic inequality profoundly impacts people's agency in the emerging digital environment. The mentioned transformation in the communicational ecosystem has reinforced asymmetries and power relations in Brazilian society. In this regard, data from CETIC (2021) indicates that individuals from the economic elite are the main agents involved in content production and circulation. Combined, only 30% of users from classes A and B stated that they do not download, create, or share content on the web, while nearly 70% of users from classes C, D, and E claimed not to engage in such activities on the internet.

In the digital environment governed by Big Techs, technology acts to direct and limit our access. Social media platforms personalize what we receive, offering selective glimpses of reality that can influence or manipulate opinions and behaviors. They operate within the so-called "attention economy," with intelligent algorithms fueled by our personal data at every layer of interaction with the applications, seeking to maximize the time spent on mobile screens, directing personalized advertising content to each user.

Sensationalist content that evokes strong emotions and expresses simplistic and polarized understandings of reality, especially regarding Human Rights issues, attracts greater attention and engagement. These are the objectives pursued by platforms due to their business models. Thus, the same digital environment that has enabled new spaces for participation and opportunities, albeit unevenly distributed, has also become, in recent years, a fertile ground for the widespread circulation and consumption of harmful content, such as misinformation and hate speech.

Often, these contents are propagated by organized groups employing coordinated actions to achieve their interests, whether political, economic, or electoral. Various multi-platform and multimedia strategies are adopted, featuring automatic mechanisms for mass dissemination of harmful and disinformative content. Such content can threaten the freedom of individual and collective creation and expression, contributing to the growth of violence, extremism, and intolerance, including victimizing children and adolescents and recruiting them for hateful actions.

It is crucial to reiterate that the proliferation of hatred and misinformation, both online and offline, harms the entire population. By reinforcing prejudices and strengthening extremist movements, it polarizes discussions and strains relations among societal actors in various spaces and contexts, particularly within families.

It deprives us of the collective right to receive reliable information, affects trust between individuals and institutions, and causes real and concrete damages, as observed in the coup attempts on January 8 and recent tragedies in Brazilian schools.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the spread of misinformation contributed to thousands of deaths. Currently, hate speech continues to claim daily victims, especially among the most vulnerable sectors of the population. Based on the premise that the protection of freedom of expression does not encompass the promotion of hate speech, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) published the <u>document</u> "Safeguarding freedom of expression and access to information: guidelines for a multistakeholder approach in the context of regulating digital platforms" (UNESCO a, 2023), resulting from the conference "Internet for Trust: Towards Guidelines for Regulating Digital Platforms for Information as a Public Good." The document emphasizes the need to organize efforts to "address potentially harmful content that can undermine democracy and human rights — current examples include hatred towards defined groups, incitement to violence, harassment, misinformation, and hostility directed towards women, racial and minority groups, human rights advocates, or vulnerable groups" (UNESCO a, 2023).

Another consequence of the misinformation and hate speech ecosystem is the discredit of the work of professional journalism, with particular attacks on women journalists. According to research conducted by the Gender and Number Association in partnership with the NGO Reporters Without Borders (2022), 41.9% of women journalists have experienced online violence due to their profession. 53.1% reported that the violence suffered impacted their work routine, and 14.7% claimed to have developed some form of "mental issue." Adding to these data, the research also revealed that, of gender-based violence against journalists, 68% originated in digital media.

Other central concerns relate to the relationship between technology and social inequality. The absence of access to significant connectivity results in a new form of exclusion in a digitized world, indicating the need for policies for democratizing access that also address the limitations caused by mobile connectivity dependence and zero-rating (a practice by which mobile telephony operators allow "unlimited" access to only a few applications, disregarding the consumption of the data quota).

Digital exclusion and the effects of harmful content flooding the networks primarily affect the most vulnerable segments of society and/or those with less access to significant connectivity, such as black individuals, LGBTQIAP+ population, children and adolescents, elderly individuals, people with disabilities, migrants and refugees,

and other groups. Communities formed by rural populations, indigenous peoples, quilombolas, favelas, and peripheries are also those that suffer most intensely from the consequences of misinformation, hate speech, and digital exclusion, as various layers of inequality overlap with the precarious access to education and, in particular, media and digital literacy.

Nevertheless, despite the extreme complexity involved in taking a more holistic look at the media environment and the economic, political, and social context surrounding it, from Brazil, the dimension of the named challenges should not lead to discouragement. Instead, it should serve as a premise for the construction of consistent public policies aimed at overcoming inequalities and promoting rights. This is especially relevant as the Brazilian government presents, for the first time, to its population the outlines of a national media education strategy - one that should complement other strategies and public policies oriented towards digital sovereignty to build a fairer, more equal, and more supportive country.

1.2 Media Education in an Increasingly Digital World

Historically, the term 'media education' has been used alongside other terms such as 'educommunication,' 'media education,' and 'media literacy' to denote a set of movements (or specific practices within this set) that employ multidisciplinary strategies and tools. The primary challenge lies in its definition, yet some common characteristics can be identified across different approaches.

If personal or collective experiences with media and information technologies involve various languages and expressions, the goal of media education can be understood as the development of a metalanguage. This involves an analytical understanding of broader and interconnected media contexts, encompassing the critical skills needed for accessing, analyzing, and producing media content to engage with the digital environment critically, reflectively, and healthily (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2007).

Media education goes beyond understanding and critically participating in the digital environment, extending to print media, television content, and other media products. All media forms must be considered in educational processes, especially those that significantly impact the experiences of the individuals involved. The challenges posed by digital transformation should be addressed based on concrete

realities, with a focus on digital media due to the enormous presence of constantly evolving communication technologies in social relations and people's daily lives.

Media education should be viewed as a practice that enables the reading of the world, as "the competence of competences," as Paulo Freire stated. It is crucial to broaden the concept to include the relationship with culture, identity formation, viewing media as instruments that shape our way of being, existing, and understanding the world. If we live mediated by these instruments, media education must be understood as a necessity to comprehend our relationship with the media and how they enable us to be citizens who construct meaning and transform our reality.

Contributions of Educommunication

In this context, the media education strategy draws on the historical field established at the intersection of education and communication, with critical participation as a central axis: educommunication. Rooted in Paulo Freire's perspectives on democratic education, educommunication applies "fundamentally to communication relations in educational spaces" (SOARES, 2018, p. 12), using methodologies for communication analysis, projects focused on human rights education, and the practice of communication based on the protagonism of social subjects (SOARES, 2018, p. 12).

As a transformative social practice, educommunication is recognized as epistemology from the Global South, particularly Latin America, present since the 1980s in the experiences of social movements, unions, and ecclesial base communities at the intersection of communication/popular education. Its theory and practice complement the Strategy by guiding, politically and pedagogically, media education actions with a focus on decolonizing thinking, grounded in possibilities of intervention, contestation, and (r)existence, aiming to secure the right to communication for all, with special attention to historically marginalized groups.

Society, Digital Media, and Democracy

In the normative field, the Marco Civil da Internet, established by Law No. 12,965/2014, plays a crucial role by defining guidelines for user protection, especially children and adolescents, in the digital environment. These guidelines establish the responsibility of digital platforms in promoting a safe environment, emphasizing the need for transparency mechanisms and control over the use and availability of personal data. By emphasizing digital education and digital inclusion,

the Marco Civil da Internet recognizes the need to develop digital, media, and information competencies comprehensively, critically, ethically, and responsibly.

From these perspectives, media education actions should focus on the relationship between society and the media, impacting the support of democracy. Educated individuals comprehend the importance of a plurality of voices and understand their responsibility when interacting with information, whether as consumers or producers. Thus, a deeper understanding of freedom of expression in its individual and collective dimensions, along with the ethical responsibility of the media, becomes possible. People also become aware of their responsibilities as content producers, critically evaluating the reliability of the information they rely on and reflecting on whether their choices as authors can reinforce or question values, prejudices, and injustices. Media education, understood in this way, has the potential to promote greater intercultural dialogue, social inclusion, and diversity promotion. It can provide a context for the safe, conscious, and positive use of communication and information technologies in schools, fostering methodologies that build students' informational autonomy and leverage educational outcomes.

Transversality in Basic Education

Media education should be guided by a cross cutting vision to other learning processes. In basic education, attention must be given to the training of managers and educators so that schools can develop media education topics integrated into the curriculum, transversally, promoting a closer connection between learning and digital culture.

This vision aligns with the Common National Curriculum Base (BNCC), which presents references related to media education in at least six of its general competencies for basic education, with emphasis on number 5, already in the document's introduction:

"5. Understand, use, and create digital information and communication technologies critically, meaningfully, reflectively, and ethically in various social practices (including school practices) to communicate, access and disseminate information, produce knowledge, solve problems, and exercise protagonism and authorship in personal and collective life." (BRAZIL, 2023)

More recently, the National Digital Education Policy (PNED, Law No. 14,533/2023), instituted by President Lula on January 11, 2023, also established priority strategies from an informational and citizen perspective, going beyond formal education:

I - promotion of digital and informational competencies through actions that aim to raise awareness among Brazilian citizens about the importance of digital, media, and informational competencies; (...) III - training in digital, media, and informational competencies, including vulnerable citizen groups; (Art. 2°, PNED)

Media Education Beyond the Formal Learning Environment

Media education must be promoted beyond the school. It needs to reach adolescents and young people outside the formal education system, and critical thinking skills regarding media should be developed among adult populations, including the elderly, especially in vulnerable groups and/or those with precarious access to digital media. Popular education has an important role to play in this challenge.

Given the challenges related to the production, circulation, and consumption of information in digital platforms and beyond, it is essential to look at journalistic production from a media education perspective. With the intensive integration of digital technologies, journalism opens up to more effective audience participation in narrative construction, expanding the versions of reported facts.

Faced with the new possibilities created by digital technologies, groups previously marginalized in the production and circulation of content, information receivers, began producing their own news based on an understanding of the importance of peripheral territories for the perception of realities, encompassing their diversities. Independent journalism initiatives envision dynamics that point to a 'communicative' dialogical relationship with their audience, incorporating concrete elements of media education into their work routines, driven by a valuative understanding of peripheral social knowledge.

However, it is crucial to note that we still live in a country with news deserts concentrated in certain regions, such as the North and Northeast, and media concentration in small family groups. Similarly, in urban centers, groups and collectives of popular and peripheral communication lack structure and incentives to facilitate sustainable action. Therefore, policies associated with media education should also seek to encourage autonomous communication movements to promote a plurality of voices both online and offline.

The development of a robust, comprehensive, and critical media education policy emerges as a necessary and urgent measure for strengthening Brazilian democracy. People with skills developed through media education can make critical choices based on secure and reliable information, engaging in interactions and debates equally, fully exercising and promoting freedom of expression and dialogue (UNESCO b).

1.3 Media Education for Children and Adolescents

Children and adolescents should be considered as priority actors in media education policies, especially considering that this audience, entitled to seek, receive, and disseminate information, already constitutes one-third of global internet users (UNICEF, 2023). In this regard, the Committee on the Rights of the Child of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) emphasizes, in its General Comment No. 25 on the Rights of the Child in the digital environment (OHCHR, 2021), the importance of the full and qualified use of technologies. It understands that content is created by individuals with a specific agenda of interests and should, therefore, be critically received.

For example, a recent study by Ofcom, the UK's regulatory agency, found that British children and adolescents are consuming many "dramatic" online videos designed to "maximize stimulation, requiring minimal effort and focus" (OFCOM, 2023). The study also highlighted that almost all children and adolescents aged 3 to 17 watch videos on video-sharing websites and apps (96%).

In Brazil, the Kids Online survey identified that 92% of children and adolescents aged 9 to 17 are internet users. This corresponds to approximately 24 million people, revealing that Brazilian youth interact with digital technologies daily and increasingly see them as an integral part of their lives (KIDS ONLINE BRASIL, 2023). In this universe, 86% of children and adolescents reported having profiles on social networks (approximately 21 million people). According to the survey, this significant participation in social networks is present in all age groups, reaching almost all internet users aged 15 to 17 (96% of users, according to the survey). This percentage is significant, especially considering the impact of social inequality on digital exclusion. Practices like zero rating may facilitate access to services such as messaging but limit the scope and quality of internet access for this audience, negatively impacting access to entertainment, leisure, health, education, and culture. In particular, it affects the ability to seek reliable information and verify

the reliability of certain sources. According to TIC Domicílios 2022, only 37% of people usually check information when accessing it solely through mobile devices (CGIB, 2023).

Another study by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) indicates that seven out of ten young people up to 15 years old in Brazil cannot distinguish facts from opinions (OECD, 2021). Despite being considered "familiar with the digital world compared to previous generations" due to their proficiency in handling technologies, many times, children and adolescents lack the skills and repertoire to interpret and identify advertising, misinformation, or criminal content circulating on networks.

Furthermore, according to TIC Kids Online 2022, 43% of children and adolescents aged 11 to 17 believe that the first result of an internet search is always the best source of information, indicating a strong lack of knowledge about the digital economy and paid result boosting. Thus, there is a particular vulnerability of this audience in the digital environment, being especially susceptible, for example, to recruitment by groups of violent extremism through virtual interactions in games, social networks, or discussion forums.

In seeking to help children and young people face these challenges, many Brazilian educators aim to develop critical and responsible consumption and production of media by students. 56% of the teachers interviewed for the TIC Education study (2020) have worked with media education content in the classroom, but only 20% of them feel well-prepared to teach on the subject. Another recent study conducted at the end of 2022 by the Instituto Palavra Aberta supports these data. The study "Teachers, media, and information: the repertoire of teachers for media education practice" reveals that fake news is a concern for 73% of the respondents, but only 41% of them feel prepared to deal with the challenge they represent in society. These data reinforce the need to implement public policies that support educators, considering that new realities of artificial intelligence, data analysis, and algorithms in the digital environment constantly require new skills and, therefore, new literacies.

The interaction in the digital environment also plays a fundamental role in democratic processes, such as access to education, social participation, and the exercise of citizenship. Promoting safe and critical use of the Internet by children and adolescents is, therefore, not only an urgent need but also a challenge: formulating policies that ensure a healthy digital environment, balancing guarantees of security and privacy with freedom of expression.

In this sense, in line with the United Nations, in its General Comment No. 25 on the Rights of the Child in the digital environment, it is understood that children and adolescents should be protected on the Internet, not from the Internet. This considers the central role that technology and access to information through digital means play in the lives and development of children and adolescents. A process that, through media education, enables learning and the development of skills for the exercise of citizenship. The ability to check information sources and recognize fake news, for example, has become fundamental for any high school student.

It is important to understand protection as part of the triad of the rights of the child and adolescent, which must also be based on the right to provision and participation, as part of the holistic structure established by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Provision rights relate to the resources necessary for the survival and development of children to their full potential. Protection rights concern the wide range of threats to the dignity, survival, and development of children. Participation rights allow children to engage with processes that affect their development and empower them to play an active role in society (Livingstone, S., Carr, J., and Byrne, J. (2016).

It is essential to highlight that the Marco Civil da Internet establishes, in Article 26, that "the fulfillment of the constitutional duty of the State in providing education at all levels includes training, integrated with other educational practices, for the safe, conscious, and responsible use of the internet as a tool for exercising citizenship, promoting culture and technological development." In this context and also considering the BNCC and PNED, SECOM understands media education actions focused on children and adolescents as priorities in the strategy of developing digital policies, promoting and protecting the rights of this audience, and strengthening Brazilian democracy.

1.4 Media Education for Adults and Seniors

Involving audiences with distinct characteristics from children and adolescents, media education for adults requires specific strategies. The era of digitized communications has brought challenges for the adult population, especially concerning how to deal with information in digital media. This scenario is conducive to the spread of misinformation and the perpetuation of fraud.

According to a study by the Poynter Institute (2022), about 43% of Brazilians stated that they had accidentally shared false information. Another finding from the same

research shows that, unlike younger generations, older adults are more reluctant to correct people who share misinformation when encountering them online.

This context has a negative impact on the development of social policies, such as health. Narratives of anti-vaccine misinformation reached over 32 thousand messages shared between February and March 2023, according to a report from the Laboratory of Studies on the Internet and Social Media of UFRJ, NetLab (2023). In 2020, the Chief Scientist of the World Health Organization (WHO), Soumya Swaminathan, stated that there was an "infodemic" underway due to the volume of false health information spread on the internet (AGÊNCIA BRASIL, 2023).

The situation becomes even more concerning when considering that a significant portion of the Brazilian population has low literacy levels, making them more vulnerable to harmful content in the digital environment. Data from the Functional Illiteracy Indicator (INAF, 2018) indicate that about 30% of the population aged 15 to 64 falls into the category of functional illiterates. Nevertheless, even with limitations in functional literacy skills, part of this group reports being users of digital platforms: 86% use WhatsApp, and 72% are Facebook users (INAF, 2018).

Similar to the scenario mapped with children and adolescents in the digital environment, the development of skills for critical understanding of information and digital media among adults is also essential. This population should be educated to discern reliable information, identify fake news, engage autonomously and consciously in the media environment, and protect themselves against online fraud.

Media education for adults must be inclusive, accessible, and tailored to the specific needs of this population, taking into account the context, language, and history of various population groups (e.g., the 60+ population lacking formal spaces to discuss aspects of digital culture, behaviors, and precautions when dealing with and producing information in this realm). These skills should be developed through specific and targeted media education actions in formal and informal teaching spaces, with a focus on Youth and Adult Education (EJA) and popular education, ensuring that every Brazilian citizen can access information securely and effectively to exercise their digital citizenship.

1.5 Artificial Intelligence and Media Education

The rapid rise of artificial intelligence (AI) systems poses a significant challenge to media education. Complex algorithms have been employed for years by major digital platforms to offer personalized content recommendations and micro-target advertising based on our data. However, the operation of these systems, used daily by tens of millions of Brazilians, is not transparent, making it difficult for users to critically interpret the media and fully understand the context and meaning of the content they interact with.

In other words, the daily experience of social media users is marked by a lack of knowledge about the functioning of artificial intelligence algorithms, which, guided by corporate interests, personalize what we see, exposing us to selective cuts of reality, directing behaviors, and shaping our opinions. These algorithms also encourage consumption through invisible features and prioritize and reinforce engagement with biased, offensive, or violent content, potentially pushing certain individuals more susceptible to extremist environments and actions.

Social media platforms presented themselves to the world as platforms capable of promoting a plurality of voices, expanding the connection of people and groups, and facilitating access to consumers for small and medium-sized enterprises. Without transparency and social responsibility in their artificial intelligence algorithms, we have observed that the pursuit of maximum user engagement has brought other undesirable consequences, as predicted by experts and activists: digital dependence, mass misinformation, decline in collective mental health, and extreme political and social polarization.

At this moment, generative artificial intelligence tools that drew everyone's attention in the last year are moving toward even greater opacity. Researchers from Stanford University published in October 2023 the "The Foundation Model Transparency Index," providing a comprehensive assessment of the transparency of developers of artificial intelligence models. In a context where models like GPT-4 and Llama 2 are already used by millions of people, a worrying trend of declining transparency was identified, adding to the opacity observed in social media platforms and other previous technologies. To address this issue, researchers introduced the Transparency Index, designed around 100 indicators that encode crucial aspects of the construction, implementation, and use of these models in the AI ecosystem, revealing a fundamental lack of transparency across the industry (BOMMASANI et al., 2023).

A broad set of measures will need to be adopted by the public sector, society, and the private sector to address these challenges. One of them, absolutely fundamental, is to educate people so that they can understand the operation and effects of their own technological environment. In the current stage of development of generative artificial intelligence technologies, where human questions can find incorrect or biased answers created by predictive systems, computer literacy urgently needs to enter the media education agenda. However, knowledge and skills must be explored critically to understand the impacts of technology on social justice and democracy—not just as a tool for work in a digital society. This new field, which expands the boundaries of information education and bridges the gap between computing and media education, can be recognized as "critical algorithmic literacy" or "critical computing."

Media education in our times must go beyond building skills to access, evaluate, and create messages, examining authorship and context. It must also encompass a deeper understanding of the complex, and often hidden, dynamics among individuals, media, and technological systems that shape our world. Without the ability to identify and act on these systems, we become even more vulnerable to the destabilizing effects of misinformation and polarization, which threaten institutions and social peace, as well as the potential exclusionary nature of artificial intelligence.

Educating for new sociotechnical dynamics implies recognizing that technologies are not neutral and incorporate the values of those who create or program them; that their effects are ecological, impacting and redefining social and economic relations; and that, acting on unequal societies, they can exponentially amplify social injustices and exclusion.

If able to incorporate these new literacies into their pedagogical practices, media education can develop the necessary skills for people to perceive, question, and influence the behavior of technological systems and the dynamics between technology and society in the exercise of their citizenship and political participation. In particular, it can convey critical knowledge about dynamics that promote unattainable images or vulnerableize certain groups, about biases or exclusions reflected in the production of generative Als, and about the mechanisms of engagement and attention that favor content that segregates, offends, and destabilizes societies.

Thus, classroom activities or informal teaching spaces can lead children, adolescents, and adults to explore the ways algorithms operate that shape the results of our searches on the internet; they can question the ethics of prediction

and recommendation systems or even the design behind the interfaces of social media using them.

The coming years will bring an even more disruptive transformation with the expected emerging capabilities in the next generations of language and multimodal models, already incorporated into conversation, simultaneous translation, and automatic creation of multimedia content applications. In this regard, while recognizing that emerging technology should contribute immensely to areas such as health, the environment, and economic growth, the Center for Humane Technology, a non-profit organization based in the U.S. operating in the field of technology and society, highlights that the race to offer new Al capabilities to the market, without adequately considering their ethical and social implications, will have enormous negative impacts on society. Among the consequences that may be observed in the short term is the exponential growth of misinformation (including with deep fakes), extremism, fraud, extortion, child pornography (fake child porn), and crimes in general in the online environment.

Faced with present and expected challenges, a multi-sectoral agenda will need to be built to define critical points that must be addressed technically and politically to drive the best use of technologies and mitigate or eliminate major risks related to them. For example, we must seek that these artificial intelligence tools, which will soon mediate much of our contact with information consumption and the digital environment itself, are trained to provide clear and reliable explanations about their own internal operating mechanisms. Moreover, as guiding agents of human experience in the informational environment, companies offering these technologies must ensure that Als can disseminate knowledge that allows a critical understanding of the media amid a scenario of continuous transformation. Thus, if adequately regulated, ethically trained, and transparent, it seems reasonable to assume that these new systems also have the potential to bring benefits to the critical understanding of the media, such as enhanced detection of misinformation, hate speech, and other harmful and illegal content.

As can be seen, the government launches its first Brazilian Media Education Strategy at a historic moment of profound global technological revolution. It is difficult to predict the real dimension of the future impact of AI on the country's communication and information ecosystem. For this reason, it is likely that this strategy will require revisions in the very near future, possibly in less than two years.

During this time interval, it will be crucial for educators, researchers, social movements, civil society organizations, and public officials to be in a state of alert, continuous updating, and scrutiny in the face of the dizzying pace of

transformation driven by the constant evolution of cutting-edge technology. Debates and other strategies for mobilization and the production of critical knowledge on the subject will be necessary, including goals regarding the development of AI systems and strategies for our population to develop systems suitable for their realities, promoting technodiversity. Only collectively will it be possible to build paths for strengthening the resilience of Brazilian society in the face of the risks that are looming.

2. Mission, Vision, and Objectives

Considering the presented context, the diverse audiences to be reached, and the inherent complexities of the dimensions of the Brazilian territory and the diversity of its population, the mission, vision, and objectives guiding strategically the actions developed by the Coordination-General of Media Education, an entity linked to the Secretariat of Digital Policies of the Secretariat of Social Communication of the Presidency of the Republic responsible for the formulation, coordination, and implementation of the actions outlined in this Brazilian Media Education Strategy, are presented below.

Mission

To promote the development of skills and competencies in children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly for understanding, analyzing, engaging, and critically producing content in the experience with different channels of digital media and information in a creative, healthy, conscious, and citizen-oriented manner.

Vision

To make Brazil a country of reference in the promotion of media education for its population, contributing to the integrity of information, individual and collective freedom of expression, critical thinking, citizen awareness, the promotion of human rights, addressing inequalities, violent discourses, and prejudices, and the diversity and plurality of voices in the media and information environment.

Strategic Objectives

I. Qualify education professionals and multipliers for media education, promoting their continuous training and qualification and offering resources and pedagogical content suitable for different audiences and the various skills and competencies to be developed.

- II. Promote the teaching and learning of skills and competencies for reading and critical participation in the experience with media in formal and informal spaces, addressing social, regional, racial, ethnic, religious, gender diversities, and their intersections.
- III. Establish partnerships and commitments with the public sector, academia, civil society, private sector, and international organizations, focused on the development of educational campaigns, studies, and research, and other initiatives for the promotion and protection of rights in the digital environment and for media education of the Brazilian population.
- IV. Raise awareness in society about the importance of media education and digital culture for citizenship, popular protagonism, and democracy, and disseminate content that promotes education for the conscious, healthy, critical, and safe use of digital media.

3. Areas of Action

The areas of action outlined below structure and provide coherence to the various planned and ongoing initiatives aimed at achieving the objectives related to the Brazilian Media Education Strategy.

Actions and projects focused on (i) promoting media education in basic education, (ii) training and continuous qualification of education professionals and multipliers, (iii) establishing partnerships with academia, civil society, and the private sector, (iv) developing educational campaigns, (v) promoting conscious use of screens and digital devices by children and adolescents, and (vi) social participation are presented.

3.1 Media Education in Basic Education

According to the principles of the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education (LDB), the realization of the educational rights of children and adolescents requires a wide range of measures, which must be worked on in a cross-cutting manner. In the same direction, the National Policy for Digital Education (Law No. 14,533/2023) foresees the promotion of digital, media, and information skills broadly, critically, ethically, and responsibly.

As one of the main strategies for developing these skills, media education must be qualitatively included in basic education, in all its modalities, including youth and adult education. In other words, the teaching of media education competencies and skills must reach classrooms and other learning spaces with approaches suitable for the developmental stage of students, led by trained educators equipped for this mission, based on evidence-based methods and aligned with the promotion of human rights and the protection of the rights of children and adolescents in the digital environment and beyond.

Considering its competencies and role in promoting quality education for the country, the Ministry of Education (MEC) is the main partner in achieving these objectives. The SECOM, through the Coordination-General of Media Education, is responsible for both coordination actions and the production of the technical subsidies necessary to achieve the stated objectives.

The implementation of actions must take into account the challenges posed for Brazilian basic education, considering, among other elements, the diversity of the Brazilian population and public and private institutions, as well as the structural complexities present in the country's educational system. These actions articulate with the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC), which includes media education transversally in the general competencies of basic education, among which competence 5 stands out, as previously mentioned in this document.

The BNCC also foresees informational literacy and the development of communication and media competencies from the journalistic-media field, one of the thematic approaches in the Languages area, which includes activities that deepen students' knowledge and relationship with discursive genres that permeate the public sphere, such as journalistic and advertising texts.

The following initiatives are aimed at promoting media education in basic education, stimulating and creating conditions for it to be internalized in practices and didactic content throughout the country:

a. Full-Time School:

The Full-Time School Program, established by Law No. 14,640 of July 31, 2023, aims to promote full-time enrollment at all stages and modalities of basic education, from the perspective of integral education. In partnership with MEC, SECOM will work to promote the development of media education activities during the extended day, based on the construction of national technical guidelines and actions of coordination and awareness-raising with education networks.

b. Didactic Materials:

In partnership with MEC, the goal is to promote the acquisition of didactic materials that include the teaching of media education competencies and skills, with the inclusion of the theme in the notices of the National Programs of the Book and Didactic Material (PNLD) and Library in School (PNBE), as well as the training of evaluators on the subject.

c. Brazilian Media Education Week:

With its first edition held between October 23 and 27, 2023, it aims to be an annual event organized by SECOM and MEC, in partnership with civil society organizations, which seeks to raise awareness about the importance of the theme, encouraging mobilization and engagement of society and, especially, education networks for the development of media education activities in schools and beyond, based on educational resources available on the event's page.

d. Educational Olympiads:

The Olympiad against Disinformation is a large-scale impact project developed in partnership with the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation. The initiative aims to mobilize, in its first edition planned for 2024, 400 thousand high school students in scientific activities that promote critical media reading and the development of solutions for contexts where disinformation and the circulation of fake news grow exponentially, promoting the exercise of digital citizenship and inspiring the next generation of young people to become active agents in the fight against disinformation.

e. Hackathon:

The Hackathon against Disinformation is another initiative resulting from the partnership with the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation, which is now part of the National Program for Popularization of Science (Pop Science), with the objective of "combating scientific disinformation through scientific, media, and digital education." The first Hackathon, held in October 2023, focused on combating disinformation related to vaccination in Brazil, bringing together basic education students in search of creative solutions. This initiative aims to empower future generations to critically assess health information, fostering essential skills. During the event, participants work in teams, collaborating with experts in developing technological tools and strategies to actively combat disinformation, ensuring the dissemination of accurate and reliable information.

f. National Guidelines:

Development of national guidelines for the development of educational practices in the field of media education, with the provision of coordination and technical support to the National Council of Education and other instances of formulation, coordination, and monitoring of public policies in areas such as children and adolescents, youth, social assistance, health, among others.

3.2 Training and Ongoing Qualification of Education Professionals and Multipliers

The rapid advancement of digital technologies and the complexification of the information ecosystem demand urgent investment in the training and continuous qualification of education professionals and multipliers to promote critical and reflective thinking in the face of media.

In the context of basic education, it is essential to qualify teachers at all levels of education to address topics related to media education in a cross-cutting manner throughout the curriculum. Teachers need to develop knowledge and skills to guide students on conscious consumption, ethical production, and responsible distribution of digital content. They should also be capable of promoting digital literacy, recognizing fake news, protecting personal data, and ensuring online safety.

This qualification must be continuous and constantly updated, keeping pace with the rapid transformations brought about by new technologies, such as artificial intelligence, data analysis, and algorithms. Teachers need to be prepared for the changes brought about by automation, advances in cognitive computing, and new interfaces.

In addition to teacher training, it is crucial to qualify multipliers in various social segments to become disseminators of reliable information and combat the harmful effects of misinformation. Professionals in health, social assistance, public safety, civil society organizations, and community leaders can be trained in media education and act as agents of positive transformation in their respective communities.

By sharing critical media skills with different audiences through accessible and contextualized language, these multipliers contribute to a more conscientious citizen participation in the digital environment. They play a central role in reversing the negative effects of the infodemic that afflicts the country.

Therefore, the constant qualification of educators and multipliers from various fields is crucial to enable them to face the complex challenges brought about by the spread of misleading and harmful content in the digital age. Only through coordinated and continuous efforts will it be possible to promote a culture of ethical, safe, and democratic use of media.

The following initiatives are planned for this axis of action:

a. Initial Training:

Promotion and coordination, directly or indirectly, with Higher Education Institutions, including public and private universities, for extension projects aimed at training basic education teachers. This includes support for creating disciplines and/or improving media education teaching in Pedagogy, Communication, Library Science, Bachelor's degrees, and other related areas, incorporating it into the curricula.

a. Ongoing Qualification:

Providing courses and other high-quality teaching content related to various competencies and skills of media education on MEC's digital platforms, such as the AVAMEC Platform, for continuous qualification of education professionals nationwide.

a. Courses for Multipliers:

Conducting media education courses for agents considered potential multipliers, such as health workers, social workers, public safety professionals, community leaders, athletes, among others. This will be done in partnership with public bodies, academia, and civil society.

3.3 Partnerships with Civil Society, Academia, and Private Sector

In Brazil and around the world, various initiatives are developed by Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the field of media education. These actions have aimed, to date, to complement government actions or address the absence of public policies on the subject, involving a wide range of activities.

Among the public interest projects that are or can be developed by CSOs in the field of media education, we can highlight: teacher training courses, creation of educational resources, workshops for specific audiences (youth, elderly, etc.), awareness campaigns, school media projects, mediation of conflicts in the digital environment, community communication projects, film and audiovisual festivals, formation of collaboration networks, creation of digital platforms (knowledge

repositories), studies and research, development of technological solutions, and recognition of good practices (awards, seals/certifications, etc.).

The SECOM intends to work in partnership with civil society organizations to develop new and boost existing projects and actions of public interest in the field of media education. Partnerships will be governed by the Regulatory Framework for Civil Society Organizations (RFCSO), provided for in Law No. 13,019, of July 31, 2014, which establishes the legal regime for partnerships between public administration and civil society organizations, in a mutual cooperation regime, for the achievement of public and reciprocal interests, through the execution of activities or projects previously established in work plans included in collaboration agreements, in promotion agreements, or in cooperation agreements.

The instrument to be used will be the collaboration agreement, aimed at achieving work plans initiated by SECOM to establish partnerships involving the transfer of financial resources. In addition to the social impact resulting from its implementation, the development of projects in partnership with CSOs will allow the accumulation of knowledge in SECOM on the subject, contributing to the constant reformulation of the national media education policy.

Moreover, a series of partnerships, without the transfer of resources, will be established with organizations working in the field of media education to incorporate the accumulation, experience, and critical reading of the field into the national policy. These partnerships will allow for greater reach and effectiveness of actions developed by the Coordination-General of Media Education.

The academia should also be an important partner in the media education strategy, especially federal institutes and public and private universities. In addition to supporting and coordinating the creation of new disciplines, research groups, and research networks, as well as scientific initiation and extension projects related to media education, SECOM will seek to support, co-organize, or influence the inclusion of the theme in awards, events, and publications, possibly collaborating with the support of other partner institutions (civil society and/or international organizations).

Partnerships and commitments will also need to be established with the private sector. It is important to reiterate that digital platforms are not mere spectators of the content circulating on social networks; they influence with their algorithms the reach of publications and moderate content based on their terms of use and obligations present in the legislation of the various countries in which they operate. They must, therefore, act with care, diligence, and due diligence, seeking to ensure a healthy digital environment aligned with the perspective of human rights.

This scenario poses complex challenges of various kinds, especially when considering children and adolescents as the audience of platforms, especially given the business model of Big Techs, widely based on the collection and exploitation of personal data for commercial purposes. The architecture of networks is aimed at capturing the audience's attention for as long as possible, with a negative impact on the mental health of users.

Beyond efforts related to the legal regulation of social platforms, various countries have formulated guidelines for social platforms and online service developers aimed at spreading good practices and establishing commitments by companies. This aims to ensure that the offer of services by social platforms is appropriate for the protection and promotion of rights in the digital environment. In particular, the design of platforms must be suitable for the age of children and adolescents using the services, adequately protecting their rights.

In this context, SECOM will take the initiative to map the different dimensions of rights that must be considered in the architecture of social platforms. This will include transversal and intersectional aspects such as the protection of the rights of children and adolescents, women, the elderly, people with disabilities, indigenous and quilombola populations, black people, among other groups that require careful consideration when identifying recurrent violations and rights to be ensured.

Based on the mapping, SECOM will seek to articulate with social platforms to define, for each of them, priorities for promoting designs aligned with the promotion and protection of rights in the digital environment and media education of the Brazilian population. Similarly, the production and/or dissemination of media education content will be encouraged with digital platforms, in addition to encouraging companies to invest in projects in the field.

Finally, the private sector can also be a partner in the implementation of media education policy by financing projects and promoting media education for workers in their companies.

The following initiatives are part of the axis of partnerships with civil society, academia, and the private sector:

a. Financing Civil Society Projects:

Publication of notices for financing projects by Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the field of media education. Initially, actions aimed at populations in peripheral territories, indigenous and quilombola communities, riverside

populations, and other territories of greater socioeconomic vulnerability will be prioritized. Also, populations in the North and Northeast regions and populations with greater media and informational vulnerability, such as the elderly, people with disabilities, and those with low educational attainment. Partnerships with the private sector can also be articulated for the financing of projects developed by CSOs.

b. Cooperation with Civil Society:

Establishment of partnerships, without the transfer of resources, with Civil Society Organizations active in the field of media education for the development of products and actions in the area.

c. Teaching, Research, and Extension:

Establishment of partnerships and promotion and coordination, directly or indirectly, with federal institutes and public and private universities for the development of teaching, research, and extension actions in the field of media education. This includes the promotion of projects, events, publications, awards, and other mechanisms for recognition, visibility, and awareness on the subject.

d. Commitments with Platforms:

Mapping of architectures and practices of social networks and establishment of commitments for the adaptation of platforms (literacy by design) for transparency, accessibility, protection of rights, and media education of users.

3.4. Educational Campaigns

Beyond classroom teaching and collaborative projects with other entities, additional strategies must be adopted to expand the reach of public policy and mobilize a broad audience around media education. In this regard, a series of campaigns focused on the dissemination of media education content will be developed. These campaigns will vary based on the characteristics of the target audience and the adopted strategy.

The production of content may be carried out by SECOM itself and/or through partnerships with other public bodies or partner institutions, depending on each case. The following initiatives are planned for the development of educational campaigns:

a. Thematic Actions:

Partnerships with Ministries for the production and dissemination of content on their social media networks and public platforms, addressing media education based on the specific themes of each department.

b. Radio and TV Campaigns:

Partnerships with public, state, and university radio and television stations for the execution of campaigns. Additionally, collaborations with commercial radio and television stations for campaigns and/or mandatory broadcast of educational programs (as per Article 16 of Decree-Law 236 of February 28, 1967).

c. Media Education Ambassadors:

Coordination and collaboration with digital influencers for the production and execution of campaigns on social networks. This project will involve the appointment of "media education ambassadors," as well as engagement with social movements and children and adolescents who can act as ambassadors in their schools and communities.

d. Collaborative Networks:

Creation and/or participation in collaborative networks for the production and dissemination of content. This may involve community radios, university stations, or other potential partners, contributing to the widespread dissemination of messages, campaigns, and media education content.

3.5 Conscious Use of Screens and Digital Devices by Children and Adolescents

"Excessive screen time has been causing severe consequences for children and adolescentes in their health and well-being of children and adolescents. Emerging issues include sleep disorders, childhood obesity, vision problems, behavioral issues (aggression, difficulty managing emotions, lack of empathy, social isolation, digital dependence), anxiety and depression, and cognitive delay in learning.

In addition to these health and development consequences, the dynamics established in the digital environment and specifically on social platforms bring other alarming implications involving the child audience. Practices such as cyberbullying have expanded, along with occurrences of body image disorders, low self-esteem, and risks related to sexuality, nudity, sexting, sextortion, sexual abuse, and virtual rape (SBP, 2023). These phenomena have a significant impact on the mental health of boys and, especially, girls.

In this scenario, SECOM will coordinate the development of official guidelines for the responsible use of screens by children and adolescents. This will be done in partnership with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Justice and Public Security, Ministry of Social Development and Assistance, Family, and Combating Hunger, and the Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship.

To gather insights for the guideline development process, a public consultation has been opened to receive contributions until November 23, 2023, through the following link: https://www.gov.br/participamaisbrasil/uso-de-telas-por-criancas-e-adolescentes.

The guideline development process will also include the creation of a working group with representatives from public bodies, civil society organizations, and experts in different areas related to the topic (health and child development, education and technology, among others). Multiple initiatives such as workshops and public hearing procedures will be conducted to guarantee parents, educators, and the children and adolescents engagement.

The guidelines will consider consistent studies and existing publications in the area and will be disseminated through communication, awareness, and mobilization strategies to be defined, aiming to reach various audiences, including children and adolescents, parents and guardians, teachers, among others.

Additionally, the maturation of understanding about the risks and benefits existing in the relationship between technology and childhood and adolescence will serve as input for the qualification of public policies in various government areas.

3.6 Social Participation

Effective social participation, from conception to evaluation, is crucial for public policies to represent the desires and meet the needs of the population, especially historically excluded groups. These groups should be prioritized in government actions.

The formulation of this Brazilian Media Education Strategy incorporated contributions from civil society through extensive public consultation conducted in 2023, with 418 proposals from various segments. Participatory initiatives like this enable a plurality of perspectives and greater popular engagement in defining government priorities and strategies, effectively contributing to guide the way forward (BRAZIL, 2023).

Another example of ongoing engagement is the open consultation to subsidize the screens conscious usage by children and adolescents guide, mentioned in the previous section.

Beyond these initiatives, it will be necessary to expand institutional spaces for broad and diversified participation, especially from collectives and organizations in low-income neighborhoods. The contribution and participation of these actors will be essential to provide legitimacy, effectiveness, and appropriate focus to initiatives in the field of media education.

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